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Formal Mentoring Programs: A Mentor-Centric and Longitudinal Analysis

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Formal mentoring programs are becoming more popular as organizations attempt to reap the benefits that have long been associated with informal mentoring. The present study adds to the small number of mentor-centric studies and offers a unique longitudinal examination of formal mentoring programs. Findings suggest that as formal mentoring relationships develop over time, mentors begin to use their time more efficiently and the negative effects of cross-gender differences dissipate. Furthermore, whereas mentor reports of psychosocial support and role modeling appear to relate to mentor program satisfaction and protégé reports of mentor effectiveness, reports of vocational support appear to have no impact on these variables. Study limitations are discussed, and implications for future research and for practice are suggested.

Keywords: *mentoring; formal mentoring programs; mentor gender; mentor effectiveness; mentor satisfaction*

In an organizational context, a mentoring relationship involves an experienced and knowledgeable individual (the mentor) investing time, knowledge, and effort to provide developmental career support in a caring and helpful manner to a less experienced individual (the protégé) in order to improve the protégé's knowledge, skills, and growth (Kram, 1985; Shea, 1995). Mentoring has been found to have profound positive impacts on individuals, and so organizations have attempted to replicate these benefits by implementing formal

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mentoring programs (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006a, 2006b; Allen & Finkelstein, 2003; Allen & O'Brien, 2006; Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2002; Hegstad & Wentling, 2005). However, formal mentoring program implementation entails complications that are distinct from those one would experience in informal mentoring relationships.

One major distinction between formal and informal mentoring is that formal mentoring relationships are constrained by a very specific period of time (Ragins & Cotton, 1999), and we do not yet know much about how mentors carry out their roles over the course of these abbreviated formal assignments (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). A better understanding of how formal mentoring relationships cultivate over the duration of the relationship will allow us to design programs to best replicate the benefits associated with informal mentoring. The few studies that have examined the dynamism in mentoring relationships over time (e.g., Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2008; Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002) did not examine this interaction in formal organizational mentoring programs and were constrained by their cross-sectional designs such that they captured snapshot views of mentoring relationships at one period in time. Thus, the question remains about how formal mentoring relationships evolve over time.

A second distinction of formal programs is that organizations will need to recruit and select mentors to become participants in the program and ensure that employees selected as formal mentors are matched well with protégés so that they provide effective levels of mentoring to their assigned protégés. Informal mentoring does not entail this type of recruitment process, and informal matching occurs naturally as organizational members voluntarily form relationships. According to Wanberg, Welsh, and Hezlett (2003), the success of formal mentoring programs depends, in part, on the motivation of experienced individuals to participate and effectively fulfill their roles as mentors in the program. To understand how experienced organizational members perceive and enact a formal mentoring role, it is essential to capture the mentor's perspective. A mentor's perspective of the mentoring he or she provides is often quite different from that of the protégé, partially because the mentor may engage in mentoring behaviors that are "outside of the protégé's awareness," yet few studies have examined formal mentoring from the perspective of the mentor (Allen, 2007, p. 130). By studying what formal mentors actually do in their role as opposed to protégés' assumptions or perceptions, we may be able to clarify specific behaviors for mentors that are more effective than others, which can lead to increased success rates for formal organizational programs.

Previous studies have provided guidance on factors that may influence the extent of mentoring provided by formal mentors. Research has shown that mentoring functions often vary based on demographic factors such as the gender composition of the dyad and that cross-gender relationships may be particularly problematic in formal programs (e.g., Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Although a number of studies have examined the effects of gender composition on mentoring functions in both formal and informal dyads, only a handful have considered how these effects may change over the course of the relationship. Thus, examining the dynamic way in which mentoring dyad characteristics affect mentoring provided over the duration of the relationship may be of particular importance in formal mentoring programs.

Several other researchers have offered specific characteristics for effective formal mentoring. In 1999, Ragins and Cotton suggested that mentors who participate in formal mentoring

programs might have high levels of organizational commitment, yet no empirical studies have determined whether formal mentors' level of organizational commitment in any way influences the degree of mentoring support provided to protégés. Furthermore, Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2005) highlighted frequency of meetings between mentors and protégés as an important determinant of mentoring functions and posited that communication frequency should lead to positive results in formal programs. However, we know very little about the role of time together and how mentoring occurs over the course of a formal relationship because most published studies are cross-sectional in nature.

In the present study, we attempt to address these issues as we consider factors that are theorized to motivate experienced workers to provide formal mentoring support and as we longitudinally examine the degrees to which those factors relate to the amount of mentoring provided at two different time periods within intact formal mentoring dyads. To this extent, we first examine the main effect of formal mentors' levels of organizational commitment on the mentors' provision of mentoring, and then we investigate the dynamism of the relationships between the dyad's gender composition and the pair's time spent together on mentoring functions provided by examining whether these interactions intensify or dissipate as the relationship progresses over time.

Mentoring support functions, however, are only one characteristic of mentoring relationships and do not represent the final results of such relationships. Although many positive outcomes have been associated with mentoring (see Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; and Wanberg et al., 2003, for reviews), some questions remain, specifically with regard to formal mentoring programs. The maintenance of a successful formal mentoring program requires the ongoing participation of employees to serve as mentors. If these employees have a negative experience or perceive more costs than benefits in being formal mentors, then the program will quickly terminate, because few people will be motivated to support the program. Furthermore, it remains unclear which mentoring functions provided by formal mentors are related to protégé perceptions of mentor effectiveness. Which type of mentoring support is deemed more important to protégés in a formal program? By matching mentors' reports of developmental support with their protégés' ratings, we can also explore how these perspectives compare with one another in terms of highlighting what mentors believe they are providing with what protégés perceive as valuable. Consequently, we also examine the relationships between mentoring provided and these two important outcomes of the mentoring relationship as rated by the mentors and the protégés, respectively. Thus, the purpose of this study is two-fold: first, to further our understanding of how formal mentoring relationships evolve over time; and second, to examine which mentoring functions are related to two outcomes that are deemed important for the continued success of formal mentoring programs.

Theory and Hypotheses

Formal Mentoring Programs

The literature suggests that the extent of mentoring provided in formal relationships may be less than what occurs in informal mentoring relationships (e.g., Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). For this reason, it may be reasonable to assume that

mentors in formal relationships should be carefully and appropriately selected and matched to a suitable protégé so that they may provide the greatest possible amount of mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003). The focus on mentoring support is important because previous research has found that the degree of mentoring provided by a formal mentor is related to subsequent protégé benefits (Allen, 2007). Furthermore, Ragins and colleagues (2000) found that individuals with high levels of satisfaction with their formal mentors reported similar career outcomes as individuals in satisfying informal mentoring relationships. As pointed out by Wanberg et al. (2003), this suggests that when proper consideration is afforded to the design of the program, it is possible for formal mentoring programs to provide the same benefits as informal relationships.

The Formal Mentor's Perspective

Although the majority of studies on formal mentoring have examined mentoring support from protégés' perspectives of mentoring received, this study focuses on mentors' reports of the mentoring they provide. This alternative view allows us to examine the relationships between important mentoring correlates outside the boundaries of the protégés' minds. It is clear that the mentor's perspective matters (Allen, 2007). Mentor-centric areas of research that have been addressed to date include mentor willingness to mentor others (e.g., Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999), mentor-protégé selection (e.g., Allen, 2004; Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000), provision of mentoring (e.g., Allen & Eby, 2004; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997; Lankau, Riordan, & Thomas, 2005), and the mentor's satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (e.g., Allen & Eby, 2003; Noe, 1988). The mentor's perspective is also important in regard to such organizational outcomes as retaining tenured employees and filling mentor positions with people who want to serve as a mentor.

According to Allen (2007), it is likely that the mentors themselves are exclusively aware of all the behaviors in which they have engaged on behalf of their protégé. Therefore, because the mentor is the one who ultimately chooses how much mentoring to provide in the relationship, it is critical to examine how these experienced members of the relationship perceive the mentoring they provide to their respective protégés. Thus, to understand a mentoring relationship from the perspective of the mentor, we must first understand which types of behaviors are associated with a mentor's provision of mentoring support to his or her protégé.

Provision of Mentoring Support

Most research on mentoring in organizations stems from Kram's (1985) seminal work, in which she discusses mentoring as a developmental relationship in which a senior or more experienced organizational member provides guidance for a less experienced individual. A mentor may provide such guidance in the forms of time, effort, knowledge, support, and feedback to a protégé (Kram, 1985; Shea, 1995). Scandura and Ragins (1993) build on Kram's (1985) theories

about organizational mentoring to explain how these different types of mentor guidance manifest as three distinct mentoring support functions—vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling.

Vocational support (the career development function) occurs when a mentor supports the protégé's ability to perform his or her job. Specifically, a mentor provides vocational development to his or her protégé by providing support with regard to learning the operational functions of the organization and preparing the protégé for career advancement (Kram, 1988). Such career functions provided by the mentor consist of lessons that help the protégé deal with his or her current projects and prepare him or her for either lateral or upward movement within the corporate structure (Noe, 1988). Additionally, by providing sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, and protection and by assigning challenging assignments to the protégé, a mentor fulfills the career development/vocational mentoring function (Noe, 1988).

Mentors provide psychosocial support to their protégés by assisting them in developing their own identity within the organization while promoting a sense of self-confidence and work-role effectiveness (Kram, 1985, 1988; Noe, 1988). Ways in which a mentor may provide such psychosocial support include providing an atmosphere of acceptance and confirmation, providing counseling by encouraging the protégé to talk openly, and by providing friendship through informal interactions at work (Noe, 1988).

Last, the role modeling function is met when a protégé respects the knowledge and abilities of his or her mentor and the mentor acts as an appropriate exemplar to the protégé. Generally speaking, a mentor who makes available the full range of these three mentoring functions to his or her protégé will provide more valuable mentoring support to his or her protégé (Kram, 1985), thus resulting in more developmental benefits and more positive mentoring relationships.

Mentor's Organizational Commitment and Mentoring Support

Researchers have examined a number of correlates to mentor reports of mentoring provided. Examples include the relationships between such items as mentor demographics (e.g., Allen & Eby, 2004; Lankau et al., 2005), previous experience as a mentor (e.g., Allen & Eby, 2004; Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997), mentor dispositional variables (e.g., Allen, 2003; Bozionelos, 2004), and mentor motives for mentoring (e.g., Allen, 2003; Allen, Poteet, et al., 1997) with mentor-provided reports of their mentoring. Yet, despite these recent advances, we still know very little about the relationship between mentors' attitudes and the mentoring functions they provide to their protégés. Most of these studies have focused on demographic variables (e.g., Fagenson-Eland, Baugh, & Lankau, 2005; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Smith, Howard, & Harrington, 2005), with a few studies investigating personality and career history variables (e.g., Bozionelos, 2004). In addition, the mentoring relationships in these studies have been informal or a mix of informal and formal, which raises questions about the applicability of the findings for formal mentors.

In formal mentoring programs, seasoned employees are typically recruited as mentors to participate in an organizationally sponsored program. One individual variable that may play an essential role in determining the extent of mentoring provided is the formal mentor's level

of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment has been defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982, p. 27). Employees with high levels of organizational commitment are willing to put forth considerable effort for organizational purposes (Mowday et al., 1982; Van Scotter, 2000). This effort may be toward not only task performance but also contextual performance, such as volunteering, helping, and endorsing organizational objectives (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

Ragins and Cotton (1999) suggested that mentors who participate in formal mentoring programs might have high affective organizational commitment. Affective commitment refers to the degree to which an employee identifies with, is emotionally attached to, and is involved in his or her organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). However, no studies to date have examined formal mentors’ levels of organizational commitment and the impact of that commitment on the mentoring they provide. The theoretical mechanism of psychological ownership can help explain why high levels of organizational commitment may result in formal mentors’ desire to provide more mentoring functions. Psychological ownership reflects a relationship between an individual and a target of ownership where the individual experiences feelings of possessiveness and being psychologically tied to the object (O’Driscoll, Pierce, & Coghlan, 2006). When individuals feel ownership for their organization, they are likely to experience a heightened level of responsibility to contribute to the organization’s well-being because membership in the organization is associated with their self-identity (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). Mentors who are highly committed to the organization may be motivated to provide more functions to their assigned protégés because of these mentors’ sense of psychological ownership and emotional attachment to the organization than formal mentors who are less committed.

Thus, a mentor who is highly committed to his or her organization may demonstrate a preference for educating less experienced workers (protégés) to be more competent in performing their roles in the organization and to appreciate the values for which the company stands. Such a committed mentor would likely encourage a positive work environment by enlightening the protégé as to how he or she could effectively cope with career-related issues, and, as such, a highly committed mentor would likely be viewed as a role model figure to his or her protégé.

Hypothesis 1: In a formal mentoring program, higher levels of a mentor’s organizational commitment will positively relate to the extent of mentoring functions provided by the mentor.

Overall Time Spent Together Affecting Mentoring Support

Because each mentoring function requires a certain amount of time to accomplish, we would expect that the more overall time the two individuals spend together (including face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, e-mails, and other correspondence), the more functions the mentor will be able to provide to his or her protégé. Fagenson (1992) found that mentors who communicated with their protégés more frequently tended to provide more vocational, psychosocial, and role modeling support. Wanberg and colleagues (2003) also identified interaction frequency as an important variable for study in formal mentoring

programs. These authors reasoned that more time spent together may be positively associated with mentoring received in the relationship. A recent study found that time spent together mediated the relationship between mentor and protégé demographics and mentoring provided to protégés (Allen et al., 2006a). Specifically, these authors found that from the mentor's perspective, time spent together mediated the relationship between the two members being in the same department and the degree of psychosocial support they reported providing; and from the protégé's perspective, it mediated the relationship between being in the same department with the mentor and the protégé's report of vocational support received. As such, we anticipate that the ability of a mentor to successfully endow career-related and psychosocial guidance, as well as his or her ability to act as a role model, would likely depend upon the amount of time he or she has to impart these values upon the protégé.

However, mentoring relationships unfold over time, following a four-stage sequence of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition described by Kram (1985). Although this sequence has been well documented, it remains largely unexamined in the context of formal mentoring programs (Blake-Beard, 2001). Scant attention has been paid to the way in which formal relationships evolve (Blake-Beard, 2001; Collins, 1983; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Given the nature of formal programs, we already know how and when the initiation phase (phase 1) begins, and we likewise know when the separation phase (phase 3) occurs, as "the end of the formal program represents a literal push into the separation phase" (Blake-Beard, 2001, p. 338). Thus, the first two stages, initiation and cultivation, are of particular interest to the present study. In the initiation stage, the mentorship forms via members' initial interactions with one another, which allow the protégé and mentor to begin to gain respect for one another as competent individuals deserving of their time. Next, in the cultivation stage, the mentor and protégé begin to learn more about each other such as the other's strengths and capabilities. As such, optimization of mentoring functions is expected to begin once the pair reaches this cultivation stage. Thus, it makes sense that in the beginning of a mentoring relationship, the time a mentor and protégé spend together may be spent, in part, getting to know one another, thereby leaving less time to focus on providing mentoring than in later stages where the mentor and protégé are more familiar with one another. Therefore, we expect that earlier in the relationship, time spent together may not predict a mentor's perspective of the mentoring support he or she provides, but as the relationship develops over time, the more time a mentor spends with his or her protégé, the higher his or her perception of support he or she provides to that protégé. The longitudinal design of the present study allows us to test this proposition as a formal hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between time spent together and reports of mentoring support provided will become more pronounced as the formal mentoring relationship develops.

Gender Composition of the Relationship's Impact on Mentoring Support Over Time

Kram (1983) found evidence, through a series of interviews, that mentoring functions vary in volume as the relationship unfolds over time. A longitudinal examination of mentoring relationships over time could help to confirm the temporal sequence Kram suggests. Yet, there

remains a lack of longitudinal studies of formal mentoring relationships (Wanberg et al., 2003). Whereas previous studies have made claims regarding the relationships between variables associated with organizational mentoring, most of them have only considered the status of these relationships at one period in time (Godshalk & Sosik, 2007). However, given Kram's (1983, 1985) discussion of how mentoring relationships develop over time, it is likely that aspects of the relationship and the subsequent mentoring functions change accordingly.

Consequently, it is possible that previous researchers may have stressed snapshot associations between variables that may actually change over time, either strengthening or diminishing as the relationship between the mentor and protégé develops. In attempts to consider the change in these associations over time, Avery et al. (2008) and Turban et al. (2002) both theorized and tested models of mentor–protégé sex similarity and its impact on mentoring functions over the duration of the relationship. However, these authors collected all of their data at one time via cross-sectional methods, simply comparing longer duration mentoring dyads to dyads whose relationships had shorter durations at the time of data collection. Therefore, both of these studies were limited in that they did not capture the changes as they occurred within each dyad as the relationships developed over time. Furthermore, neither of these studies examined formal, organizationally sponsored mentoring relationships. Because formal mentoring relationships often have constraints upon them that may affect relationship development differently than in informal relationships (e.g., they are generally shorter in duration than informal relationships and the goals of the relationship are often specified at the initiation stage of the relationship) (Ragins & Cotton, 1999), a formal mentoring dyad may experience the continuity of mentoring phases at an abbreviated rate. Previous cross-sectional studies did not allow us to see how these condensed relationships evolve. In the present study, we explore the dynamism of mentor and dyadic influences by examining them in the beginning of the formal mentoring relationship and again after the formal relationship has ended.

In formal mentoring programs, cross-gender relationships are quite common despite some evidence suggesting that the homogeneous pairing might produce better results. This is caused in part by the great number of women who continue to enter the workplace compared with the male-dominated mentoring roles (Noe et al., 2002; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). Previous research (e.g., Feldman, Folks, & Turnley, 1999) has suggested that same-gender mentoring dyads produce higher levels of mentoring than cross-gender dyads. However, in a more recent study, Sosik and Godshalk (2000) found no difference between same-gender and cross-gender mentorship pairing in terms of mentoring functions provided and, in contrast, found that male mentor–female protégé dyads produced the highest level of vocational mentoring functions. Another discrepancy reigns between the findings of Appelbaum et al. (1994) and Ragins and Cotton (1999): Appelbaum and his colleagues (1994) found that the gender composition of mentoring dyads significantly affects the mentoring relationship such that a cross-gender relationship of a female mentor–male protégé relationship has the least beneficial outcomes (Armstrong et al., 2002). In contrast, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found no difference in psychosocial mentoring functions in same- versus cross-gender mentoring relationships (Noe et al., 2002). It is important to note that although protégés may remain unaware of all of the mentoring behaviors in which their mentors engage (Allen, 2007), most of these earlier studies on gender and gender composition were examined from the protégé's perspective.

Much of the reasoning behind the theories that gender-matched mentoring dyads may produce better results than cross-gender dyads draws on Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction theory, which suggests that people tend to be professionally attracted to others of the same gender. As such, a mentor who is responsible for counseling a protégé of the same sex is likely to provide an atmosphere of acceptance and confirmation to the less experienced individual and may be more comfortable modeling behaviors to this person than he or she would be with a protégé of the opposite gender. The atmosphere of acceptance and confirmation relate to psychosocial mentoring functions, whereas the modeling behaviors have to do with the function of role modeling. Therefore, we expect that same-gender mentoring dyads will be reported to have produced higher psychosocial and role modeling functions than cross-gender mentoring dyads.

Additionally, as Heilman (2001) points out, gender-stereotypic perceptions remain in the workplace, regardless of the growing number of women assuming various organizational roles. To this regard, male mentors may be especially prone to such stereotyping, as their perceptions of women and the male sex role associated with management combine to produce a perception of a woman's *lack of fit* (Heilman, 2001). Pulling from Erickson's concept of generativity (Erickson, 1963), entering into a mentoring relationship may allow a senior organizational member to redirect much of his or her energy toward the development of the younger member, who the mentor may perceive as a younger version of himself or herself (Kram, 1983). This may be more realistically accomplished with a younger member of the same gender, because the mentor would likely relate closer with a same-gender protégé than a protégé of the opposite gender. Ragins (1997) draws on sociological perspectives on power and minority group relations to propose that "relationships involving minority mentors will provide fewer career development functions than relationships involving majority mentors" (p. 504). However, given the findings of Feldman et al. (1999) and Appelbaum et al. (1994), we believe that female mentors will still provide more mentoring to female protégés than to male protégés, even if their total support is not as high as male mentors with male protégés. Consequently, same-gender mentoring dyads are also expected to produce higher levels of mentoring functions than cross-gender mentoring dyads.

However, this relationship is expected to dissipate over time, as the relationship develops. Avolio (1999) discusses how we must consider developmental relationships in terms of their temporal and situational contexts. Thus, the "snapshot" findings of associations between variables in mentoring relationships should be considered in terms of when in the relationship they occur. This view is consistent with Kram's (1985) four mentoring stages as well as additional studies that have proposed that the salience of surface-level dissimilarity characteristics tends to dissipate over time (e.g., Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Lankau et al., 2005). Thus, it makes sense that in the beginning of a mentoring relationship, surface-level differences such as gender may play a larger role in the mentoring relationship. Therefore, we expect that earlier in the relationship, homogeneity in terms of gender may have a more pronounced role in the support that the mentor provides, but as the relationship develops over time, gender composition will have a decreased or entirely nonsignificant impact on the mentor's perception of support he or she provides to the protégé. Once again, the longitudinal design of the present study allows us to test the change in this variable over time:

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between homogeneity in terms of gender and reports of mentoring support provided will become less pronounced as the formal mentoring relationship develops.

Mentor Gender, Gender Composition, and Time Spent Together

Whereas Hypothesis 2 expects that the amount of time spent together will have a greater impact on mentoring support as the relationship grows over time, and Hypothesis 3 expects that gender homogeneity will have a decreased impact on mentoring support as the relationship grows, we now consider how these variables interact with one another. Specifically, we are interested in whether time together relates differently to male and female mentors' levels of mentoring support provided in same versus cross-gender mentoring relationships. We are interested in exploring the experiences of male and female mentors in more detail by examining how time spent together may vary depending on the composition of the relationship. Previous research has demonstrated the importance of communication frequency and degree of interaction on mentoring and also suggested that female protégés may use the relationship more effectively (Allen, 2007). We wanted to determine whether there are differences in how male mentors and female mentors provide mentoring functions in their time spent with protégés and, more specifically, whether there is variation when mentoring same-gender or different-gender protégés. Hence, we will examine the three-way interaction between mentor gender, gender composition, and time spent together. The following research question is proposed:

Research question: Is there a difference between the interaction effect of gender homogeneity and time spent together on the provision of mentoring for male versus female mentors?

Mentor Satisfaction with the Formal Mentoring Program

Previous studies have shown that the extent of mentoring functions provided by a mentor is related to *protégé* satisfaction with the program. However, few studies have examined whether a mentor's perceptions of the support he or she provided affect his or her own satisfaction with the program. Wanberg et al. (2003) note that formal mentoring program success depends in part on the motivation of experienced organizational members to participate as mentors in the program. Furthermore, it is clear from previous studies that mentors serve a key role in ensuring the continuation of knowledge within organizations (Allen, 2003; Kram & Hall, 1996). Involvement in a mentoring relationship has been shown to have important career development implications not only for protégés but for mentors as well (cf. Allen, 2003; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kram, 1985; Scandura, 1992; Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991).

The relationship between mentoring others and the development of one's own career has been discussed at length in the literatures of both career theory (e.g., Feldman, 1988; Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2000; Kram, 1985) and life stage theory (e.g., Erickson,

1963; Levinson, 1986; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). Allen (2003) distinguishes between these two schools of thought by discussing how career theories explain the decision to mentor others as a function of one's (advanced) stage in his or her own career, whereas life stage theories suggest that mentoring others is a process that one undertakes at the midpoint in his or her life, when he or she actively reassesses career and life accomplishments. Both theories, however, appear to agree that people receive intrinsic benefits from passing along wisdom and knowledge to less experienced colleagues. Thus, according to these theories, the mentors not only are likely to affect protégé outcomes but also can themselves benefit from participating in a mentoring program. For instance, Kram (1985) builds on Erickson's (1963) discussion of generativity to suggest that the intrinsic benefit of providing guidance and support to the protégé is a mentor benefit all to itself. More tangible benefits of mentoring include greater job satisfaction (Burke, McKeen, & McKenna, 1994) and increased personal learning (Allen & Eby, 2003).

Furthermore, goal achievement has been found to affect one's satisfaction with the organization (Locke & Latham, 1994). Following this, it appears reasonable to expect that a mentor who has provided more support to his or her protégé may be more satisfied with the mentoring program, because he or she would perceive the program as having offered the opportunity to fulfill his or her goals associated with mentoring a less experienced individual. In this regard, there are two types of goals that a mentor may be able to fulfill via mentoring. The first, as discussed earlier, is the personal goal of generativity, which refers to a more experienced person contributing to the growth and education of a less experienced individual. Second, by committing to take part in the formal organizational mentoring program, an experienced worker displays some level of commitment to the organization and to the program. Thus, a formal mentor will have the goal of fulfilling his or her professional responsibility as a program participant, which will be associated with the goals that the organization has set for the formal program. As such, formal mentors will have both personal and professional goals related to the formal program that they would like to fulfill, the fulfillment of which will bring about satisfaction with the program. This logic is based on the assumption that protégés are receptive to the mentoring provided by the formal mentors because the protégés volunteer to participate in the formal organizational program and have thus indicated a desire to be mentored. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: A mentor's perception of his or her levels of mentoring support will be related to his or her satisfaction with the mentoring program.

Protégé Ratings of Mentor Effectiveness

Effective mentoring is that which brings about desired or intended results, and thus effective mentors are a necessary component of any mentoring system. In a formal mentoring relationship, a mentor would meet his or her intended results by successfully accomplishing the organization's goals such as meeting program requirements and making an effort toward protégé development. Desired results, as discussed here, represent those results that the protégés wish to receive from participation in the program. Previous studies have

shown that protégés' perceptions of the mentoring they receive are related to their ratings of mentor effectiveness (e.g., Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997; Ragins et al., 2000). However, the question remains as to whether there is a relationship between the protégé's ratings of mentor effectiveness and the mentor's perceptions of the mentoring support he or she provides. It is important that we consider the mentor's perception regarding this matter; when we collect protégés' perceptions of mentor effectiveness along with the mentors' perspectives of the mentoring support provided, the relationship no longer resides merely in the mind of the protégé. Rather, we are able to better pinpoint and identify the behaviors that the mentor knows that he or she has provided and examine them in light of the protégé's perceptions of whether those behaviors have resulted in effective mentoring.

Mentors who provide mentoring support for their protégés are more likely to be considered by those protégés to be effective. Specifically, certain observable mentor attributes are expected to result in protégé perceptions of effectiveness. The vocational support provided to a protégé is expected to relate to a protégé's perception that results for the relationship have been achieved. In addition, psychosocial and role modeling behaviors on the part of the mentor demonstrate a caring and affirmation that further contribute to such results. Hence, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 5: A mentor's perception of his or her levels of mentoring support will be related to protégé ratings of mentor effectiveness.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Respondents were involved in a formal mentoring program in the regional office of a large insurance company. The participants took part in a voluntary 9-month mentoring program that was designed to make mentors available to any employee who desired one. As stated by the organization, the purpose of the mentoring program was to enhance the job and organizational knowledge of the participating protégés. Protégés were asked to indicate topic areas that they would most like to learn about, and mentors were asked to indicate topic areas that they felt they had proficiency in. Mentor-protégé matches were ultimately made by an executive committee in the organization based on this information. Prior to engaging in mentoring activities, the mentors attended an orientating workshop describing their forthcoming responsibilities. Although the objective of the program was career-related, this workshop introduced both mentors and protégés to all aspects of mentoring, including vocational functions, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Because almost 98% of the mentors completed the training, we are able to rule out the orientation session as an alternate explanation for our findings (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006b). As part of the formal program requirements, mentors and protégés agreed to meet at a minimum once per month.

All mentoring program participants received an e-mail message from the human resource department inviting them to participate in two online survey questionnaires. The first survey was administered approximately 2 months into the 9-month formal program, and the second

survey was administered 1 month after the formal program had ended (approximately 8 months after the first wave of data were collected). Each online survey was available to participants for 3 weeks after it was announced. The initial sample contained 317 pairs of mentors and protégés; 175 mentors and 192 protégés responded to the survey for response rates of 55.2% and 60.6%, respectively. Matching mentor–protégé pairs resulted in 110 usable dyads to analyze. This sample of 110 dyadic pairs consisted of 57 male and 53 female mentors providing guidance to 40 male and 70 female protégés. Mentors had an average of 14.02 years of experience in the organization and were, on average, 39.74 years old. Approximately 67.35% of the mentors indicated that they were college graduates and 19.6% indicated that they had attended graduate school. Mentors reported that they had spent on average 7.35 hours total in mentoring activities with their formally assigned protégés between the initiation of the formal relationship and Time 1 data collection and 7.38 hours total from Time 1 to Time 2. At Time 1 the mentors and protégés had spent approximately 3 months together, and between Time 1 and Time 2 the mentors and protégés spent approximately 6 months together. In the second wave, there was approximately the same number of face-to-face meetings.

Measures

Mentor Organizational Commitment. The present study uses the shortened nine-item version of Porter and his colleagues' Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) ($\alpha = 0.89$). As it was applied here, the OCQ measures the level of commitment that the mentor has to the corporation for which he or she works. A sample question includes "I care about the fate of the organization." Organizational commitment was collected at Time 1.

Gender and Gender Composition. Mentor and protégé gender were reported at Time 1 and dummy coded as 1 for men and 2 for women. Gender composition was created with a dummy coded variable with 1 representing homogeneous gender dyads and 2 representing heterogeneous gender dyads. For the total sample, approximately 69% of mentors were a part of a homogeneous gender mentoring dyad, whereas approximately 31% mentored in gender heterogeneous gender dyads. This amounted to approximately 54% of the male mentors mentoring in homogeneous gender-relationships and 46% in heterogeneous gender dyads. With regard to the female mentors, approximately 85% mentored in gender-homogeneous relationships and 15% were in heterogeneous gender dyads.

Amount of Time Protégé and Mentor Spend Together. The amount of time the protégé and mentor spent together was collected at both Time 1 and Time 2, where mentors reported the total number of hours they spent with their respective protégés.

Mentoring Functions. Mentoring functions were reported at both Time 1 and Time 2 by the mentors. The mentors completed a 12-item measure based on Scandura and Ragins' (1993) mentoring functions scale. The response measurement used a Likert-type scale ranging from

1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Six items represented the latent variable vocational support (Time 1 $\alpha = 0.76$; Time 2 $\alpha = 0.74$), three items pertained to the latent concept psychosocial support (Time 1 $\alpha = 0.67$; Time 2 $\alpha = 0.63$), and three items represented the role modeling latent variable (Time 1 $\alpha = 0.78$; Time 2 $\alpha = 0.78$). Sample items include “I devoted special time and consideration to my protégé’s development,” representing the vocational function; “I was a source of social support for my protégé,” representing psychosocial support; and “I believe my protégé respects my ability to teach others,” representing the role modeling function.

Mentor Satisfaction with the Formal Mentoring Program. The mentors’ satisfaction with the formal mentoring program was collected at Time 2 from a three-item scale designed to capture this construct. A sample item includes “Overall, I am satisfied with the formal mentoring program in this organization.” Internal reliability for the measure was established at $\alpha = 0.84$.

Protégé-Rated Mentor Effectiveness. Protégé-rated mentor effectiveness was captured at Time 2 from a five-item measure based on the four-item Satisfaction With Mentor Scale used by Ragins and Cotton (1999), with the addition of the item “I had a high-quality relationship with my mentor.” An additional sample item was “My mentor has been effective in his or her role.” Internal reliability for the measure was established at $\alpha = 0.94$.

Control Variables

Mentor Tenure, Education, and Overall Satisfaction. Ragins and Cotton (1993) found that higher level organizational employees had a greater intention to mentor than their less experienced colleagues. Research has also shown that supervisors with more education perceive fewer barriers to mentoring and have greater intentions to serve as a mentor than those with less education (Allen et al., 2000). Given these reasons, we included mentor tenure and education level as control variables in our study. Mentor tenure was collected at Time 1 and was reported as the number of years the mentor had been employed in the organization. Education level was similarly reported at Time 1 but was reported as a categorical variable based on the highest degree the participant received. Last, we wanted to control for job satisfaction for the analysis of the dependent variable “mentor satisfaction with the formal mentoring program” to remove any effects of general job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was collected at Time 2 and was assessed by Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) 14-item Job Satisfaction Scale ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Results

Tests of Hypotheses

Means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alphas, and intercorrelations appear in Table 1: Hypotheses were tested using separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses. For Hypotheses 1 through 3 and our research question, the dependent variables were the three

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Intercorrelations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Mentor tenure	14.02	7.87	—																
2. Mentor education	4.14	.80	.06	—															
3. Mentor overall satisfaction	4.05	.48	.01	-.04	(.81)														
4. Mentor organizational commitment	4.21	.50	.01	-.084	.56** (.89)														
5a. Total time spent together (T1)	7.35	10.04	-.09	-.02	.09	.05	—												
5b. Total time spent together (T2)	7.38	7.04	.04	-.06	-.08	-.02	.35**	—											
6. Mentor gender	1.50	.50	.03	-.27**	-.12	.01	-.05	-.11	—										
7. Protégé's gender	1.67	.58	-.07	-.11	.08	.05	-.04	-.10	.39**	—									
8. Gender composition	1.31	.46	-.03	-.01	.17	.17	.10	-.11	-.31**	.07	—								
9. Vocational support (T1)	3.45	.59	-.00	.10	.052	.11	.24**	.31**	-.16**	-.08	-.19*	(.76)							
10. Psychosocial support (T1)	3.45	.75	.03	-.05	-.03	.02	.27**	.23*	.21**	.13	-.23*	.43**	(.67)						
11. Role modeling (T1)	4.05	.56	.20**	.07	-.08	.02	.17*	.18	-.02	-.19	-.20*	.50**	.43**	(.78)					
12. Vocational support (T2)	3.46	.55	-.01	.02	.02	.22*	.23*	.45**	-.06	.00	-.21	.65**	.38**	.36**	(.74)				
13. Psychosocial support (T2)	3.56	.72	.04	.12	-.11	.07	.26*	.26*	.14	.12	.03	.35**	.66**	.31**	.41**	(.63)			
14. Role modeling (T2)	4.06	.46	.08	-.01	.173	.29**	.39**	.30**	.10	-.00	-.08	.45**	.39**	.54**	.63**	.39**	(.78)		
15. Mentor satisfaction with formal program	3.81	.66	.01	-.02	.21	.23*	.14	.32**	.18	.04	-.12	.24*	.26*	.32**	.46**	.21*	.60**	(.84)	
16. Protégé's rating of mentor effectiveness	3.84	.96	-.06	.21	.02	-.01	.36**	.23	.27*	-.07	-.01	.21	.21	.44**	.25	.30*	.32*	.32*	(.94)

Notes: T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2. Two-tailed tests of significance are reported. Standardized regression coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

mentoring functions (vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling), as appropriate. To examine these first three hypotheses and to answer our research question, we entered our control variables (mentor tenure and education) in Step 1; mentor organizational commitment in Step 2; total time spent together in Step 3; mentor gender and gender composition in Step 4; the interaction of mentor gender and gender composition in Step 5; and the three-way interaction of mentor gender, gender composition, and time spent together in Step 6. For Hypotheses 4 and 5, the dependent variables were mentor satisfaction with the formal program and protégé-rated mentor effectiveness, respectively. In these final two equations, the first five steps remained the same, but in Step 6, the three-way interaction was replaced with the three mentoring functions of vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Tables 2 and 3 display the beta values and the change in R^2 values from the multiple regression runs.

The results showed that mentors' level of organizational commitment was significantly related to their role modeling activities at the end of the relationship ($\beta = 0.26, p = .04$); this finding offers partial support for Hypothesis 1. Contrary to our expectations, organizational commitment of the mentor did not significantly affect the mentor's provision of vocational or psychosocial support.

As predicted in Hypothesis 2, time spent together was related to the extent of mentoring at both time periods, and its relationship toward all three mentoring functions became more pronounced as the mentoring relationship developed (Time 1 vocational $\beta = 0.24, p = .02$; psychosocial $\beta = 0.28, p < .01$; role modeling $\beta = 0.19, p = .06$; Time 2 vocational $\beta = 0.60, p < .01$; psychosocial $\beta = 0.50, p < .01$; role modeling $\beta = 0.54, p < .01$). To determine the degree to which these relationships increased as the mentoring relationship developed, we examined the difference between the regression coefficients at Time 1 versus Time 2 using a t test (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Results indicate that as the mentoring relationship developed over time, the amount of total time the mentor spent with his or her protégé had a significantly greater impact on vocational, psychosocial, and role modeling functions than it did earlier in the relationship (vocational $t = -4.67, p < .01$; psychosocial $t = -3.32, p < .01$; role modeling $t = -3.27, p < .01$).

We also ran a set of post hoc polynomial regression analyses to explore how the congruence or consistency of time spent together over the course of the formal relationship influenced the extent of mentoring reported by formal mentors at the end of the relationship. We used the procedures outlined by Edwards (1994). We ran separate analyses for each dependent variable: vocational support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. We entered the time spent together reported by the mentors in number of hours at Time 1 period (2 months into the relationship) and Time 2 (end of relationship) in the first step, the quadratic terms and interaction in the second step, and the cubed and interaction terms in the third step. The second and third steps are used to detect nonlinear relationships. There were significant linear results for vocational support and psychosocial support. For vocational support, the slopes for lines of congruence and incongruence were significant at $p < .05$. An examination of the estimated response surface showed that consistently high amounts of time spent together throughout the relationship (both Time 1 and Time 2) were associated with higher levels of vocational support provided by mentors than consistently low amounts of time spent together. In addition, greater vocational support was provided

Table 2
Regression Results for Mentoring Functions

Predictors	Vocational Support (T1)		Psychosocial Support (T1)		Role Modeling (T1)	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Mentor tenure	-.01	.01	.03	.00	.20*	.05
Mentor education	.10		-.05		.06	
Mentor organizational commitment	.12	.02	.01	.00	.03	.00
Total hours spent together (T1)	.24*	.06*	.28**	.08**	.19†	.04†
Mentor gender	-.23*	.10**	.15	.09**	-.08	.05†
Gender composition	-.32**		-.22*		-.24*	
Two-way interaction of mentor gender and gender composition	-.10	.00	-.77*	.04*	.13	.00
Three-way interaction of mentor gender, gender composition, and hours spent together (T1)	-.63*	.04*	-.40	.02	-.02	.00

Predictors	Vocational Support (T2)		Psychosocial Support (T2)		Role Modeling (T2)	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Mentor tenure	.01	.01	.10	.04	.14	.02
Mentor education	.07		.17		-.03	
Mentor organizational commitment	.20	.04	.01	.00	.26*	.06*
Total hours spent together (T2)	.60***	.35**	.49***	.23**	.54***	.27**
Mentor gender	-.02	.04	.23	.04	.09	.01
Gender composition	-.20		.10		-.02	
Two-way interaction of mentor gender and gender composition	-.15	.00	-.60	.03	.05	.00
Three-way interaction of mentor gender, gender composition, and hours spent together (T2)	.33	.01	.80*	.04*	.32	.01

Notes: T1 = Time 1; n = 161; T2 = Time 2; n = 93. Two-tailed tests of significance are reported. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

when time together was higher in the end of the relationship (low in beginning) than when time together was higher in the beginning of the relationship (low at end). For psychosocial support, the slope for the line of congruence was significant but the slope for the line of

Table 3
Regression Results for Mentor Program Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Predictors	Mentor Satisfaction with Program		Protégé-Rated Mentor Effectiveness	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Mentor tenure	.03	.05	-.07	.05
Mentor education	-.00		.22	
Mentor job satisfaction	.230	.063	—	
Mentor organizational commitment	.15	.02	.01	.00
Total hours spent together (T2)	.34**	.12**	.24	.06
Mentor gender	.24 [†]	.06	-.21	.04
Gender composition	-.04		.03	
Two-way interaction of mentor gender and gender composition	-1.20**	.10**	.10	.00
Vocational support (T2)	.20	.21**	-.17	.20*
Psychosocial support (T2)	-.38**		.46*	
Role modeling (T2)	.41***		.37 [†]	

Notes: T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2. Two-tailed tests of significance are reported. Standardized regression coefficients are reported. Mentor Satisfaction: $n = 93$; Mentor Effectiveness: $N = 62$

[†] $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

incongruence was not significant. These results showed that high amounts of time spent together at Time 1 and Time 2 were associated with significantly greater psychosocial support provided by mentors in the relationship than consistently low amounts of time spent together at Time 1 and Time 2. The polynomial results provide additional support for the importance of the quantity of time mentors and protégés spend together in formal programs and the consistency of high levels of interaction time across the relationship as well as the particular importance of interaction time later in the relationship for vocational support.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that the positive relationship between homogeneity in terms of gender and reports of mentoring support provided would become less pronounced as the formal mentoring relationship developed. This hypothesis was mostly supported. At Time 1, the main effect for gender composition was significant for all three mentoring functions such that cross-gender relationships reported less vocational support ($\beta = -0.32$, $p < .01$), psychosocial support ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .034$), and role modeling ($\beta = -0.24$, $p = .023$). However, at Time 2, gender composition was not significantly related to any of the mentoring functions. We used the same procedures by Cohen and Cohen (1983) described above to examine whether the regression coefficients were significantly different from one another between Time 1 and Time 2. The t -test results (one-tailed) indicated that the regression coefficients for the effect of gender composition on psychosocial support ($\beta = -0.22$ vs. 0.10 , $t = -2.23$, $p < .03$) and role modeling ($\beta = -0.24$ vs. -0.02 , $t = -1.70$, $p < .05$)

differed significantly. The results did not support a significant difference between the regression coefficients for the effect of gender composition on vocational support at Time 1 and Time 2 ($\beta = -0.32$ vs. -0.20 , $t = -.99$). These results indicate that gender dissimilarity played a significantly greater role at Time 1 in the mentoring relationship for the provision of psychosocial support and role modeling than at Time 2.

To explore the research question of whether there are differences between men and women in how time spent together influences mentoring functions in homogeneous and heterogeneous relationships, we entered a three-way interaction into the regression equations. At Time 1, the three-way interaction of mentor gender, gender composition, and time spent together was significant only for vocational support ($\beta = -0.63$, $p = .03$). Separate regression equations were then calculated for male and female mentors. The results indicated a nonsignificant two-way interaction between time spent together and gender composition for male mentors but a significant two-way interaction for female mentors ($\beta = -2.94$, $p < .01$). For male mentors, the impact of time together on mentoring functions did not differ between those who mentored male protégés and those who mentored female protégés. However, for female mentors, the positive relationship between time spent together and vocational support was stronger for those mentoring female protégés than those mentoring male protégés. At Time 2, the three-way interaction was significant only for psychosocial support ($\beta = 0.80$, $p = .04$). Again, separate regression analyses were then calculated for male mentors and female mentors. There was a nonsignificant two-way interaction between time spent together and gender composition for male mentors and a significant two-way interaction for female mentors ($\beta = 2.73$, $p = .02$). However, the positive sign of this beta indicates a different pattern of relationships for this two-way interaction than that reported above for vocational support. The impact of time together on psychosocial support was significantly stronger for female mentors with male protégés than female mentors with female protégés. Plots of these interactions are displayed in Figure 1.

The final two analyses considered mentor satisfaction with the formal mentoring program and protégé-rated mentor effectiveness, respectively. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported given that role modeling was significantly associated with mentor satisfaction with the program ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .01$) but vocational support was not. Contrary to our hypothesis, psychosocial support was negatively related to mentor satisfaction with the program ($\beta = -0.38$, $p < .01$). However, the zero-order correlation (see Table 1) between psychosocial support and mentor satisfaction was significant and in the positive direction, as hypothesized. These mixed findings raised the possibility that a curvilinear relationship may exist between psychosocial support and mentor satisfaction with the program. Therefore, we ran an additional set of regression analyses in which we tested for a curvilinear effect, following the procedure outlined by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). The result of this analysis did not support a curvilinear relationship between psychosocial support and mentor satisfaction. Given that a curvilinear relationship does not exist, this positive correlation and negative beta weight indicate that psychosocial support is operating as a negative suppression variable in this case (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Furthermore, although not hypothesized, time spent together positively related to mentor satisfaction with the program ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .01$). In addition, the two-way interaction of mentor gender and gender composition was significantly related to mentor program satisfaction ($\beta = -1.20$, $p < .01$). The two-way interaction shows that male mentors

Figure 1
Interaction Plots for Mentoring Functions

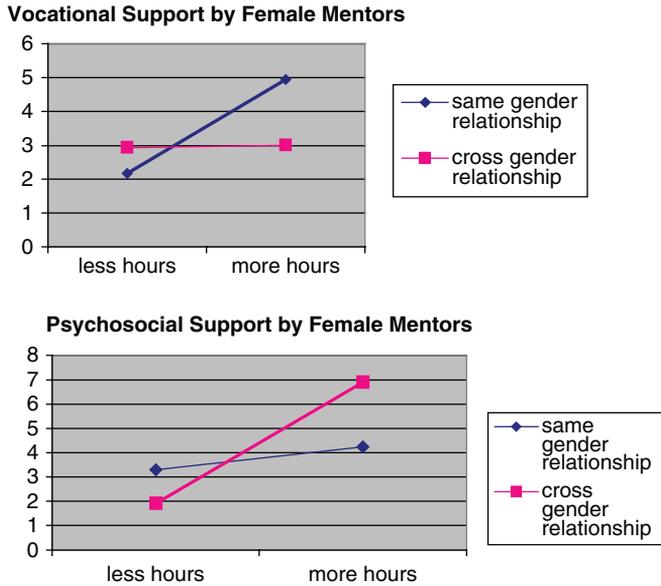
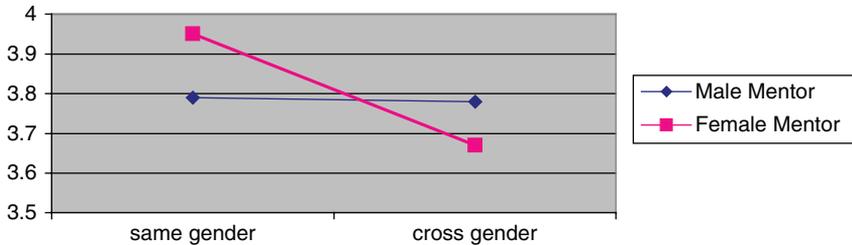


Figure 2
Interaction Plots for Mentor Satisfaction with the Program



in same-gender dyads indicated similar levels of satisfaction with the formal mentoring program (mean = 3.79) as did male mentors in cross-gender dyads (mean = 3.78); yet female mentors in same-gender dyads reported greater satisfaction with the formal program (mean = 3.95) than did female mentors in cross-gender dyads (mean = 3.67). A plot of this interaction is shown in Figure 2. However, although the plot confirms the directions of this interaction, the *t* test between the means for female mentors in same-gender and those in cross-gender

dyads was not significant, most likely because our sample size of women in cross-gender dyads does not offer us the power to detect this effect.

Findings for protégé-rated mentor effectiveness (Hypothesis 5) also partially supported our expectations: Psychosocial support significantly relates to effectiveness ($\beta = 0.46, p = .03$), role modeling has a marginal relationship with effectiveness ($\beta = 0.37, p = .07$), and vocational support does not relate to effectiveness as rated by protégés. Thus, mentors who reported providing psychosocial support and role modeling had protégés who rated them as more effective, whereas vocational support was unrelated to protégé-rated effectiveness.

We also conducted post hoc polynomial regression analyses to explore the effects of consistency in the provision of mentoring functions across the two time periods of the formal relationship on mentor satisfaction and protégé-rated effectiveness of the mentor. We followed the procedures by Edwards (1994). The independent variable measures (each mentoring function) were first centered on the midpoint of their scales to reduce multicollinearity and enable easier interpretation of congruence. Separate equations were calculated for each mentoring function on the two dependent variables (a total of six equations). For each equation, the Time 1 and Time 2 levels of each respective mentoring function were entered on the first step, the quadratic terms were entered on the second step, and cubed terms were entered on the third step to examine whether nonlinear effects were present. Four of the six equations showed significant results for linear effects. There was a significant linear effect for vocational support at Time 1 and Time 2 on mentors' satisfaction with the program. The slopes for the lines of congruence and incongruence were significant at $p < .05$. The results showed that reports of consistently high amounts of vocational support at Time 1 and Time 2 were associated with significantly greater mentor satisfaction than consistently low amounts of vocational support provided at Time 1 and Time 2. Also, high vocational support provided at Time 2 with low vocational support at Time 1 was associated with significantly greater mentor satisfaction than high vocational support at Time 1 with low vocational support at Time 2. The linear effects for psychosocial support and role modeling on mentor satisfaction were similar in that the slopes for the lines of congruence were significant but the slopes for the lines of incongruence were not significant. These results indicated that there were significant differences in mentor satisfaction for mentors who provided consistently high levels of psychosocial support and role modeling over the duration of the relationship compared with mentors who provided consistently low levels of these mentor functions. The only significant finding for protégés' ratings of mentor effectiveness was a linear relationship for psychosocial support for the effect of congruence. The results showed that consistently high psychosocial support across time was associated with higher ratings of mentor effectiveness by protégés than consistently low psychosocial support across time. Taken together, the polynomial results emphasize the importance of consistency in the delivery of high levels of mentoring support for positive outcomes for the mentor and protégé.

Discussion

A number of items distinguish the present study from the majority of scientific investigations of mentoring relationships. This study builds on mentor-centric data to examine both

main effects and interactions across two time periods within a formal mentoring program. Specifically, within a formal program, we analyze the effects that mentors' organizational commitment, the amount of time mentors and protégés spend together, gender, and gender composition have on the extent of mentoring support provided to assigned protégés. Furthermore, we examine two outcomes of the mentoring functions: mentor satisfaction with the formal program and protégé-rated mentor effectiveness. Our initial results demonstrated that mentors with higher levels of commitment to the organization put forth more effort in serving as role models to their protégés than did mentors with lower levels of organizational commitment. As such, organizational mentoring programs may benefit from identifying employees with high organizational commitment to serve as formal mentors.

Furthermore, although our finding that the amount of time a mentor and protégé spent together affects the degree of mentoring provided may appear rather intuitive, the results of our longitudinal analysis reveal that the degree to which the time together affects mentoring grows as the relationship develops over time. This speaks to the importance of accountability in formal mentoring programs. For example, it appears important for program coordinators to design programs in such a way that the coordinators continually monitor the amount of time mentors and protégés spend together throughout the different natural stages of their formal relationship. Program coordinators who make decisions without considering the stage of the mentor and protégé's relationship may arrive at their decision prematurely, without having the opportunity to account for any potentially positive change that could occur in the relationship over even a relatively short period of time.

Our study further found that the negative effect of cross-gender relationships on mentoring dissipates as the relationship develops over time. Similarly, the main effect of female mentors not offering the same level of vocational support dissolves over time. These findings highlight the importance of considering the time length of a formal mentoring program. For example, the present study followed a 9-month program. Results indicate that after more than 3 months into the program, some pairs may have still been using time together inefficiently and responding to surface-level differences such as gender. Such findings might appear disheartening to program coordinators who recognize the time limitations that generally bind a formal mentoring relationship. However, our data collected 8 months later tell a different story: It appears that the negative effects dissipated as the mentoring relationship evolved and that mentors and protégés were able to spend time more efficiently together and overcome cross-gender differences after their relationship ended its initiation stage and entered that of cultivation. In this situation, information that a program coordinator collects after 4 or 5 months could differ significantly from that collected after 9 or 10 months. Regardless, the 9-month program appears to have offered sufficient time for the pairs to overcome their differences and develop cultivating relationships. Thus, we caution formal mentoring program coordinators to consider the time length of the programs they design (in favor of longer programs) and carefully consider any intermediary information they collect as the mentoring pairs develop their relationships.

Our study also highlights positive news in the lack of significant differences found for male mentors in comparing homogeneous and heterogeneous relationships. Male mentors assigned to male protégés provided similar levels of mentoring support and had similar levels of satisfaction with the formal program as did male mentors assigned to female protégés. The

positive effects of time spent together on mentoring functions were also similar across groups. Hence, we did not find that gender of the protégé mattered for male mentors in a formal program. However, the results of our study showed that female mentors provided differential levels of mentoring support depending on whether the protégé was same in gender or different. Female mentors provided more vocational support to female protégés when they spent more time together than did female mentors in cross-gender relationships. However, these same mentors provided significantly less psychosocial support to their female protégés as time spent together increased than did female mentors paired with male protégés. Therefore, the effects of time spent together on female mentors' provision of mentoring to same- and cross-gender protégés differed for vocational versus psychosocial functions.

Our findings that female mentors provided greater vocational support to female protégés and that female mentors in these gender-homogeneous relationships were more satisfied with the program may relate to their desire to further the careers of women in a traditionally male-dominated field. The organization that served as the sample in this study was typical of most organizations, where men are more prevalent in higher positions. Although approximately 63% of the organization is female, the majority of these women are in lower level staff/support positions (59.65%). In contrast, only 10.8% of the male employees at this organization are in staff/support positions. Furthermore, previous research has suggested that women may perceive or experience barriers to obtaining a mentor or may lack willingness to mentor others (Allen, 2007; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Thus, female leaders in an organization may have greater motivation to provide effective mentoring to junior-ranked women in an organization in an effort to reduce barriers to advancement that they themselves may have experienced earlier in their career. Similarly, female protégés paired with female mentors may identify more positively with their mentors and feel more comfortable relying on their mentors as a resource and source of support.

A tentative explanation for the finding that female mentors offered more psychosocial support to male protégés as time spent together increased than did female mentors paired with female protégés may be that female mentors in same-gender dyads did not believe that they needed to continue to offer a large amount of psychosocial support due to their perceptions of a strong gender-related bond. In contrast, female mentors in cross-gender dyads may have felt the need to offer continuously high levels of psychosocial support to their male protégés in an attempt to proactively lessen any perceived difficulties associated with their gender dissimilarities. Although we tested this interaction as a research question and thus had no *a priori* hypotheses regarding these relationships, our results demonstrate a need for future research to consider the effects of gender and relationship dynamics within formal mentoring relationships. Researchers should more closely examine the dynamic of same- versus cross-gender mentoring relationships over time to learn whether men and women differ in their mentoring approaches in formal programs.

The last part of our study considered two important outcomes of formal mentoring: mentor satisfaction with the program and protégé-rated mentor effectiveness. Results indicated that mentor satisfaction with the formal mentoring program was directly related to the mentors' perceptions of role modeling functions they provided but not to the degree of vocational support they reported. However, the negative suppression effect on the relationship between psychosocial support and mentor satisfaction with the mentoring program makes it impossible for us to meaningfully interpret the relationship between these two variables. Rather,

because negative suppression is likely to come about under the condition of a missing unknown predictor variable, it appears vital that researchers consider additional factors that may simultaneously affect mentor program satisfaction. Items for consideration include the level of emotional labor involved in providing psychosocial support to a protégé, mentor frustration with formal program constraints, and the degree to which individual mentors view psychosocial support as an in-role activity associated with their formal mentor position.

Last, results of our final analysis indicate that mentor effectiveness, as rated by the protégés, was related significantly to psychosocial support and marginally to role modeling but not to vocational support. These results indicate that although protégés may seek vocational support as an outcome of the relationship, it is the mentors' behaviors such as listening, communicating, and providing opportunities for identity development that are most influential. In this instance, mentor behaviors such as listening, communicating, and providing opportunities for acceptance are expected to increase the degree to which protégés perceive that their mentors are responsible for bringing about the desired or intended results and hence rate the mentors as particularly effective in performing their duties.

Results of the present study support the implementation of structured formal mentoring programs within organizations. For example, the finding that the mentor's own personal commitment to the organization did not affect the degree to which he or she provided vocational or psychosocial support to the protégé may indicate between-group homogeneity due to the constraints imposed by following a standardized formal mentoring structure. Typically, formal mentoring programs establish a specific purpose for the mentoring relationship, such as increased organizational knowledge or technical training, so the expectations for vocational outcomes are more explicit. This same "standardized format" reasoning may also be applied to the findings that the mentors' tenure, education, and gender did not affect their provision of mentoring functions on their own accord (with the exception of female mentors at Time 1, as discussed earlier). These findings may hold particular salience to managers tasked with implementing a formal mentoring program, because although it is likely that they might look for the organization's most seasoned or tenured employees to act as formal mentors, we have found that this particular characteristic makes no difference in mentors' endowment of mentoring support.

Study Limitations and Research Directions

Limitations. Despite its strengths, the present study is constrained by a number of limitations. We used intact mentor-protégé pairs in our study in order to collect data from the protégés. This limited our sample size, which decreased the power to detect significant relationships, particularly in our analyses where we examined the two outcome variables. Additional research with larger sample sizes is needed to confirm the findings in our study. Additionally, the present study represents the case of a single organization, so future replication in additional settings is warranted before these findings can be generalized.

Another limitation was the relatively low internal consistency reliabilities for the mentoring scales. The mentoring items were based on a scale that was originally created from the protégé's perspective and modified in wording to represent the mentor's actions. The mentoring literature lacks studies of construct validity of the various mentoring scales. One study that

examined convergence in mentors' and protégé's ratings of mentoring functions found low to moderate correspondence (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Further measurement work is needed to determine whether mentors identify a different set of activities and behaviors than protégés. Existing measures, as they are used in the mentor-centric mentoring literature, tend to only capture mentors' perceptions of the support that they provide and do not focus exclusively on mentor behaviors. For example, these measurement instruments often ask mentors to report their observations of protégé behaviors associated with mentoring functions. Development of a measure to specifically and exclusively capture mentor behaviors would be immensely useful to the field of mentoring research.

Similarly, although some form of the mentoring function scales that we used in the present study have been correspondingly used in most other studies of formal mentoring (e.g., Allen et al., 2006a; Armstrong et al., 2002; Hirschfeld, Thomas, & Lankau, 2006), these scales were originally developed to study informal mentoring relationships. Research has not yet examined whether it is reasonable to expect that these same mentoring functions are integrally provided in formal mentoring relationships. Future research is warranted to examine the possibility that the mentoring functions provided in formal mentoring programs may be qualitatively dissimilar to the functions provided in informal relationships.

A further limitation to the present study is that one of the formal program constraints was that the organization required participants in the formal mentoring program to meet at least once per month, and this constraint adds a degree of range restriction to the "amount of time spent together" variable. In addition, whereas this study examined the mentors' satisfaction with the formal mentoring program, we did not capture their satisfaction with their protégés. Exploring this question may lead to different types of hypotheses than those proposed in the present study and could prove useful in the further development of formal mentoring programs. A similar constraint associated with the formal nature of the mentoring program was that the mentors were aware that providing career-related support was the stated purpose of the program. However, 98% of the mentors attended an orientation workshop that introduced them to all aspects of mentoring, including vocational functions, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Given that the vast majority of mentors were thus made aware that vocational, psychosocial support, and role modeling are all expected aspects of mentoring, this reduces the likelihood that any difference in variance is attributable to their training. Regardless, the possibility exists that although the variance was normally distributed, the career-related goal of the program may have accounted for why we failed to capture variables that we can associate with differences in vocational support.

A paucity of research has included female mentors paired with male protégés (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007), and although our study adds to the small number of empirical analyses that include this type of cross-gender pairing, our sample of female mentors with male protégés was the smallest of the four possible gender matches. Therefore, although we believe our study provides an important step toward exploring the dynamics of cross-gender formal relationships, we call for future researchers to specifically collect more data on female mentors paired with male protégés.

Future Research. The present study offers a new outlook on mentoring relationships as they evolve over time. We have offered initial evidence that over time, formally matched mentor-protégé pairs tend to overcome surface-level differences to become more effective.

Replication of our findings may help to generalize this finding and shed additional light on the ways in which formal mentoring dyads evolve over time. Moreover, although the two data collection periods of the present study were sufficient to test our hypotheses regarding change over time for both the "time spent together" variable and the gender composition variable, future research with additional incremental time periods could determine more accurately the points at which the time spent together and the gender composition of the dyad become begin to become more and less pronounced toward mentoring functions, respectively. Such studies would allow us to more accurately map the life cycle phases of formal mentoring relationships.

With regard to time spent together, researchers should examine not only the total time the members spend together but also the content of that time. For example, the time together may consist of coaching, mentors listening to protégés' concerns, or protégés shadowing their mentors. Each mentoring activity may have a unique impact on the degree of total mentoring provided. As Jablin (2001) points out, it is possible that the quality of the time spent together may have a greater impact on the mentoring relationship than the quantity of time; thus, researchers may wish to consider the quality of the time that protégés spend with their mentors in addition to the amount of time they spend together.

Results of our research question indicate that future research is warranted on the three-way interaction between mentor gender, gender composition of the dyad, and the amount of time spent together in developmental activities. Although we found that the impact of time together on psychosocial support was significantly stronger for female mentors with male protégés than for female mentors with female protégés, we had no a priori hypothesis to expect this specific result. Therefore, we call for research to examine the relationship between these three variables and their impact on the provision of mentoring support.

Some findings in the present study were somewhat surprising considering the theory behind the hypothesized relationships, such as the nonsignificant finding for vocational support affecting protégé-rated mentor effectiveness. We hope that some of these surprises may be due to the discrepancy between the formal nature of the mentoring relationships in the present study and the informal mentoring upon which many of the present theories have been built. With this as the case, it is possible that after completing the mentorship training, the participants carried away a sense of the value associated with vocational support but not an awareness of the importance of providing psychosocial support or role modeling. Future research comparing the mentor-centric characteristics examined herein across formal and informal mentoring programs may help to substantiate the argument that the findings are attributable to the formal nature of the mentoring relationships examined in the present study.

We call for research to further examine the way in which Kram's (1983) mentoring phases pertain to formal mentoring relationships. Given the nature of formal programs, we already know how and when the initiation phase (Phase 1) begins, and we likewise know when the separation phase (Phase 3) occurs. The present study offers initial insight into how the initiation phase continues beyond introductions and how the cultivation phase (Phase 2) manifests within the constraints of a formal mentoring program. However, more work is needed to extend our understanding of what actually occurs in formal mentoring meetings that affects cultivation of a positive mentoring relationship. Kram and Bragar (1992) suggested that formal programs ideally act as a platform on which informal relationships can develop. Research

designed to empirically examine the ways in which formally paired mentors and protégés redefine their relationship after the conclusion of the formal program (Phase 4) could provide insight into this final phase of the mentoring lifecycle in formal programs.

Implications for Practice

The present study shows indirect support for the implementation and use of formal mentoring programs within an organization and sets in motion a number of suggestions for organization leaders who wish to execute a formal program. For example, the study suggests that over time, an organization may expect to find equally effective vocational, psychosocial, and role modeling support provided by its formal mentors, regardless of their commitment to the organization, their gender, or the gender composition of the mentoring dyad. Admittedly, it is possible that other mentor characteristics not examined in the present study may equally affect the mentor's provision of mentoring throughout the duration of the relationship. However, our findings suggest that coordinators of formal mentoring program should design their programs with sufficient duration to allow the mentor–protégé relationships to evolve beyond the effects of the mentor and dyadic characteristics examined in this study. Additional evidence for this suggestion comes from our finding that mentors tend to use their mentoring time more efficiently at later stages in the relationship. Hence, sufficient program length may allow the pairs to overcome their initial difficulties and use the time together more efficiently. Our findings also illustrate the importance of structuring formal programs in such a way as to include opportunities for the pairs to continue to contact one another over the duration of the relationship.

However, if some poorly functioning pairs drop out early because of the difficulties associated with early stages of formal mentoring, they may never have the chance for the relationship to come to fruition. Thus, we further suggest that organizations take active steps to improve mentor–protégé interactions at early stages of relationship development. Our foremost suggestion is that program coordinators take advantage of the organization's formal endorsement of the program by designing exercises, development activities, and opportunities for feedback into their programs so that they might detect early dyadic difficulties that could lead to voluntary termination of the relationship. By monitoring the relationships and encouraging feedback from both mentors and protégés, an informed organization may be able to design intervention programs aimed at helping the members overcome initial difficulties.

More specifically, program coordinators may want to pay particular attention to the amount of psychosocial support and role modeling that are provided early in the relationship. When compiling a list of the numerous challenges faced by members of cross-gender mentoring dyads, McKeen and Bujaki (2007, p. 205) cite Kram (1985), noting that these challenges “include the absence of role-modeling, intimacy concerns, gender stereotyping that limits individual growth, public scrutiny of the relationship, and possible peer resentment.” The items on this list of challenges are quite representative of psychosocial support and role modeling. Thus, formal programs that offer mentors and protégés forums in which to proactively work toward improving these types of interactions may help to speed the process of overcoming surface-level differences.

Mentoring program coordinators should note which aspects of mentoring appear to relate to mentor satisfaction with the formal program and protégé ratings of mentor effectiveness. Specifically, in the present study, where vocational support was the primary purpose of the mentoring program, mentors' reports of vocational support provided did not appear to relate to their satisfaction with the program nor to the protégé's perceptions that their mentors were effective. Conversely, mentors who reported providing greater levels of role modeling were more satisfied with the program. In addition, mentors who provided greater levels of both psychosocial support and role modeling were rated as more effective by their protégés. This suggests that in a formal mentoring program where all of the mentoring relationships tend to revolve around an organizational desire for advancing protégé careers, the greatest benefits may come from supplementary social developmental interaction rather than from direct vocational support.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that formal mentoring programs of at least 9 months in length may offer a venue in which mentors of varying backgrounds can offer efficient support to protégés of varying backgrounds, regardless of differences in mentor education or tenure, or of the gender homogeneity of the dyad. Furthermore, the present study has found that in a formal mentoring program in which protégé vocational support is the explicit goal, psychosocial support and role modeling may play more substantial roles than vocational support in the experiences that both mentors and protégés have in the program. Results of this study reinforce the importance of examining mentoring relationships over time, particularly in the context of a formal mentoring relationship. We hope this study sparks further research on how formal mentoring relationships are cultivated over time and on the effectiveness of these organizationally endorsed programs.

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