Personality Factors Impact on Success in the Mentor-Protégé Relationship

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Purpose: Based on theory from the literature, an inventory for perceived success was created to analyse the relationships between personality factors and mentoring outcomes.

Study design/methodology/approach: A written questionnaire was developed incorporating the Big Five Personality Dimensions and the inventory for perceived success. The analysis examined influencing patterns between personality factors and mentoring outcome.

Findings: The model predicting relationships between personality factors and mentoring outcome was supported. Additional relationships were discovered between perceived success and both age discrepancy and gender constellations.

Originality/value: The study provides a three-perspective framework for analysing mentoring relationships: the personality discrepancy between participants, each individual's personality separately, and an individual's personality in relation to their counterpart's perception of mentoring outcomes.

Keywords: personality, mentoring, knowledge, management.

Introduction

The impact of personality factors on mentoring effectiveness represents an important yet understudied area in organizational research. While questions about this relationship have been raised by numerous academic researchers (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000; Arora 2020; Deng, Gulseren, and Turner, 2022; Eby, McManus, Simon, Russell, 2000; Hackett, Esposito and O'Halloran, 1990; Kumari, Ali, Batool, Cioca & Abbas 2022; Tokar, Fischer, & Subich, 1998; Turban & Dougherty, 1994) and practitioners (Lee, Turban & Dougherty, 2000), few studies have systematically examined how personality factors might explain observed differences in mentoring effectiveness.

The significance of this inquiry is highlighted by findings that mentoring relationships vary considerably in quality and can sometimes be dysfunctional (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). For instance, Eby et al. (2000) identified negative experiences in 84 of 240 mentoring relationships studied, with dyad mismatches, distancing behaviors, and manipulative conduct accounting for 75% of all reported negative experiences. Furthermore, Ragins et al. (2001) discovered that satisfaction with the relationship explained more variance in job and career attitudes than either the type of mentor or even the presence of a mentoring relationship itself.

If the mentor-protégé relationship is *"as fragile as any personal relationships one enters into"* (Scandura, 1998), then discrepancies in personality structures within the mentoring dyad may introduce significant stress into these professional partnerships. From an interactionalist perspective, while acknowledging the ongoing debate between personality and situational determinants of behavior (Furnham, 1992), it's important to recognize that social situations themselves are partly determined by the personalities of the interacting individuals (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985; Pervin, 1984).

Variation in mentoring effectiveness as an effect of personality factors

Research examining personality factors and mentoring has primarily focused on specific aspects of mentoring relationships. Some studies have investigated only one side of the relationship, typically the mentor (Bozionelos, 2004; Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Polychroniou, and Kostopoulos, 2014), while others have concentrated on formal mentoring structures (Menges, 2016). This limited scope has left gaps in our understanding of how personality dynamics within the mentoring dyad influence effectiveness.

The present study investigates the relationships between perceived success of the mentoring dyad and the personalities of participants. We address three key questions: "What is the correlation between similarity in personality traits and perceived success in the dyad?", "Are the relationships between perceived success and the personality of the mentor and protègè separate?", and "What is the relationship of perceived success of the mentor in the relationship with the protègè's personality and the perceived success of the protègè in relation to the mentor's personality?". These questions align with Scandura's (1998) model of dysfunctional mentoring and outcomes.

Previous research has often centered on whether personality factors influence the likelihood of entering mentoring relationships rather than their quality. Kalbfleisch & Davies (1993) identified relationships between high self-esteem, communication skills, and mentoring participation. Allen, Poteet, Russell and Dobbins (1997) found that internal locus of control and upward striving (related to conscientiousness) correlated positively with intention to mentor. Scandura and Ragins (1994) reported that combined extraversion, openness, conscientiousness and low neuroticism related to having had a mentor, while agreeableness and conscientiousness predicted receipt of mentoring support even when controlling for gender.

Turban & Dougherthy (1994) demonstrated that protégés influenced mentoring received through relationship initiation, with internal locus of control, high self-monitoring, and emotional stability enhancing initiation efforts. This suggests personality's role in obtaining mentoring and receiving mentoring benefits (Tokar et al., 1998). Conversely, Fagenson (1989) found no relationship between protégés' personality and their perceptions of mentoring quality. The limited literature suggests personality may be more influential in determining who becomes a protègè than how they respond to the relationship.

FFM as a model of personality

Systematic efforts to organize taxonomy of personality began as a response to McDoughall's (1932) suggestion that a five-factor model would be appropriate. Although other models have been proposed, such as Catell's 16 factor model, a converging of views on the structure of personality traits into a five-factor model has emerged (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Norman 1963; Costa & McCrae, 1985). According to Tokar et al. (1998), research on the Five Factor Model (FFM), based on the Big Five personality traits, has demonstrated that the FFM has robustness, generalizability, and comprehensiveness to an extent that it "…provides a useful preliminary organizational framework for most, if not all, nontrivial personality features". The FFM contains the dimensions extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. It seems reasonable to assume that individual differences along these dimensions will be important in mentor relationships.

The FFM can be traced back to Allport & Odbert's classic work in the 1930s, and it also encompasses Murray's (1938) taxonomy of psychological needs (Costa & McCrae, 1988), Jung's (1923, 1971) psychological types (McCrae & Costa, 1989b), and Eysenck's (1947) two-factor model (McCrae & Costa, 1985). It was dormant for almost 50 years, until Costa & McCrae (1985) used it to create structure in chaos of different personality traits. The present

study is based on Engevik's (1992) version of the FFM inventory. The model is still controversial, however, and in the context of organizational psychology it may be argued that concepts other than those included in the FFM are important predictors of job performance constructs (Block, 1995; Sneider & Hough, 1995).

Success factors as a result of the dyad

An impressive range of organizational benefits from mentor-protègè relationships have been identified (Alleman, 1989). For the purpose of this study, we focused on the success factors described for mentors and protègès. These two groups created the success categories used to define total success within the mentoring dyad. After reviewing the literature, we discovered eight "groups" of benefits that are focused on for the protégé and four thoroughly described groups of success factors for the mentor. An inventory 8 items for the protègè's perception of success and 4 items for the mentor's perception of success was developed and used in the survey. The groups are briefly described below.

Criteria 1 – Career development: Mentoring is important for career development both for mentors and protègès (Kram, 1985). From the mentor's point of view, the mentoring role is an important development component of career (Kram, 1985) and life stages (Levinson et al., 1978). Mentoring enhances the compensation, promotions and pay satisfaction of the employees who receive it (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Dreher & Cox, 1996; Scandura, 1992; Whitely et al., 1991; Whitely & Coetsier, 1993). For protègès, mentoring relationships are related to organizational advancement, career development and career satisfaction (Fagenson, 1988, 1989; Roche, 1979; Scandura, 1992; Whitely et al., 1991).

The mentor often becomes the living proof of potential success and for what can be achieved. If the mentor provides appropriate assistance, he/she can help the protégé realize his/her career goals (Clutterbuck, 1985; Franzén & Jonsson, 1993) and create rapid advancement opportunities (Rosenbach, 1993). By helping the mentor with his/her job, the protègè serves as a source of organizational information and intelligence, which often results in the mentor becoming a trusted advisor (Rosenbach, 1993). Consequently, the mentor can improve his/her own possibilities for promotion by letting the protègè become his/her successor (Clutterbuck, 1985).

Criteria 2 – Personal development: The protègè is developed personally (Franzén & Jonsson, 1993). Mentors benefit from protègès' energy and enthusiasm, and they gain new perspectives and ideas that contribute to their own development. (Clutterbuck, 1985; Franzén & Jonsson, 1993; Burke & McKeen, 1990). In addition, a case study shows that veterans in life and health insurance seem to increase their sales when mentoring (Mckenzie, 1993).

Criteria 3 – Learning: Relationships play a central part in learning, and individuals in all career stages benefit from alliances, only some of which may be approximate from to classical mentoring. (Kram & Bragar, 1991). We also know that mentors can provide protègès with more focused learning, enabling them to study the managerial and leadership techniques of successful people under real world conditions (Rosenbach, 1993). Mentors make productive use of their own knowledge and skills in middle age, and they learn in ways that otherwise would not be possible for them (Burke & McKeen, 1990). Thus, the mentor learns from the relationship (Clutterbuck, 1985) and becomes a better leader as a result (Hultman & Sobel, 1994). In particular, the process introduces the mentor to new knowledge about the different levels of the organization (Franzén & Jonsson, 1993).

Criteria 4 – Motivation: Knowing that the mentor is available and believes in the protègès' abilities is motivating in itself (Hultman & Sobel, 1994). To shape a young promising coworker can be motivating, challenging, and stimulating, especially if the mentor's own career has

reached a permanent or temporary plateau (Clutterbuck, 1985; Franzen & Jonsson, 1993). The successful protègè gives the mentor a sense of pride in contributing to the organization (Rosenbach, 1993), a respect from other colleagues (Burke & McKeen, 1990). Finally, it has been suggested that mature men have reached that time in life when they derive satisfaction from being altruistic (Levinson et al., 1978 and Sheehy 1976).

Criteria 5 – Network: The mentor introduces the protégé to senior staff by including him/her in his/her projects. (Clutterbuck, 1985; Franzén & Jonsson, 1993). The introduction often results in improved networking ability (Rosenbach, 1993). Protègès can also break into executive social networks, which may have taken much longer without the mentor's support (Rosenbach, 1993).

Criteria 6 – Status enhancement: The protègè achieves a higher profile through his/her mentor (Clutterbuck, 1985).

Hypotheses

Hypotheses were formulated for the relationship between personality factors and the success factors career development, personal development, learning, motivation, network, and status. To assess the similarity in personality profiles between each mentor and protègè, a discrepancy score had to be calculated for each of the personality dimensions. This process gave us five personality discrepancy scores. The first set of hypotheses were built around the expectation that mentor-protégé similarities in personality profiles would enhance the effect of the relationship from the protégé's point of view. This first set of hypotheses covered the relationships between each of the five personality discrepancy scores and the protègès' perceptions of success on each of the six criteria outlined above (DP):

> H0   There is no correlation between mentor-protègè discrepancies in personality scores and the protègès' perceived success in the dyad.

> H1   There is a correlation between mentor-protègè discrepancies in personality scores and the protègès' perceived success in the dyad.

Likewise, a second set of hypotheses were built around the expectation that mentor-protègè similarities in personality profiles would enhance the effect of the relationship on the mentor's side. This second set of hypotheses covered the relationships between each of the five personality discrepancy scores and the mentors' perceptions of success on each of the six criteria outlined above (DM):

> H0   There is no correlation between mentor- protègè discrepancies in personality scores and the mentors' perceived success in the dyad.

> H1   There is a correlation between mentor- protègè discrepancies in personality scores and the mentors' perceived success in the dyad.

The third set of hypotheses was solely concerned with the protègès and was built around an expectation that the personality factors would influence their perception of the outcome of the mentoring dyad. This set focused on the relationships between each of the five protégés' personality scores and their perception of success on each of the six criteria outlined above (PP):

H0	There is no correlation between the protègès' personality scores and their perceived success in the dyad.
H1	There is a correlation between the protègès' personality scores and their perceived success in the dyad.

Parallel to this, a fourth set of hypotheses was solely concerned with the mentors and was built around an expectation that the personality factors would influence their perception of the outcome of the mentoring dyad. This set focused on the relationships between each of the five mentors' personality scores and their perceived success on each of the six criteria outlined above (MM):

H0	There is no correlation between the mentors' personality scores and their perceived success in the dyad.
H1	There is a correlation between the mentors' personality scores and their perceived success in the dyad.

As an extension of the first set of hypotheses, the fifth set of hypotheses was concerned with the relationship between the mentors' personality profile and the protègès' perceptions of success. This set of hypotheses was built around an expectation that the mentors' personality factors would be so important that they would be the sole determinant of how the protègè would perceive the outcome of the mentoring dyad. This set focused on the relationships between each of the five mentors' personality scores and the protègès' perceived success on each of the six criteria outlined above (MP):

H0	There is no correlation between the mentors' personality scores and the protègès' perceived success in the dyad.
H1	There is a correlation between the mentors' personality scores and the protègès' perceived success in the dyad.

As an extension of the second set of hypotheses, the sixth set of hypotheses was concerned with the relationship between the protègès' personality profile and the mentors' perceptions of success. This set of hypotheses was built around an expectation that the protègès' personality factors would be so important that they would be the sole determinant of how the mentors would perceive the outcome of the mentoring dyad. This set focused on the relationships between each of the five protègès' personality scores and the mentors' perceived success on each of the six criteria outlined above (PM):

H0	There is no correlation between the protègès' personality scores and the mentors' perceived success in the dyad.
H1	There is a correlation between the protègès' personality scores and the mentors' perceived success in the dyad.

Additional hypotheses were formulated between age and the success factors career development, personal development, learning, motivation, network, and status. We expected to find a positive relationship between high age on the mentor side and perception of success, since age should relate positively to experience, position, and network. The greater the mentor-protègè age discrepancy, the more positive the effects that should be found as outcomes:

H0	There is no correlation between mentor-protègè age discrepancy and perceived success in the dyad.
H1	There is a correlation between mentor-protègè age discrepancy and perceived success in the dyad.

Likewise, a set of hypotheses were formulated for the relationship between gender and the success factors career development, personal development, learning, motivation, network, and status. We expected to find a positive relationship between high age on the mentor side and perception of success, since age should relate positively to experience, position, and network. The greater the age discrepancy, the more positive the effects that should be found as outcomes.

> H0　　　There is no correlation between gender composition and perceived success in the dyad.
>
> H1　　　There is a correlation between gender composition and perceived success in the dyad.

Methodology and research design

The research model is a set of six hypotheses for the personality perspective, which are grouped together in pairs and analyzed based on three subsets of research models. In addition, two hypotheses are presented for the age and gender perspective.

	Mentors perceived Outcome Satisfaction (M_{os})	Protégés perceived Outcome Satisfaction (P_{os})
Mentors Situational and Personal factors ($M_{s\&p}$)	1 What is the relationship of $M_{s\&p}$ to M_{os}	4 What is the relationship of $M_{s\&p}$ to P_{os}
Protégés Situational and Personal factors ($P_{s\&p}$)	2 What is the relationship of $P_{s\&p}$ to M_{os}	5 What is the relationship of $P_{s\&p}$ to P_{os}
Difference between Situational and Personal factors of protégé and mentor ($D_{s\&p}$)	3 What is the relationship of $D_{s\&p}$ to M_{os}	6 What is the relationship of $D_{s\&p}$ to P_{os}

The first group describes the phase where discrepancy scores' relationship with perceived success is analysed. The second model analyses the individual groups separately, without factoring in the other group. The third model analyses one group's perception of success relation with the other group's personality profile.

The study population consisted of 30 mentoring dyads in a large international company in the process industry. The company's program was initiated more than six years ago and is a mixture of formal and informal mentoring. The mentor program is arranged as a set of introduction seminars aimed at a specific group of employees, who are divided into possible mentors and protègès. At the end of this formal part of the program, it is the future protègès' own responsibility to find a mentor within the group. Occasionally, mentors and protègès find each other outside the defined group, an initiative that is usually supported by the company.

The questionnaire was divided into six parts: (1/2) Mentoring-related questions, with one section for the mentor and one section for the protègè, (3) Questions about the perceived success of the mentoring dyad, (4) The FFM part of the questionnaire, (5) Career-related questions, and (6) Demographic questions for age, gender, education, and position.

Measurement of perceived success

Based on Carruthers' (1993) list of benefits of the dyad, a seven-point itemized rating scale was used to assess each respondent's degree of satisfaction with the individual attributes. Success scores were reported by the protègè and measured using a seven-point Likert scale (low score equals high level of perceived motivation because of the dyad). The dyad success score is the sum of the scores of the included items. Cronbach's alpha is 0.89 for the protègè dyad success score and 0.87 for the mentor success scores.

Personality

The test used to investigate the big five personality factors originates from the Five Factor Model (FFM). The version used was modified and culturally adapted by Engevik (1992), and developed at the University of Oslo, Norway using ipsative scores for analysis. The inventory uses standardized ipsative personality scores (Engevik, 1994), which are ipsated values of the personality FFM part of the questionnaire. The scores were self-reported by the respondent on a seven-point Likert scale.

In order to measure the difference in personality, a discrepancy score was calculated. The discrepancy score is the absolute value of the difference between the personality values. The personality scores for each of the five personality factors are standardized for mentors and protègès, respectively. The values of the scale start with 0 (no discrepancy), and each unit equals one standard deviation Alpha for the FFM factors, which are 0.90 for agreeableness, 0.88 for extraversion, 0.89 for conscientiousness, 0.92 for emotional stability and finally 0.91 for openness to experience (Engevik, 1993)

Method of analysis

The data from the questionnaires were plotted into SPSS and proper labels were created. The original success scores were then re-coded into sum scores of "dyad successes" and "career success". Introductory tests were performed in order to find any systematic bias between the groups of mentors and protègès and their relationship with personality. In addition, tests were performed for variables thought to influence personality. Educational level was coded from 1 for high school up to 7 for PhD, according to the Swedish educational system. Finally, each respondent identified his/her gender (0 = woman, 1 = man) and age.

Results

A large number of correlations were tested with a five percent significance level to explore relationships between personality factors, individual differences, and perceived success in mentoring relationships. The analysis follows a structured approach examining six key relationships between mentors and protégés:

1. Mentor personality → Mentor perceived outcome satisfaction

2. Protégé personality → Mentor perceived outcome satisfaction

3. Difference between Mentor/Protégé personality → Mentor perceived outcome satisfaction

4. Mentor personality → Protégé perceived outcome satisfaction

5. Protégé personality → Protégé perceived outcome satisfaction

6. Difference between Mentor/Protégé personality → Protégé perceived outcome satisfaction

Although few significant relationships were found, they clustered in ways that make it possible to draw interesting conclusions about how personality factors and individual differences relate to perceived success in mentor-protégé relationships.

Relationship of Mentor Personality to Mentor Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between mentor's personality scores and mentors' success scores was analysed using linear regression. As shown in Table 1, there is a significant relationship between mentors' success scores and mentors scoring high on extraversion. The relationship is strengthened if the mentor also scores high on agreeableness, and very marginally on openness to experience.

Table 1: Mentor Personality and Mentors Success

Mentors Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_M	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	.27		.40*	.25	.24	.24	.04
Extraversion	.48**	.58***		.47**	.43*	.49**	.21
Conscientiousness	-.18	-.14	-.09		-.36	-.28	-.37
Emotional stability	-.30	-27	-.12	-.26		-.42	-.43
Openness to experience	-.17	-.07	-.18	-.27	-.32		-.44

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The results indicate that extraverted mentors are generally more satisfied with the outcomes of mentoring than mentors scoring high on other personality variables.

Relationship of Protégé Personality to Mentor Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between protégés' personality scores and mentors' success scores were analysed using linear regression. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant relationship between mentors' success scores and protégés scoring high on conscientiousness. The relationship is marginally strengthened if the protégé also scores high on agreeableness, emotional stability and/or openness to experience.

Table 2: Protégé Personality and Mentors Outcome Satisfaction

Protégé Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_M	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	-.25		-.37*	-.21	-.26	-.32	-.14
Extraversion	-.31	-.42*		-.14	-.37	-.32	-.07
Conscientiousness	.59***	.60***	.55**		.65***	.67***	.70
Emotional stability	-.08	-.11	-.19	.16		-.09	.17
Openness to experience	-.08	-.19	-.08	.20	-.09		.19

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The results indicate that it is of great importance for the mentors' outcome satisfaction that the protégé is well organized and responsible for their own progress. There is also a tendency toward even greater appreciation from the mentor's side if the protégé is not too talkative or extraverted and is rather cynical than altruistic.

Relationship of Difference in Personality to Mentor Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between difference in personality scores and mentors' success scores was analyzed using linear regression. As shown in Table 3, there is a significant relationship between mentors' success scores and discrepancy scores of conscientiousness, extraversion, and *agreeableness*.

Table 3: Difference in Personality and Mentors Success

Difference in Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_M	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	.41*		.43**	.33*	.39*	.44*	.09
Extraversion	.51**	.52***		.36*	.53**	.51**	.08
Conscientiousness	-.55***	-.50**	-.43**		-.65***	-.61***	-.69
Emotional stability	-.18	-.09	.05	-.35*		-.21	-.39
Openness to experience	-.09	.07	-.05	-.24	-.15		-.32

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

These results indicate that the mentor prefers if the protégé scores higher than the mentor on conscientiousness while the mentor prefers to be the more agreeable and extraverted person in the dyad.

Relationship of Mentor Personality to Protégé Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between mentor's personality scores and protégés' success scores was analysed using linear regression. As shown in Table 4, no significant relationships were found.

Table 4: Mentor Personality and Protégé Success

Mentors Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_P	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	-.16		-.13	-.18	-.17	-.17	-.04
Extraversion	.18	.15		.17	.23	.18	-.01
Conscientiousness	-.08	-.11	-.05		-.08	-.07	-.04
Emotional stability	.02	-.00	.11	-.11		.04	.25
Openness to experience	.05	-.02	.05	.03	.06		.19

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Relationship of Protégé Personality to Protégé Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between protégés' personality scores and protégés' success scores was analysed using linear regression. As shown in Table 5, no significant relationships were found.

Table 5: Protégé Personality and Protégé Success

Protégé Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_P	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	-.14		-.17	-.15	-.11	-.08	-.04
Extraversion	-.06	-.11		-.14	.01	-.06	-.01
Conscientiousness	-.20	-.21	-.24		-.13	-.15	-.04
Emotional stability	.24	.22	.24	.19		.27	.25
Openness to experience	.18	.15	.18	.12	.22		.19

$*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001$

Relationship of Difference in Personality to Protégé Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between protégés' success scores and difference in mentor personality and protégé personality was analysed using linear regression. As shown in Table 6, no significant relationships were found.

Table 6: Difference in Personality and Protégés Success

Difference in Personal Factors	Crude	Adjusted for					
	MSCI_P	Agreeableness	Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness to experience	All
Agreeableness	-.05		-.05	-.04	-.09	-.10	-.29
Extraversion	.16	.15		.21	.13	.15	-.10
Conscientiousness	.09	.08	.16		.06	.07	-.18
Emotional stability	-.13	-.14	-.07	-.11		-.16	-.36
Openness to experience	-.09	-.12	-.08	-.07	-.13		-.34

$*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001$

Interpretation of Personality Findings

Based on these results, we can draw several conclusions about how personality factors relate to mentoring success:

Extraversion

Extraversion is the personality dimension with the strongest correlation to perceived success as a result of the dyad. The protégé perceives a greater degree of success if the discrepancy of extraversion between mentor and protégé is low. At the same time, the mentor perceives overall

success if he/she scores high on extraversion. In order for the perception of overall success to be high for both participants as a result of the dyad, both mentor and protégé must score high on extraversion. These results can be related to the findings that persons with high self-esteem and high level of communication competence are more likely to participate in mentoring (Kalbfleish & Davis, 1993). This is because high self-esteem and high level of extraversion are basically the same dimension of personality (Barrick & Mount, 1991). We can conclude that extraverts are more likely to participate in a mentoring relationship and also perceive a higher degree of success as a result of the relationship than those who are low in extraversion.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness is the personality dimension with the second strongest correlation to perceived success as result of the dyad. The mentor perceives a higher degree of success if the discrepancy of agreeableness between mentor and protégé is low, and if the mentor scores high on agreeableness. In order for the perception of overall success to be high for both participants as a result of the dyad, both mentor and protégé must score high on agreeableness.

Conscientiousness

Third in strength in relation to perceived success as a result of the dyad is conscientiousness. The protégé perceives a higher degree of success if the discrepancy of conscientiousness between mentor and protégé is high. At the same time, the mentor perceives a higher level of overall success if the protégé scores high on agreeableness. In order for the perception of overall success to be high for both participants as a result of the dyad, the mentor must score low and the protégé must score high on conscientiousness.

Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience

These two dimensions are the most difficult to interpret. The correlations indicate that the protégé perceives a higher degree of success if he/she scores high on openness to experience, and if the mentor scores high on emotional stability. The correlations found only show the personality dimensions from one of the participants' point of view. This makes the conclusion difficult to state directly. However, the individual correlations are quite strong and must be considered. Some attention can be drawn to the fact that where protégés score high on emotional stability, this has been shown to enhance initiation of mentoring (Turban & Dougherty, 1994). This could, therefore, be a link between the mentors' and protégés' levels of emotional stability. The dimension must be further investigated to state any clear relationship.

Individual Differences and Mentoring Success

The study also examined the relationship between various individual difference factors and mentoring success. The framework for this analysis followed the same structure as the personality analysis.

Relationship of Individual Differences to Mentoring Outcome Satisfaction

The relationship between mentors' personal differences and mentors' score of mentoring success was analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation. As shown in Table 7, mentors' level in the organization is very strongly correlated with mentors' perceived success of the mentoring relationship. This suggests that the higher the hierarchical position the mentor holds, the more satisfied they are with participating in a mentoring relation.

In addition, there is a negative correlation between mentors' age and their MSCI_M score, indicating that younger mentors perceive a higher degree of satisfaction with outcomes from mentoring participation.

Table 7: Mentoring Success and Individual Differences

Relations between mentors' individual differences and MSCI	MSCI_M	MSCI_P
MENTOR		
Age	-.39*	
Years since graduation		
Level of education		
Years of experience		
Level of strata	.70**	
Gender		
PROTÉGÉ		
Age		
Years since graduation		
Level of education		
Years of experience		
Level of strata		.37*
Gender		
DIFFERENCE IN:		
Age		
Years since graduation		
Level of education		
Years of experience		
Level of strata	.67**	
Gender		

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The strata difference was strongly correlated to the MSCI score, indicating that mentors report significantly higher perception of success as a result of participating in the mentoring relationship if the mentor is at a higher strata level than the protégé. This fully supports Jaques' (1996) theories.

For protégés, the MSCI score was strongly correlated with mentors' strata score, indicating that protégés matched with mentors of high strata are more satisfied than protégés matched with mentors with lower strata scores.

Age

When the mentor is older than the protégé, the protégé reports a greater perception of career attainment as a result of the dyad. In fact, the correlation indicates that the larger the age gap, the greater the career attainment perceived by the protégé. This result is interesting because it means that older employees may have a role to fill here. Instead of retiring early, older and experienced employees may have a new market for their knowledge and networks, which can help foster an interesting career for new employees. The older employees can become trusted advisors, an augmentation that is supported by Murphy (1991) and Rosenbach (1993). Even if the literature supports the correlations shown, we must acknowledge that only one success score correlated in any direction with age. Replicated studies are therefore necessary.

Gender

It is surprising that for dyads that include women, the protégés report an overall lower success perception than for dyads made up solely of men. One explanation may be that women still find it difficult to secure certain positions in business and are not therefore able to provide the network, status and career attainment possibilities expected by the protégé. The sample size is

not large enough to draw any definitive conclusions, but the indications should be noted. Our suggestion is to include unequal conditions for men and women in future research.

Conclusion

This research has argued for the relevance of personality factors as a useful tool for forming mentor-protègè relationships. The focus has been on the importance of knowledge about the relationship between personality, age, and gender constellations in relation to perceived success as a result of the mentoring dyad. First, this study revealed theoretical support for the notion that both mentors and protègès have some basic success determinants for the mentoring construct. These success variables will influence the participants' overall satisfaction perception. Second, theory suggests that the relevance of personality factors should be further researched together with the age and gender constellations perspective, as related to perceived success as a result of the dyad. Based on theory, an instrument was developed to conduct an analysis of possible correlations between personality, age, and gender on one side and perceived success as a result of the dyad on the other. Finally, using correlation test, ANOVA, T-test and regression analysis, linear relationships were shown to exist between personality variables and perceived success, age and perceived success, and gender constellation and success. The relationships were found between all personality factors and both the mentor and the protègè, and the study showed that clustered significance was especially strong between the personality dimensions extraversion and agreeableness. We strongly believe that the findings presented are representative and that traits are important in mentoring relationships. However, situational factors must also be taken into consideration because the observed relationships in the findings are only moderately strong.

Findings in relation to earlier research

Our findings support those of Kalbfleish & Davis (1993) and reflect a new dimension to the importance of extraversion traits in mentoring. The findings further pave the way for a wider understanding of the findings of Turban & Dougherty (1994) Turban, Moake and Cheung (2017) and Arora (2020) as these are the only empirical studies on mentoring's correlation to personality. The present study forms a basis for further research on the area. The gender-related findings are particularly interesting, and they present a dimension that we have not found in the literature. The result can create interesting debate about the relevance of gender for success in the dyad. Finally, the age-related findings support earlier findings, but the relationships shown in this study are relatively vague and should not, therefore, be given too much attention.

Practical consequences

As a consequence of this research, we would recommend that personality compatibility is included as a variable when forming mentor-protègè relationships. This is most relevant in a formally arranged mentor relationship, but a proactive human resource department could probably also apply these findings to an informal constellation. As a consequence of this research, we would recommend that personality compatibility is included as a variable when forming mentor-protègè relationships. Advising mentors and protègès on what traits to look for when seeking to form a mentor relationship will make the process more proactive than reactive.

Future research

Future research should focus on the possible interaction between personality and situational factors in order to determine the optimal strategies for dyad development. A study should be developed that takes both the personality and the situation into consideration simultaneously. Other important research would be to replicate this study with a new population. Replication is important because of the low number of dyads included. Finally, the gender constellation and success perception need to be further analysed.

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