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Does Mentor-Protégé Agreement on Mentor Leadership Behavior Influence the Quality of a Mentoring Relationship?

VERONICA M. GODSHALK

JOHN J. SOSIK

The Pennsylvania State University

This study examined whether mentor-protégé agreement regarding mentor transformational leadership behavior would influence the quality of mentoring relationships. Mentors in 199 mentor-protégé dyads were classified as overestimators, underestimators, or in agreement based on the difference between mentor's self-rating and protégé's rating of mentor's transformational leadership behaviors. Results of multivariate analysis of variance indicated that underestimator dyads experience the highest quality of mentoring relationships in terms of psychosocial support received, career development, and perceived mentoring effectiveness. The practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the benefits associated with mentoring relationships, in which individuals with advanced experience and knowledge provide support and facilitate the upward mobility of junior organizational members (Allen, Russell, & Maetzel, 1997; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). These benefits include effective socialization of young employees (Schein, 1978), promotions and compensation (Dreher & Ash, 1990), career mobility and advancement (Scandura, 1992), career satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989), career commitment (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990), enhanced productivity (Tyler, 1998), job satisfaction (Bahniuk, Dobos, & Hill, 1990), and reduced turnover intentions (Viator & Scandura, 1991). Because not all mentors are effective (Ragins, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1993), organizational researchers and managers recently have become interested in examining the influence of a mentor's behavior on the quality of mentoring relationships. For example, several writers (e.g., Godshalk & Sosik, 1998; Scandura &

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Schriesheim, 1994) have identified transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1998; Burns, 1978) as a particularly effective set of behaviors for mentors to exhibit. Transformational leadership involves behaviors that form “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). The developmental nature of transformational leadership parallels the functions and desired outcomes of the mentoring process (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994).

However, prior research (e.g., Ashford, 1989; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Wohlers & London, 1989) suggests that the quality of the mentoring relationship may be a function of not only the mentor's and protégé's perception of transformational leadership but also the degree of agreement on transformational leadership perception between the mentor and protégé. Relying solely on self-ratings may lead to inflated, inaccurate, and biased measures (Korman, 1970; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), unreliable predictions of future behavior when compared to objective criteria (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992), and poor performance for inaccurate self-raters (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Bass & Yammarino, 1991). These problems have led researchers to use comparison of agreement between self-ratings and the ratings based on the observations of others. This approach allows researchers to make assessments about the self-rater. For example, Atwater and Yammarino (1992) posit that “self-ratings of behavior, when compared to ratings provided by observers, are an indication of one particular characteristic of the self-rater (i.e., the self-rater's degree of self-awareness)” (p. 142). In other words, a self-aware person is able to incorporate feedback regarding his or her behavior and then make adjustments to his or her behavior as indicated by the feedback offered by others. It follows that the self-aware mentor, who is cognizant of the protégé's perceptions, may be capable of demonstrating needed behavioral changes as well as understanding the protégé's needs, and therefore may be more likely to make more accurate self-assessments in future mentoring interactions.

The present study gauges self-awareness (defined as agreement between self and other transformational leadership ratings) of the mentor in mentor-protégé dyads and assesses whether the level of agreement between the dyad members influences the quality of the mentoring relationships. This study extends prior work in three ways. First, it examines the relationship between transformational leadership and quality of mentoring relationships that has been conceptualized but essentially not yet empirically investigated. Second, it examines self/other agreement on the mentor's leadership behavior in mentoring relationships. No previously published work has explored this issue. Third, it assesses the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship (i.e.,

how professional, nurturing, productive, and rewarding the relationship is) from the protégé's perspective. Previous research has ignored this important outcome variable.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Yammarino and Atwater's (1997) model of the self-other rating agreement process provided a theoretical framework for the present study. Briefly, Yammarino and Atwater proposed that personal and situational variables (e.g., biodata, individual characteristics, context) affect self-other rating comparisons (e.g., perception of transformational leadership behaviors), which in turn influence performance outcomes (e.g., quality of mentoring relationships in terms of psychosocial support and career development) and associated developmental needs. Psychosocial support involves mentors acting as role models, providing acceptance, and confirming the protégé's behavior (Noe, 1988). Career development involves mentors acting as coaches to the protégé, protecting the protégé from adverse organizational forces, providing challenging assignments, sponsoring advancement, and fostering positive exposure and visibility. Although results of several studies (e.g., Atwater, Rousch, & Fischthal, 1995; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Sosik & Megerian, 1999) have provided support for the model, prior research has ignored the role of self-other rating comparisons of transformational leadership behavior in mentoring relationships. Accordingly, the present study can be positioned as an application of self-other rating agreement in mentoring contexts that may help elucidate the mentoring process.

In terms of self-other rating comparisons of transformational leadership behaviors, mentors may be categorized as *overestimators*, *underestimators*, and those *in agreement*. Overestimators produce self-ratings that are significantly higher than other ratings on dimensions of interest. Underestimators produce self-ratings that are significantly lower than other ratings on dimensions of interest. Those in agreement produce ratings similar to other ratings on dimensions of interest (Ashford, 1989; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992).

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The leadership and mentoring literatures provide several reasons to support conceptual and empirical distinctions between the leadership and

mentoring constructs. First, leadership involves a performance-oriented influence process, whereas mentoring involves a long-term role-model relationship that is primarily career- and development-oriented (Burke, McKenna, & McKeen, 1991). Second, leadership involves one leader and one or more followers, whereas mentoring usually involves one mentor and one protégé. Leadership may be a more formal, overt, and direct influence process, whereas mentoring may be a more informal, subtle, and indirect influence process (Appelbaum, Ritchie, & Shapiro, 1994). Graen and Scandura (1986) suggested that leadership is distinct from mentoring but effective Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relations may be a function of being mentored by a leader. Third, not all experienced leaders become effective mentors (Ragins & Cotton, 1993). Fourth, empirical distinction between leadership and mentoring has been found by Scandura and Schriesheim (1994), Eisenbach (1992), and Morgan (1989).

At the same time, prior research (summarized by Bass, 1998, and Yukl, 1998) has identified some similar and overlapping characteristics between mentoring and transformational leadership behaviors. For example, Schein (1978) described behaviors associated with transformational leaders as integral to creating and manipulating organizational culture, whereas Wilson and Elman (1990) described mentors as transfer agents of culture. Gladstone (1988) argued that mentors behave as leaders when they shape values, act as an example, and define meanings for protégés. Such behaviors have been linked to transformational leaders (Bass, 1998). Thibodeaux and Lowe (1996) found convergence of in-group LMX relations and mentoring functions. Although the intent of these dyadic relationships (mentor-protégé or leader-follower) is to enhance the personal effectiveness and development of the junior individual, mentors who display transformational leadership may proceed in a variety of ways to achieve this end.

Indeed, transformational leadership offers mentors several behaviors to promote protégé development: (a) building trust by exhibiting idealized influential behaviors, (b) striving to develop protégés through individualized consideration, (c) promoting protégé independence and critical thinking through intellectual stimulation, and (d) attaching importance to human development through inspirational motivation (Godshalk & Sosik, 1998). Mentors who exhibit idealized influential behaviors may build protégé trust through identification with the mentor's expertise, success, self-sacrifice, and personal risk-taking (Altmeyer, Prather, & Thombs, 1994; Bass, 1998; Covey, 1997). Idealized influential behaviors parallel personal risk-taking behaviors identified by Conger and Kanungo (1998) as key charismatic/transformational leadership behaviors. By exhibiting idealized influence,

mentors may sacrifice self-gain for the gain of their protégés, take necessary risks, and be viewed by their protégés as a symbol of success and accomplishment. Perceived as a trustworthy, respected, and admirable role model, a mentor who demonstrates these transformational characteristics may enhance his or her protégé's ability to assess and undertake calculated risks to advance their careers.

Mentors who exhibit individually considerate behaviors may promote protégé development by (a) spending time teaching and coaching protégés; (b) treating protégés as individuals with unique needs, abilities, and aspirations; (c) helping protégés develop strength; and (d) listening attentively to protégé concerns (Godshalk & Sosik, 1998). Individually considerate behaviors parallel sensitivity to organizational members identified by Conger and Kanungo (1998) as key charismatic/transformational leadership behaviors. These individually considerate behaviors are likely to facilitate the mentoring relationship and the professional growth of protégés. In fact, mentors have long been identified as those who coach the protégé and provide acceptance and confirmation within the organization (Noe, 1988).

Mentors who exhibit intellectually stimulating behaviors encourage protégés to reformulate assumptions through considering the absurd, fantasizing, and focusing on the context rather than the task (Bass, 1998). Intellectually stimulating behaviors often require displaying unconventional behavior that surprises other organizational members, yet is effective in achieving organizational goals (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). These methods of intellectual stimulation are useful in fostering protégé creativity and developing protégé cognitive abilities (Torrance, 1983). In addition, intellectual stimulation may develop protégé analytical skills through reexamining assumptions, seeking different perspectives, suggesting new ways of performing tasks, and rethinking what has never been questioned before. As mentors challenge their protégés with new assignments, protégé intellectual development may similarly be fostered.

In their efforts to motivate protégés, mentors may articulate inspirational long-term visions that attach meaning and importance to human development. By linking the significance of human development (e.g., developing new skills and higher levels of creative thinking, trust, and responsibility) to the successful attainment of the broader organizational mission, these mentors may enhance protégés' belief that they can be effective contributors to a high-achieving organization (Ragins, 1997). Such behavior parallels strategic vision and articulation, which are characteristic of charismatic/transformational leaders (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). In addition, mentors sponsor their protégés by providing opportunities for new challenges, by

creating greater visibility for their protégés, and by protecting protégés from adverse situations (Noe, 1988). Mentor behavior that provides career development functions for protégés may be enhanced by sensitivity to the environment, a key aspect of charismatic/transformational leadership behavior (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). When mentors provide these career development functions for protégés, protégés also may believe more strongly in their abilities and contributions to the organization.

QUALITY OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

As noted above, the career and professional development literatures (e.g., Bahniuk et al., 1990; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Viator, 1994; Schein, 1978) have linked effective mentoring relationships with numerous beneficial individual and organizational outcomes. A common theme running through these literatures is that effective mentoring relationships provide career development and psychosocial support to the protégé (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). As such, the quality of a mentoring relationship is defined in congruence with Kram's (1985) suggested definition, that is, the greater the degree of career development and psychosocial functions the mentor offers, the greater the quality of the relationship with the protégé.

However, it has been suggested that mentor behaviors vary as a function of the composition of the relationship (Ragins, 1997). In fact, Ragins (1997) posited that the nature of the mentor-protégé relationship may influence the mentor's behavior, which in turn will affect the protégé's realized career-related outcomes. "The mentor's behavior is influenced by the protégé's needs, the mentor's perception of the protégé's needs, and the ability and motivation of the mentor to meet the needs of the protégé" (Ragins, 1997, p. 502). Awareness on the part of the mentor may play an important role in mentoring processes. In his discussion of emotional intelligence (EQ) in the workplace, Goleman (1998) argued that self-awareness (e.g., accurate self-assessment of one's style of leadership) is required for effective mentoring and leadership processes and outcomes. In support of Goleman's (1998) proposition, Sosik and Megerian (in press) found aspects of a leader's self-reported EQ (i.e., purpose in life, personal efficacy, interpersonal control, and social self-confidence) to be positively related to subordinate ratings of transformational leadership for self-aware leaders. Thus, based on the qualities associated with transformational leaders, we expected that mentors who act as transformational leaders in their relationships with protégés and

who are in agreement with the protégé regarding the mentor's style of leadership will develop higher-quality mentoring relationships (as perceived by the protégé) than mentors who overestimate or underestimate their transformational leadership behavior.

SELF-OTHER AGREEMENT ON MENTOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND QUALITY OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The degree of agreement between the mentor's self-rating and the protégé's rating of the mentor's transformational behaviors is expected to influence the quality of the mentoring relationship. Ashford (1989) suggested that overestimators, who make very positive self-evaluations of their behaviors, would be unlikely to see changes in their behavior as necessary. Mentors who overestimate may therefore have misconceptions about the quality of their mentor-protégé relationship. Mentors with more accurate self-ratings, those in agreement with the protégé, are likely to use protégé feedback and make adjustments to their behavior accordingly (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982; Church, 1997). Underestimators, or those mentors with lower self-evaluations, may also feel some pressure to alter their behavior, although it is unclear as to what extent they may do so (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992).

Yammarino and Atwater (1997) suggested behavioral outcomes are associated with each level of mentor-protégé rating agreement. For those mentors who are in agreement with their protégés regarding the mentor's transformational leadership style, prior research (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Yammarino & Atwater, 1997) suggests positive outcomes for those involved with in-agreement dyadic relationships. Mentors who are self-aware may be successful, be strong performers, and have positive job attitudes. They may use feedback from others constructively to alter their behavior as needed. A self-awareness of transformational behaviors positions the mentor as a role model and provides individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation to the protégé. In addition, Atwater and Yammarino (1992) and Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, and Fleenor (1997) found that leaders who are in agreement with their followers are most effective. Church (1997) found a significantly greater proportion of high performers among accurate raters (or self-aware individuals) than under- or overestimators. For these reasons, we expected transformational behavior to be most positively related to quality of mentoring relationships for those mentors who are in agreement. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Mentors who are in agreement with their protégé regarding the mentor's transformational leadership style will be associated with the highest levels of mentoring relationship quality (as reported by the protégé).

Overestimators, because of their need to maintain their self-perceptions (Korman, 1970), are expected to discount or rationalize negative feedback and generally accept positive feedback as more accurate (Harvey & Weary, 1984). This tendency discourages the use of feedback in altering behavior, and therefore may create negative outcomes for those involved with the overestimator. In this case, the mentor has inaccurate beliefs about his or her transformational leadership qualities. Therefore, the mentor may not be fulfilling the necessary functions to create a productive mentoring relationship. In addition, Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Atwater et al. (1997), and Church (1997) found overestimators to be associated with the lowest level of leader effectiveness. For these reasons, we expected transformational behavior to be inversely related to quality of mentoring relationships for those mentors who are overestimators. Thus,

Hypothesis 2: Mentors who overestimate their transformational leadership style will be associated with the lowest levels of mentoring relationship quality (as reported by the protégé).

Underestimators report lower self-ratings than do those who observe them. In fact, Church (1997) found that subordinates of underestimators rated their superiors' behavior more effective than subordinates of in-agreement or overestimator leaders. Similarly, Atwater et al. (1995) found that underestimators were rated highest by their subordinates. In the present context, a mentor who is an underestimator may not recognize his or her strengths, or is being overly modest or humble. Yammarino and Atwater (1997) suggest that although in-agreement mentors are associated with very positive outcomes and overestimators are associated with very negative outcomes, underestimators are associated with mixed outcomes. At the same time, these researchers posit that underestimators maintain their performance and raise their self-evaluations when feedback is provided by others. Therefore, on receipt of feedback from the protégé who describes his or her relationship with the mentor as a professionally productive experience, the underestimator mentor is expected to raise his or her self-evaluation and continue to provide a positive experience for the protégé. This argument suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Mentors who underestimate their transformational leadership style will be associated with higher levels of mentoring relationship quality (as

reported by protégés) than their overestimator peers, yet lower levels of mentoring relationship quality (as reported by protégés) than their peers who are in agreement with their protégés.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Two-hundred thirty adult students enrolled in a Masters of Business Administration program in a large public university in the Northeast participated in the study for course credit. Participants were full-time corporate employees from a variety of industries who were involved in either formal or informal mentoring programs. The industries represented include the following: services (22%), manufacturing (17%), financial/insurance (16%), pharmaceuticals (7%), transportation/utilities (6%), telecommunications (6%), public administration (1%), and other unidentified industries (25%). Mentoring relationships ranged in length from 1 year to 12 years, with the average being 2.7 years. Participants ranged in age from 20 years to 57 years, with the average age being 31. They had worked, on average, 4.8 years with their companies and had a range of company tenure from 2 months to 40 years. Of the participants, 56% were male, and the vast majority (82%) were Caucasian. The remaining 18% of the sample consisted of African American (6%), Hispanic (2%), Asian (7%), Native American (1%), and nonresponding (2%) participants.

Data were collected through two questionnaires that were distributed to participants in class and returned directly to the researchers. The first questionnaire was completed by the protégé and included items measuring the mentor's leadership behaviors, mentoring functions, mentoring effectiveness, and demographic information. This questionnaire contained the following instructions to define mentoring relationships for participants.

Please provide information regarding your experiences with mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships are characterized by a close, professional relationship between two individuals—one usually more senior in some regard. The mentor and protégé may or may not be with the same company.

In addition, the following information was read to participants prior to distribution of the questionnaires.

Mentoring is defined as a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the agreed-on goal of

having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific competencies. Your mentor may or may not be your manager.

The second questionnaire included items measuring leadership behaviors and was completed by the protégé's mentor. This questionnaire was mailed by each mentor directly to the researchers using a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope. A total of 199 usable responses, representing 87% of all participant cases, were used in the data analysis. Ninety-one percent (181 participants) were in informal mentoring relationships whereas 9% (18 participants) were in formal mentoring relationships. Eighty-five percent of mentors were managers/supervisors of the protégés. Of the 15% that were not, 10% were mentored by peers and 5% were mentored by other individuals.

MEASURES

Information was obtained from both mentors and their protégés. Multiple-item measures were used to assess mentor leadership behaviors and protégé perceptions of mentoring relationship quality.

Mentor's transformational leadership behaviors. Mentor transformational leadership behavior was measured using items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Although previous versions of the MLQ have been criticized for failure to empirically generate the factor structure proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994) to underlie transformational leadership (e.g., Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Yukl, 1998), research on the MLQ-Form 5X (e.g., Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1997; Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1997) has shown it to be a psychometrically sound instrument differentiating transformational leadership from other leadership styles. Mentors (and protégés) were asked to judge how frequently they (their mentors) exhibited specific behaviors measured by the MLQ-5X. Mentors completed the self-rating form of the MLQ-5X and protégés completed the other-rating form. Behavior was measured on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently, if not always*). Sample items from each transformational leadership 4-item subscale (protégé form) include the following: (a) idealized influence—behavior (“considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions”), (b) idealized influence—attribute (“goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group”), (c) inspirational motivation (“talks optimistically about the future”), (d) intellectual stimulation (“suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments”), and (e) individualized consideration (“con-

siders an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others"). Prior research (e.g., Bycio et al., 1995; Yammarino, Spangler, & Dubinsky, 1998) indicates that the MLQ subscales of transformational leadership may be conceptually but not empirically distinct. Because of these empirical findings, high intercorrelations (ranging from .67 to .81) among the subscales in the present study, and results from factor analyses, we followed prior research (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Dubinsky, Yammarino, & Jolson, 1995) and considered transformational leadership as one 20-item scale computed by averaging participant's responses to the 20 items composing the five subscales. Comparable transformational leadership scales were created for each mentor self-rating ($\alpha = .80$) and protégé observation ($\alpha = .95$).

Categorization of agreement. The degree of agreement between mentor and protégé ratings of transformational leadership involves considering differences between these ratings. Edwards (1993, 1994) noted several potential substantive and methodological problems with using difference scores for assessing self-other rating agreement. He encouraged researchers to develop and use alternate approaches to difference scores for assessing self-other rating agreement. We followed an alternative procedure developed by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) to generate category assignments (i.e., how self-aware the mentor was in relation to the protégé's assessment of his or her transformational leadership behavior). The mentor's self-rating regarding his or her transformational leadership behavior was compared to the protégé's rating regarding the mentor's style. The difference between the mentor and protégé on this variable was determined by comparing each dyad's difference score to the mean difference score. Specifically, mentors whose difference scores were one-half standard deviation or more above the mean difference were categorized as overestimators. Mentors whose difference scores were one-half standard deviation or more below the mean difference were categorized as underestimators. When mentors' difference scores were within one-half standard deviation of the mean difference, those mentors were categorized as being in agreement. Thus, deviation from the mean difference was used to produce the categorizations.

Quality of mentoring relationship. We used three measures to assess the quality of the mentoring relationship: two 10-item scales from Noe (1988) involving (a) career development (sample item: "Mentor gave you assignments or tasks in your work that prepare you for an advanced position") ($\alpha = .92$), (b) psychosocial support (sample item: "My mentor has conveyed

empathy for the concerns and feelings I have discussed with him/her”) ($\alpha = .93$), and (c) a 3-item scale measuring mentoring effectiveness (sample item: “In all, I believe that my relationship with my mentor has been professionally productive”) ($\alpha = .93$). No prior empirical investigation has measured the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship as perceived by the protégé. Therefore, we created the mentoring effectiveness scale to ascertain how productive the protégé believed the relationship with the mentor was. For all three scales, protégés were asked to indicate their extent of agreement with each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*).

Control variables. Prior theoretical and empirical research on mentoring (e.g., Kram, 1985; Murray, 1991; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Thomas, 1993) suggests that protégé experience (i.e., job level, education level) and the demographic characteristics of both mentor and protégé (i.e., age, gender, and race) can affect perception of the mentoring relationship. In addition, Yammarino and Atwater (1997) suggested that demographic characteristics may influence self-other rating agreement. To control for these potential effects, age, gender, and race of both mentor and protégé, and the protégé’s job level and education level were entered into the analyses as covariates.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the scale means, standard deviations, and product-moment correlations among the measures.

A one-way MANOVA with career development, psychosocial support, and mentoring effectiveness as dependent variables, agreement category as the independent variable, and protégé job level and education level as well as both protégé and mentor age, gender, and race as covariates was run. Results indicated a significant multivariate effect for agreement category, Wilk’s $\lambda = 8.67$, $df = 6, 370$, $p < .001$. In addition, a significant univariate effect for agreement category was found for measures of career development, $F(2, 187) = 10.11$, $p < .001$, $MS = 6.82$; psychosocial support, $F(2, 187) = 21.80$, $p < .0001$, $MS = 5.60$; and mentoring effectiveness, $F(2, 187) = 17.48$, $p < .0001$, $MS = 5.95$.

Table 2 highlights several significant mean differences in study variables across the agreement categories. These differences resulted from a series of one-way univariate ANOVAs with mentor self-ratings of transformational leadership, protégé ratings of transformational leadership, careers development, psychosocial support, and mentoring effectiveness as dependent

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Measures

Measure	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. M/Tfl	3.15	.42	—											
2. P/Tfl	2.97	.57	.29*	—										
3. CarDev	3.48	.88	.04	.38*	—									
4. PscSoc	4.07	.57	.23*	.65*	.42*	—								
5. MenEff	4.27	.86	.16*	.62*	.48*	.67*	—							
6. P/Gender	1.7	1.05	-.03	-.15*	-.16*	-.16*	.52*	—						
7. P/Age	30.65	7.16	.15*	.00	-.06	.05	-.22*	-.34*	—					
8. P/Race	1.83	.37	.02	.14	.02	.11	.15*	.08	.03	—				
9. P/EducLev	5.89	.89	.06	-.09	-.23*	-.15*	.19*	.44*	.00	.30*	—			
10. P/JobLev	2.17	1.84	.01	.02	.05	.03	.33*	.39*	-.16*	.39*	.38*	—		
11. M/Gender	1.87	1.22	-.07	-.10	.01	-.09	.46*	.66*	-.26*	.46*	.23*	.26*	—	
12. M/Age	38.65	11.56	.20*	.04	.02	.09	-.12	-.26*	.40*	-.21*	-.05	.00	-.31*	—
13. M/Race	1.91	.29	.06	.00	-.02	.02	-.01	.12	-.01	.24*	-.04	.13	.02	.06

NOTE: M/Tfl = Mentor transformational leadership self-report, P/Tfl = Protégé rating of mentor's transformational leadership, CarDev = Career development, PscSoc = Psychosocial support, MenEff = Mentoring relationship effectiveness, P/Gender = Protégé's gender (1 = female, 2 = male), P/Age = Protégé's age, P/Race = Protégé's race (1 = minority, 2 = majority), P/EducLev = Protégé education level (1 = high school, 7 = graduate level), P/JobLev = Protégé's job level (?), M/Gender = Mentor's gender (1 = female, 2 = male), M/EducLev = Mentor education level (1 = high school, 7 = graduate level), M/Age = Mentor's age, M/Race = Mentor's race (1 = minority, 2 = majority).

* $p < .05$.

variables, agreement category as the independent variable, and protégé job level and education level as well as both protégé and mentor age, gender, and race as covariates. Results indicated significant differences in mentor self-ratings of transformational leadership, $F(2, 188) = 17.10, p < .001, MS = 2.41$; and protégé ratings of transformational leadership, $F(2, 188) = 63.80, p < .0001, MS = 11.92$. Bonferroni post hoc tests (familywise error rate tests with $p < .05$) of mean differences between agreement categories indicated that the mean mentor self-rating of transformational leadership for underestimator dyads ($M = 2.94, SD = .40$) was significantly less than the score for in-agreement dyads ($M = 3.15, SD = .39$), which in turn was significantly less than the score for overestimator dyads ($M = 3.36, SD = .37$). Similar tests of mean differences between agreement categories indicated that the mean protégé rating of transformational leadership for overestimator dyads ($M = 2.52, SD = .43$) was significantly less than the score for in-agreement dyads ($M = 2.98, SD = .44$), which in turn was significantly less than the score for underestimator dyads ($M = 3.47, SD = .45$).

Hypothesis 1 was not supported. Bonferroni post hoc tests (familywise error rate tests with $p < .05$) of mean differences between agreement categories indicated that the mean mentoring effectiveness score for the underestimator dyads ($M = 4.51, SD = .45$) was significantly greater than the score in both the in-agreement dyads ($M = 4.24, SD = .62$) and overestimator dyads ($M = 3.84, SD = .65$). In addition, the mean career development score for the underestimator dyads ($M = 3.93, SD = .63$) was significantly greater than the score in both the in-agreement dyads ($M = 3.42, SD = .94$) and overestimator dyads ($M = 3.15, SD = .85$). Moreover, the mean psychosocial support score for the underestimator dyads ($M = 4.40, SD = .43$) was significantly greater than the score in both the in-agreement dyads ($M = 4.09, SD = .52$) and overestimator dyads ($M = 3.75, SD = .59$).

Hypothesis 2 was fully supported. As shown in Table 2, mentors who overestimated their transformational leadership behavior were associated with the lowest levels of mentoring effectiveness, career development, and psychosocial support as reported by protégés.

Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. It was expected that mentors who were in agreement with their protégés regarding their transformational leadership behaviors would be associated with higher levels of mentoring effectiveness than underestimators, who in turn would be associated with higher levels of mentoring effectiveness than overestimators. As shown in Table 2, those mentors who were in agreement with their protégés were associated with higher levels of mentoring relationship effectiveness and psychosocial support when compared to overestimators. However, underestimators were associated with the highest levels of mentoring effectiveness, career

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables in
Mentor Versus Protégé Agreement Groups

Measure	<i>In Agreement^a</i>		<i>Over-estimator^b</i>		<i>Under-estimator^c</i>		<i>Significant Mean Differences (p < .05)</i>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Transformational leadership							
Mentor self-ratings	3.15	.39	3.36	.37	2.94	.40	U < I < O
Protégé ratings	2.98	.44	2.52	.43	3.47	.45	O < I < U
Quality of mentoring relationship							
Mentoring relationship effectiveness	4.24	.62	3.84	.65	4.51	.45	U > I > O
Career development	3.42	.94	3.15	.85	3.93	.63	U > I; U > O
Psychosocial support	4.09	.52	3.75	.59	4.40	.43	U > I > O
Control variables							
Protégé gender	1.56	.50	1.65	.48	1.51	.50	
Protégé age	31.39	6.75	31.42	6.51	30.22	6.33	
Protégé race	1.81	.40	1.79	.41	1.91	.29	
Protégé education level	5.93	.71	5.92	.75	5.58	.88	U < I; U < O
Mentor gender	1.76	.43	1.72	.45	1.56	.50	
Mentor age	40.73	8.36	40.97	10.03	40.12	7.99	
Mentor race	1.89	.31	1.91	.28	1.92	.27	
Mentor education level	6.39	1.43	6.26	1.15	6.06	.96	

NOTE: I = In agreement, O = Overestimator, U = Underestimator. Significant mean differences are based on results of Bonferroni post hoc tests. Gender (1 = female, 2 = male), Race (1 = minority, 2 = majority), Education level (1 = high school to 7 = graduate degree).

a. $N = 84$. Includes means and standard deviations for mentors whose self-ratings of transformational leadership were within 1/2 standard deviation of protégé ratings.

b. $N = 60$. Includes means and standard deviations for mentors whose self-ratings of transformational leadership were 1/2 standard deviation ABOVE the protégé ratings.

c. $N = 55$. Includes means and standard deviations for mentors whose self-ratings of transformational leadership were 1/2 standard deviation BELOW the protégé ratings.

development, and psychosocial support as reported by protégés. This hypothesis was partially supported because overestimators were expected and found to be the least effective mentors when compared to in-agreement and underestimator dyads.

Several covariates influenced mentor self-ratings and protégé ratings of transformational leadership, mentoring effectiveness, career development, and psychosocial support. First, mentor self-ratings of transformational leadership were influenced by protégé age, $F(1, 188) = 6.89, p < .01, MS = .97$;

and mentor age, $F(1, 188) = 5.94, p < .02, MS = .84$. Second, protégé ratings of transformational leadership were influenced by protégé gender, $F(1, 188) = 11.40, p < .001, MS = 2.13$; and mentor education level, $F(1, 188) = 9.95, p < .01, MS = 1.86$. Third, the effect for the protégé education level covariate on mentoring effectiveness was significant, $F(1, 188) = 5.14, p < .03, MS = 1.76$, suggesting that this covariate influenced mentoring effectiveness. No other covariates significantly influenced mentoring effectiveness. Fourth, effects for the protégé gender and protégé education level covariates on career development were significant; $F(1, 188) = 7.35, p < .01, MS = 5.94$; and $F(1, 188) = 11.02, p < .001, MS = 8.90$, respectively, suggesting that these covariates influenced career development. No other covariates significantly influenced career development. Lastly, effects for the protégé education level and mentor race covariates on psychosocial support were significant; $F(1, 188) = 6.21, p < .02, MS = 2.33$; and $F(1, 188) = 5.96, p < .02, MS = 2.24$, respectively, suggesting that these covariates influenced psychosocial support. No other covariates significantly influenced psychosocial support.

In addition, as shown in Table 2, protégé education level was significantly different across the mentor-protégé agreement categories, $F(2, 195) = 3.91, p < .02, MS = 2.32$. Bonferroni tests of differences among agreement categories indicated that protégé educational level for underestimator dyads ($M = 5.58, SD = .88$) was significantly less than both overestimator ($M = 5.92, SD = .75$) and in-agreement ($M = 5.93, SD = .71$) dyads. There were no other significant differences across the agreement categories for the control variables.

DISCUSSION

An important finding of this study, contrary to Hypotheses 1 and 3, was that mentors who were in agreement with their protégés regarding their transformational leadership behavior did not experience the highest quality of mentoring relationship. Instead, mentors who underestimated their transformational leadership behavior were associated with highest perceived quality of mentoring relationship according to protégés. These results support findings reported in Atwater et al. (1997, 1995) and Van Velsor, Taylor, and Leslie (1992) that underestimators are perceived as most effective by others.

One possible explanation for our findings is that mentors, who display transformational leadership behaviors, set high standards of performance for themselves and others, yet may be overly critical in their self-evaluation. Prior research (e.g., Bass, 1998; Covey, 1997; Jung, Bass, & Sosik, 1996) suggests that self-discipline and critical self-assessment may be necessary

for the moral development of individuals who display transformational leadership. This perspective views transformational leadership as being consistent with collectivism, Eastern philosophies advocating selflessness, and influence patterns of Greek philosophy. To be viewed as an effective mentor (i.e., a source of wisdom and inspiration for the protégé), one may have to possess humility often associated with subrogation of self-interests for the good of others and/or collective interests. Examples of such humility can be found in business (e.g., William Hewlett, David Packard), political (e.g., Gandhi), religious (e.g., Mother Teresa, Buddha), and social work (e.g., Jimmy Carter) contexts.

Similarly, Covey (1997) argued that influence processes derived from the ancient Greeks, which suggest a sequence of character (ethos), relations (pathos), and logic (logos), are necessary for effective mentoring. First, a strong character may build credibility and provide a foundation for role modeling inherent in both transformational leadership and mentoring relationships. Critical self-evaluation may be a prerequisite for role modeling provided through the idealized influence behavioral component of transformational leadership (Megerian & Sosik, 1996). Second, an effective mentoring relationship suggests an emotional alignment between the mentor and protégé, understanding, caring, and genuineness (Covey, 1997). Idealized influence (charisma) and inspirational motivation help to form a strong emotional bond between the mentor and the protégé (Bass, 1998). In fact, DiTomaso (1993) argued that charisma, the largest behavioral component of transformational leadership (Bass, 1998), may be viewed as accumulated wisdom (i.e., beliefs, values, meanings that experience has shown to be true). As such, critical self-evaluation (i.e., private self-consciousness) may be important to the construction of charismatic images of the mentor as a "wise sage" (Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). Third, a logical, reasoned influence process, encouraged through intellectual stimulation, also may facilitate the construction of the mentor's image as a source of wisdom. Intellectual stimulation focuses on questioning assumptions and constantly seeking new and better ways to teach others as well as perform tasks. Such critical thinking exhibited by the mentor promotes protégé creativity and innovation (Torrance, 1983). Similarly, Avolio (1994) suggested that critical self-evaluation on the part of the mentor plays an integral role in continuous personal improvement. Given that the present study did not measure variables such as wisdom and level of moral development of the mentor (and protégé), future research should test these conjectures by exploring the role of self-evaluation, character, and wisdom in mentoring relationships.

An alternative explanation is that mentors underestimate the mentoring functions they supply the protégé, particularly regarding the psychosocial

support provided. Psychosocial support parallels the individual consideration behavioral component of transformational leadership, because both focus on empathy that is necessary to foster a developmental relationship with the protégé (Megerian & Sosik, 1996). Mentors may not be able to assess how much psychosocial support they offer protégés because of the relatively intangible nature of this function (Noe, 1988). Therefore, mentors may underestimate their leadership efforts and the resultant quality of the mentoring relationship.

Another explanation may be that mentors who behave as transformational leaders may be generally humble, modest individuals who are conservative in their self-assessments, and who think less of self-centered outcomes associated with their behavior and more of their protégés. Support for this explanation is provided by Kanungo and Mendonca (1996), who discussed transformational leadership in the context of altruistic leadership. Kanungo and Mendonca defined altruism as motivation through concern for others. They argued that altruistic leaders engender trust and admiration and therefore gain referent power. Ragins (1997) argued that referent power is often attributed to mentors by protégés. Altruistic behavior may stem from the learned psychological need for nurturance (Jackson, 1967), a benefit of mentoring relationships often reported by mentors (e.g., Kram, 1983, 1985). Results of the present study suggest that underestimation of one's mentoring behaviors may be related to altruistic behavior. Specifically, mentors who are underestimators may be motivated more for a concern for others and see their actions as less important, and therefore may be more humble than mentors who are overestimators or in agreement. Future research should examine the role of altruism in mentoring relationships.

Atwater et al. (1997) noted that underestimation "appears to reflect modesty and is not accompanied by lower performance" (p. 163). Many executives are now suggesting that leadership through humility, that is, being completely authentic and genuine and showing more respect for others' opinions through genuine listening, is the route to success (Bell, 1997; Covey, 1997). These humble characteristics are similar to those behaviors demonstrated by some transformational leaders and mentors (Bass, 1998).

Effective mentors are willing to confidently show their own challenges and frustrations. They act as facilitators of discovery, not teachers. Such leaders remove the masks of position as they demonstrate enthusiasm for learning. Great mentors guide the development of wisdom by working as hard to learn as they do to help another learn. (Bell, 1997, p. 15)

Through this mutual learning process, transformational mentors may underestimate the effect of their relationship with the protégé.

An interesting finding was that mentors who overestimated their ratings of transformational leadership were associated with the lowest quality of mentoring relationships. This finding contradicts a consistent finding in trait theories of leadership (see Yukl, 1998, for a comprehensive review) that self-confidence is a quality effective leaders possess. Although prior research suggests that transformational leaders are generally self-confident (Bass, 1998) and may be narcissistic (Kets de Vries, 1994), evidence exists that not all transformational leaders may possess such characteristics. For example, Sosik and Megerian (in press) found that the relationship between social self-confidence of managers and subordinate ratings of transformational leadership was moderated by self-other rating agreement. Specifically, they found that the correlation between manager social self-confidence and subordinate ratings of transformational leadership for overestimators ($r = -.18$) was significantly different from the corresponding correlation for underestimators ($r = .63$). This finding suggests that underestimators may project a quiet confidence that others find appealing. In fact, Bass and Avolio (1994) argued that unpretentious and “down-to-earth” individuals, who may underestimate their leadership qualities, may elicit the highest ratings of transformational leadership from others. Results of the present study suggest that pompous self-confidence (i.e., self-confidence without agreement) may be detrimental to perceptions of mentor effectiveness with subordinates.

An unexpected finding was that mentors who were categorized within in-agreement mentor/protégé dyads were part of lower-quality mentoring relationships than their underestimator peers. This result contradicts prior research (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992) that found leaders who were in agreement with their followers regarding their transformational leadership behavior to be most effective. One potential explanation for this discrepancy involves the differential contexts of the Atwater and Yammarino (1992) study and the present study. Atwater and Yammarino (1992) explored self-other agreement on transformational leadership in a military setting, using U.S. Naval Academy students as participants. The inherent nature of such a structured, conformist, command-and-control context, where it is important to be aware of how one presents oneself as having “the right stuff” or image, may equate modesty or humility (i.e., underestimation of transformational leadership behavior) with military career suicide. In contrast, the present study examined self-other agreement on transformational leadership in a nonmilitary setting, using corporate employees as

participants. Relative to military contexts, mentoring relationships in corporate business contexts may afford safe havens for one to let his or her guard down and be modest, humble, and more realistic regarding self-assessments of leadership qualities. Such a context may have supported the efficacy of transformational leadership behaviors of underestimators to be associated with the highest levels of psychosocial support, career development, and mentoring effectiveness as reported by protégés.

An alternative explanation concerns complacency. When mentor/protégé dyads are in agreement regarding the mentor's leadership style, they may be more complacent in their relationships with one another. In this case, the career development and psychosocial needs of the protégé may be met. Accordingly, the protégé may provide feedback to the mentor regarding satisfaction with the relationship. Therefore, the mentor may perceive no need to alter behavior to increase the quality of the relationship. As such, the mentor may actually lower his or her level of motivation and involvement in the relationship (Ragins, 1997), in contrast to the underestimator mentor who perceives the need to adapt his/her behavior.

Certain limitations of the study, which are suggestive of future research paths, should be noted. First, the sample consisted of graduate student participants, who collectively represented employees from a wide variety of ages, backgrounds, and industries. Such a sample was judged preferable to using employees within the same organization due to the potential for data reflecting shared participant pool, organizationally specific values, or mentoring programs that may or may not be representative of the general population. Nevertheless, the limitations of generalizations from "convenient" sample data are acknowledged. Subsequent investigations could employ samples from specific organizations and industries.

Second, given that 91% of our sample were involved in informal mentoring relationships, results of the present study are generalizable to informal mentoring relationships. Also, the informal nature of the mentoring relationships may have skewed the results. It may be that the underestimator mentors in this study did not realize the nature of the mentoring relationship they had with their protégés, and, hence, they did not understand the benefits the protégés received from the relationship. Chao et al. (1992) noted distinctions in process and outcomes associated with formal and informal mentoring relationships. Future research should replicate the present study using a sample composed of primarily formal mentoring relationships.

Third, 85% of the sample consisted of mentors who were direct supervisors. Several studies have suggested mentoring relationships involve special nuances beyond superior-subordinate relationships, and supervisors should opt not to mentor their subordinates (Geiger-DuMond & Boyle, 1995; Shea,

1995). However, it is interesting to note that the mentors in the present study offered both psychosocial and career development support, especially in the case of underestimator dyads. As Chao et al. (1992) suggested, although many individuals in the organization can provide the counseling, confirmation, and acceptance roles associated with the psychosocial mentoring function, few can provide the career-related roles of coaching, providing visibility and exposure, and sponsorship. Chao et al. (1992) noted the career development function is not "as easily performed by a co-worker or supervisor" and may be unique to the mentor's role (p. 628). It therefore appears that although many protégés in this study did have direct supervisors as mentors, mentors who were underestimators were able to offer both career development and effective psychosocial support regardless of their management position. Future research should investigate the mentoring relationships between protégés with and without mentors who are also their direct superiors.

Fourth, the present study used a proxy measure of self-awareness (self-other agreement). Future research should use validated measures of public and private self-awareness (e.g., Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975) in conjunction with self-other agreement. In addition, other important variables may potentially moderate these relationships found in the present study. For example, future research could focus on how cross-gender (Burke & McKeen, 1990) and/or cross-cultural issues (Cox, 1993) may affect perceptions of transformational leadership and the quality of mentoring relationships. Finally, understanding how humility in leadership and mentoring relationships, as demonstrated by the underestimator mentors, affects the outcomes associated with followers and protégés seems to be a promising new area for future research efforts. Also, investigating the dynamics of in-agreement dyads may provide useful data in understanding the outcomes associated with these relationships. Another interesting research area may involve the manner in which the quality of mentoring relationships affects career-related outcomes.

Results of the present study suggest several implications for organizational practitioners. First, the study indicates that in many cases mentors may be direct supervisors of protégés, and that these relationships may not be formally sanctioned through the organization's human resource programs. Therefore, human resource managers should provide developmental training for managers so they may handle and understand informal mentoring relationships. As such, organizations should train managers in offering mentoring functions (i.e., psychosocial support and career development), in responding to protégés on receipt of these functions, and in setting expectations between the protégé and mentor. Although this training may not be as

lengthy as formal mentoring program training, the intent should be to align managers with the traits of transformational leadership and mentor-like behaviors.

Second, the results summarized in Table 2 suggest that the transformational leadership behavior demonstrated by in-agreement and underestimator mentors resulted in higher levels of psychosocial support and career development for their protégés than the overestimators' protégés. Human resource training programs might be offered to help managers understand how transformational leadership behaviors may be applied to their relationships with all subordinates, and in particular, their protégés. Transformational leadership training programs could be modeled after aspects of the Full Range Leadership Development program (Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994). This leadership training program includes modules in which participants learn how to use delegation methods to develop follower's potential, how they are viewed by others as leaders, and how to improve their leadership behavior through critical self- and other-assessment and the preparation of a personalized leadership development plan. Such modules, which may promote self-awareness and the development of self and others, may be useful in promoting psychosocial support and career development of protégés.

Also, the study results indicate that overestimators were associated with the lowest levels of mentoring relationship quality. Therefore, managers who wish to enhance the quality of mentoring relationships should become aware of the potential overestimation of their transformational leadership behavior. To this end, human resource managers may want to offer humility training so managers may establish more accurate self-appraisals. Humility training allows individuals to acknowledge their own weaknesses, enhances interpersonal interactions, and develops empathy, patience, and gentleness for others (Means, Wilson, Sturm, & Biron, 1990). Emotional intelligence assessments and training may also be helpful in preparing managers to be more aware of their own self-image and others' perceptions of them (Goleman, 1998).

Because informal mentoring relationships may not be as readily available to women as to men (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), organizations wishing to enhance the success and well-being of women should consider the establishment of a formal mentoring program as a means of attaining this goal. Factors believed to be critical to the success of formal mentoring programs include the following: well-defined goals that are actively supported by all levels of management; training and development to foster an awareness of mentoring and its role in career development; the creation or modification of organizational structures to foster the desired behavior, such as incentive and reward systems; the design of an appropriate structure that enables protégés and

mentors to have meaningful work interactions and allows normal reporting relationships to remain intact; careful selection and matching; and support and feedback for those involved in the program (McKeen & Burke, 1989). Formal mentoring programs often begin with extensive training. Texas Commerce Bank's program begins with a two-day training session that teaches mentors and protégés what to expect from the relationship and how to get the most out of it. E. I. DuPont de Nemours holds a similar training program for both mentors and protégés stressing what their individual roles should be (Jossi, 1997).

In summary, this study was the first to examine the mentor-protégé agreement regarding mentor transformational leadership behavior and the resultant quality of mentoring relationship experienced. Underestimator dyads were found to experience the highest quality of mentoring relationships, whereas overestimator dyads reported the lowest quality of mentoring relationships. It is our hope that this study may help organizational researchers and managers to understand the complex processes that drive mentoring relationships that may be beneficial to mentors, protégés, and their organizations.

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Veronica M. Godshalk is an assistant professor of management and organization at The Pennsylvania State University at Great Valley, School of Graduate Professional Studies. She received her Ph.D. from Drexel University in organizational behavior and strategic management. Her current research primarily investigates the effects and outcomes individuals experience as they navigate their careers given their environment. She has written papers on career plateauing, mentoring, and the intersection of mentoring and leadership.

John J. Sosik is an associate professor of management and organization at The Pennsylvania State University at Great Valley, School of Graduate Professional Studies. He received his Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Binghamton in organizational behavior and human resource management. His current research interests include antecedents and consequences of transformational/charismatic leadership, mentoring issues, and high-performance and cross-cultural group processes and outcomes.