

Mentor Attraction: The Role of Protégé Personality, Mentors' Communication Style and
Mentors' Work Experience
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Abstract

The influence of protégé personality, mentors' communication style and mentors' work experience on mentor attraction was examined in this experimental study, using a 2x2 between subjects design. Participants (N=161) evaluated different mentors, that were presented in four scripts, differing in communication style (high expressiveness vs. low expressiveness) and work experience (high work experience vs. low work experience). The protégés' personality (openness, extroversion) was measured using the NEO-FFI personality questionnaire. The results of an analysis of covariance, where the protégés' personality was controlled, revealed that the more a protégé is extroverted the more he is attracted to an expressive mentor. Protégés' openness and mentors' work experience did not show a significant relation towards mentor attraction. Implications regarding the findings of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Mentoring, mentor attraction, personality, communication style

Introduction

Mentoring is becoming an increasingly important phenomenon to organizations (Young & Perrewé, 2000). Although there is limited empirical research regarding formal mentoring programs, they continue to gain popularity within organizations (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004). Mentoring can be defined as a process for the reciprocal, informal transmission of knowledge relevant to work between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé) (Bozeman & Feeney, 2008); and can be seen as a developmental relationship with the aim to enhance the growth and advancement of newcomers in organizations (Fagenson, 1989).

In general mentoring relationships provide different advantages to organizations. Mentored individuals have a higher job-satisfaction, recognition, career mobility/opportunity and higher number of promotions than their nonmentored counterparts (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Fagenson, 1989; Underhill 2006). Because of these benefits for the employee and the organization, many human resource managers attempt to establish formal mentoring programs to bring together mentors and protégés systematically (Armstrong, Allinson & Hayes, 2002). In mentoring programs these relationships between a mentor and a protégé are formally arranged and sanctioned by the organization; in contrast to informal mentoring, where mentorships are not managed, structured, or formally recognized by the organization (Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992). It is recognized that formal mentoring relationships usually are not as effective as informal mentoring relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Underhill, 2006; Allen et al., 2004). Protégés of informal mentors viewed their mentors as more effective than protégés of formal mentors and also received more career outcomes than nonmentored individuals (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Therefore it is important to understand the underlying mechanisms that influence and affect mentoring relationships and to find answers on how to

arrange successful mentoring programs where mentors and protégés are brought together by the organization.

In previous research regarding mentoring and mentor-protégé relationships various different aspects and components have been investigated within the last decades. An actual gap within the topic of mentoring literature is the lack of experiments that try to find out how formal program-based mentoring relationships work and how their efficacy can be improved. This is where the present study applies.

The present study investigates the communication on micro-level between the mentor and the protégé. At first the influence of the mentors' work experience on mentor attraction is investigated. Second, the role of the protégés' personality and the mentors' communication style regarding mentor attraction will be examined. Therefore, a link is made between the communication style *expressiveness* that represents one, but the most important, of several different ways in that individuals can communicate. *Expressiveness* represents behaviors as being extroverted and eloquent. Further this communication style is linked to two of the Big Five personality dimensions: (1) *extroversion* and (2) *openness* (see Costa & McCrae, 1992).

To examine these theoretical assumptions, an experimental setting was used. Four scripts, differing in communication style and work experience described different mentors. The participants, had to evaluate these regarding their attraction towards the presented mentors. Finally the protégés' personality (*extroversion, openness*) was measured. To analyze the data, an analysis of covariance was used to control the protégés' personality.

The following paragraph begins with the explanation of the expected relation between mentor attraction and the mentors' work experience. Further it is shown how the communication style of the mentor and the personality of the protégé are related to the topic of mentoring. Next the method of the conducted experiment is explained, followed by the results of the present study. Finally the results of the study are shown and discussed.

Mentoring and work experience

In general the work experience of mentors has gained little attention in the mentoring literature. A few studies paid attention to the seniority or tenure of the mentor regarding the mentor-protégé relationship. Arnold & Johnson (1997) for example state, that seniority of the mentor may enhance role modelling of the protégé, while de Vries, Webb & Eveline (2006) consider that seniority of the mentor may be connected to more instrumental benefits for the protégé. By definition, a mentor has more work experience in this sector than his protégé. Further it is shown, that employees with higher work experience have a higher job knowledge (Schmidt, Outerbridge & Hunter, 1986). This encompasses a possible preference of protégés for mentors with higher work experience, because the protégés could expect a higher quality of the mentoring relationship if the mentor has high work experience.

H1. Protégés in general prefer mentors with higher work experience over mentors with lower work experience

Communication and mentoring

Interpersonal communication in mentor protégé relationships. The success of a relationship between a mentor and a protégé depends on different circumstances. Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio & Feren (1988) concluded that protégés prefer mentors with higher levels of interpersonal competence, which incorporates behaviors regarding the interaction of a mentor and his protégé (eg. resolving conflict, motivating the subordinate). Further they state that these mentors are perceived as more capable of satisfying the needs of protégés in terms of emotional support, friendship and intimacy in interactions. Beyond that, the attraction to a potential mentor is positively related to the level of interpersonal competence displayed by the mentor. A study by Rubin & Martin (in Wrench & Punyanunt, 2004), identified ten different underlying behaviors that lead to interpersonal competence. These

behaviors are self-disclosure, empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, altercentrism, expressiveness, supportiveness, immediacy, and environmental control. The conclusion of the study by Wrench & Punyanunt (2004) is, that communication competence relates to a protégés' perception of mentoring and that competent communication in mentoring, as a communication based construct, is a necessity during a mentoring relationship. This leads to the assumption that the specific behavior of a mentor can affect the mentor-protégé relationship.

De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, Siberg, Gamenen, & Vlug (2009) uncovered via a lexical study seven communication style dimensions: (1) preciseness, (2) reflectiveness, (3) expressiveness, (4) supportiveness, (5) emotionality, (6) niceness and (7) threateningness. Communication style is defined by De Vries et al. (2009) as:

“The characteristic way a person sends verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal signals in social interactions denoting (a) who he or she is or wants to (appear to) be, (b) how he or she tends to relate to people with whom he or she interacts, and (c) in what way his or her messages should usually be interpreted” (p. 197).

A short overview with descriptions of the different communication styles is given in table 1. The factor *expressiveness* reflects a mix of talkactiveness, certainty, energy, eloquence and their negative counterparts, while the factor *preciseness* reflects a mix of clarity, conciseness, efficiency, composure and their negative counterparts. *Niceness* consists of the components friendliness (vs. unfriendliness), uncriticalness (vs. argumentativeness), modesty, and cheerfulness. In contrast with the factor *niceness*, *supportiveness* is characterized as a relational response factor reflecting mainly verbs describing how one responds to a person. While *niceness* reflects a general communication attitude, *supportiveness* reflects actual communication behaviors as a response to someone else and consists mainly components as accommodation, admiration, supportiveness, and stimulation.

Table 1.

Explanation of the seven communication styles (De Vries et al., 2009)

The seven factors	Explanation
expressiveness	e.g., extroverted, eloquent, and fluent vs. withdraw into one's shell, to fall silent, and to snap shut
preciseness	e.g., professional, expert, and precise vs. to waffle, to gas, and to giggle
niceness	e.g., nice, softhearted, and friendly vs. to keep harping on something, to make a fuss about something, and to contest something
supportiveness	e.g., to comfort someone, to put someone in the limelight, and to compliment someone vs. sarcastic, cynical, and mean
threateningness	e.g., to abuse someone, to bark at someone, and to threaten
emotionality	e.g., piqued, stressed, and sad vs. to joke, to be ironic about something, and relaxed
reflectiveness	e.g., to dissect oneself, to dissect something or someone, and passionate vs. coolly, formal, and to make a fool of someone

Threateningness as a factor reflects components as abuse, threateningness and deceptiveness. The *emotionality* factor contains the components sadness, irritability, anger and tension. *Reflectiveness*, as a smaller factor consists mainly of components as engagement, analytical reflectiveness and philosophical or poetic communication behavior (De Vries et al., 2009).

The majority of the behaviors by Rubin & Martin (in Wrench & Punyanunt, 2004), are quite similar to the communication styles of De Vries (2009) (e.g. expressiveness, supportiveness, empathy), so that a link between the communication styles and communication competence can be made.

This points up the link between mentoring and the communication styles by De Vries et al. (2009). Wrench & Punyanunt (2004) concluded that a mentor incompetent in her or his

attempts at communicating with his or her protégé causes an ineffective mentor-protégé relationship.

While the seven communication styles by De Vries et al. (2009) define seven dimensions regarding the communication style of individuals, that are used in this study to categorize the mentors' communication style, the Big Five personality factors are used to define different personality dimensions of the protégés. The following section will show how the Big Five personality factors are related to the topic of mentoring.

Big-Five personality factors and relation to mentoring. Mount & Barrick (1998) state that the the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which consists of the Big Five personality factors, gained considerable support as a comprehensive framework for normal personality. Further it is claimed to be the best paradigm for personality structure (Zuckermann, Kuhlman, Joireman, Teta, & Kraft, 1993). The five dimensions of the FFM include (1) emotional stability, (2) extraversion, (3) openness to experience, (4) agreeableness and (5) conscientiousness.

Emotional stability contains the degree to which people experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, anger, inhibition, tendency to focus on the self, and self-consciousness. Individuals that are highly emotional stable are calm and even-keeled, while those low on emotional stability feel stressed and upset. *Extraversion* refers to qualities as sociability, activity level, assertiveness and positive emotions, which are more extroverted. Less extroverted tend to be more reserved, are less likely to experience positive feelings and have a lower energy level. The factor *openness* refers to factors as breadth of interests, tolerance of a range of values, emotional flexibility and receptivity to new experiences and ideas.

Agreeableness and its counterpart disagreeableness pertain to interpersonal behaviors. While agreeable individuals are friendly, trustful, altruistic and flexible in dealing with others, disagreeable individuals are more critical, argumentative and unforgiving. *Conscientiousness* consists of two factors. Achievement orientations, as the first factor, incorporates the degree

to which it is important for individuals to succeed and to which degree they are willing to work to achieve results. Dependability as the second factor incorporates qualities as thoroughness, orderliness and follow-through (Bozionelos, 2004a; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Costa & McCrae, 2004; Lee, Jonston, & Doughery, 2000).

Within the mentoring literature it is shown that the various different behaviors or personality characteristics of both, mentors and protégés, influence the mentor-protégé relationship in several ways. Turban & Doughery (1994) state, that protégés are able to influence the amount of mentoring they receive. For example protégés with internal loci of control, high self-monitoring and emotional stability are more likely to initiate and to receive mentoring. Further it is shown that the Big Five personality dimensions are related to career success. For example extraversion is related positively to salary level, promotions, and career satisfaction (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001); the extroversion \times openness interaction is positively related to work involvement (Bozionelos, 2004b). Regarding different protégé personalities and the resulting preferences of communication styles of mentors, no studies exist yet. Thus, the question is how different protégé personalities influence their preference of mentors regarding mentors' communication style.

Connecting communication styles and personality. The question is now how the different personality characteristics of protégés influence their preference regarding mentors communicating in different ways. To find an answer on this question it is necessary to connect different personality dimensions with different communication styles.

A first look at the different communication styles by de Vries et al. (2009) let one assume that some communication styles tend to be more important to have a deeper look at, than others. Academic studies show that protégés in general prefer mentors that are communicating in a *nice* (Gray & Smith, 2000) and *non-threatening* (Tepper, 1995) way. These two factors were thus not a part of this study. Further the factors preciseness, emotionality, supportiveness and

reflectiveness were not considered in this study, based on two main reasons. At first one can assume that protégés in general prefer mentors communicating precise (on an expert way), supportive and reflective. Emotionality, as a communication style, incorporates behaviors such as being stressed or being sad. None of these behaviors seem to be useful for a successful mentor-protégé relationship. The last communication style *expressiveness* instead seems to be much more important and of more influence than the others. *Expressiveness* as a communication style incorporates behaviors as being extroverted, eloquent, and fluent vs. withdraw into ones shell, to fall silent, and to snap shut (De Vries et al., 2009).

Extroverted individuals tend to be more sociable, person-oriented and open for suggestions, talkative, and active, while less extroverted have a lower energy level and like to be more alone, retiring, reserved, and tend to be stand-alone individuals (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002; Bozionelos, 2004a; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Costa & McCrae, 2004; Lee, Jonston, & Doughery, 2000). Based on the, within the mentoring literature, frequently used similarity-attraction paradigm by Byrne (1971), who states that the more similar in individual perceives another individual to be, the more this individual is liked, the following can be assumed: More extroverted individuals most likely prefer a mentor who is communicating on a more expressive way, because this would imply a congruence in communicating behavior and personality. Meanwhile an incongruity in mentors' expressiveness and the protégés' extraversion could result in a more ineffective relationship with a protégé overstrained and intimidated by the mentors' expressive way of communicating.

H2. The more a protégé is extroverted, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way

Based on the similarity-attraction paradigm by Byrne (1971), a link can be made between expressiveness and the personality trait openness to experience. The factor *openness* refers to character traits as breadth of interests, tolerance of a range of values, emotional flexibility and receptivity to new experiences and ideas. Individuals scoring low on openness to experience tend to be insensitive, and conventional (Roccas et al. 2002; Bozionelos, 2004a; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Costa & McCrae, 2004; Lee, Jonston, & Doughery, 2000). This could imply that protégés that score high on openness to experience prefer mentors communicating in an expressive way, while protégés scoring low on openness to experience prefer a mentor who is not communicating on a expressive way. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3. The more a protégé is open for experiences, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way

Method

Participants. The participants were exclusively students (1) to make sure that the participants are easily able to imagine being in a mentor-protégé relationship and (2) to ensure that they did not have any experiences with mentor-protégé programs in organizations to avoid bias, based on possibly changed expectations of a mentor-protégé relationship based on earlier experiences . The study was conducted at the department of behavioral science at the University of Twente. Students that took part at this study were rewarded with credits for the department-own respondent-hours-system, that the Students have to gather while their bachelor degree program. In total 80 Dutch and 81 German students participated in this study. Respondents' mean age was 21 ($SD = 1,96$), 121 (75.2 %) were female and 40 (24.8 %) male.

Procedure. The respondents received a link to a website containing an online version of the study. The study contained an instruction for the respondents to brief them on the upcoming

tasks. An instruction regarding the mentor description told the respondents to imagine that they are just begun to work at an international organization that makes use of mentoring programs and that they should imagine to get a mentor, that is described in the following text. Further a small global definition of mentoring was given; “Mentoring is an intense work relation between a senior (mentor) and junior (mentee) employee. The mentor is more experienced and gives personal advice to the mentee, coaches the mentee, and supports the mentee in development of his/her career.” In total four different versions, each for one of the four mentors, existed. Due to the fact that a huge amount of German students are studying at the University of Twente, the scripts were in English to avoid differences in interpretations of these. After completing the questionnaire, respondents got a debriefing and were given the opportunity of leaving their e-mail address if they wanted to know the results of the study. Beyond the e-mail address, the whole study was anonymous.

Scenario Factors. The four profiles described mentors differing from one another in terms of the mentor’s work experience (high or low) and expressiveness (high or low). In general the scripts consisted of a description of a departmental manager (the mentor), similar to employee descriptions that can be found on websites of larger international organizations, where employees introduce themselves regarding their work. The four scripts differed in the main description of the personality of the manager, while the introduction, which contained general information about the manager (e.g. name and education) stayed the same, with exception of seniority. The independent variables of the 2x2 between subject design were manipulated as follows.

Work experience of the mentor. To manipulate the work experience of the mentor the seniority of the manager was changed. In the scripts versions with ‘low work experience’ a seniority of two years was indicated. A seniority of two years was chosen to ensure that the

mentor is perceived as quite new to the organization, and thus remembers his days as a newcomer, but with enough work experience to fulfill the role of a mentor on a plausible way. In the 'high work experience' scripts a seniority of 15 years was chosen, to ensure a noticeable difference to the 'low work experience' condition. To avoid problems of plausibility and credibility no age of the mentor was stated.

Communication style of the mentor. To manipulate the altitude of the communication style expressiveness of the mentor, two different descriptions of the manager were composed. These two versions were mainly based on the verbs and adjectives that de Vries et al. (2009) have found in their study that reflect the communication style expressiveness. Because of the fact that some of these adjectives and verbs correlate positively and some negatively with expressiveness these perfectly fitted to compose a 'low expressive' and a 'high expressive' description of a mentor (e.g. talkative vs. to be silent). For example a sentence of the 'high expressive' manager; "One of my strengths is my open-minded and energetic personality". The manipulated part of the high expressiveness script is formulated as: "One of my strengths is my open-minded and energetic personality. For me, as a departmental manager, the communication between me and my co-workers is of particular importance. My self-assurance and temperamental personality characterizes my style of leadership. To fall silent, shyness and a closed personality are not beneficial for the career, open-mindedness and energy in contrast can be very helpful." The description of the low expressive mentor was formulated as: "I would describe me and my style of leadership as reserved. In general I am a quite silent and closed person. One of my strengths is to wait and see and not to directly interact. Often I fall silent and keep quiet, because I want to give my coworkers the opportunity to act as they prefer and grant them much job autonomy."

Pretest of the scripts. The scripts describing the mentors were pretested regarding the communication style *expressiveness*. For this purpose 21 Dutch and German students were recruited. 10 students received a script describing a high expressive mentor, 11 received a script describing a low expressive mentor. Further they received a questionnaire to measure if the respondents perceive and interpret the described mentor as intended. This questionnaire contained all the verbs and adjectives that were found by de Vries et al. (2009) regarding expressiveness. In total the questionnaire contained 30 items, based on these verbs and adjectives (e.g. I think that the manager can be described as *extroverted*) that had to be rated by the respondents on a seven-point Likert scale. The analyses showed that both scripts were perceived and interpreted by the respondents as intended. A *t*-test showed that there is a significant difference between the group ‘high expressiveness’ and ‘low expressiveness’; $t(19) = 5.39, p < .01$ with mean scores and a standard deviation of $M = 5.76, SD = .66$ for the high expressive condition and $M = 3.54, SD = 1.14$ for the low expressive condition. These results show, that the scripts can be used for this study. The manipulation of work experience was not pretested. The main study contained a manipulation check to see if the respondents realized this manipulation.

Measurements. The protégés’ attraction towards the mentor was measured via a six item scale by Olian et al. (1988). The original scale was slightly adjusted to fit the needs of this study perfectly. To see if the participants perceive the difference in work experience of the mentors, a manipulation check of work experience was included. The major part of the study provided the Dutch translation of the 60 item NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) by Hoekstra, Ormel & Fruyt (2003). The NEO-FFI was invented in 1989 by Costa and McCrae and is widely used in different areas of research (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 2008).

Results

The manipulation check confirmed the effectiveness of the work experience manipulation.

The two-way ANOVA results show a significant main effect of work experience ($F(1, 157) = 73.18, p < .01, \eta^2 = .328$) regarding the dependent variable measuring the perceived work experience of the mentor. This shows, the significant difference between the low work experience and high work experience scripts. Mean scores show that the scripts differ in the intended direction ($M = 4.12; SD = .67$) for the high work experience scripts and ($M = 2.94; SD = 1.02$) for the low work experience scripts. Further it is shown that there is, as expected, no main effect of expressiveness ($F(1, 157) = 0.14, p = .71, \eta^2 = .001$) and no interaction of expressiveness and work experience ($F(1, 157) = 1.51, p = .22, \eta^2 = .01$). Thus it can be concluded, that the scripts are viable for the intended hypothesis tests.

Descriptive statistics. The results of table 2 show, that the participants score quite high on expressiveness and openness regarding the maximum score of 60 that could be reached for extraversion and openness in the NEO-FFI questionnaire.

Table 2.

Mean scores and standard deviations of expressiveness and openness per condition

Condition	N	Extraversion		Openness	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High expressiveness, high work experience	41	41.3	5.7	39.8	6.0
High expressiveness, low work experience	43	42.0	6.1	39.7	5.92
Low expressiveness, high work experience	39	40.5	6.5	40.3	6.0
Low expressiveness, low work experience	38	42.8	5.5	40.3	5.1

Hypothesis tests. An ANOVA was conducted to test the first hypothesis and to see if there are main effects of work experience or expressiveness without controlling extraversion and openness on mentor attraction. The results show, that no main effect of expressiveness is given ($F(1, 157) = 2.74, p = .10, \eta^2 = .017$). The *first hypothesis* proposed that protégés in general prefer mentors with higher work experience over mentors with lower work experience. The results showed that there is no significant effect of work experience, $F(1, 157) = 2.80, p = .096, \eta^2 = .018$. An analysis of covariance was conducted for hypothesis two and three, to control the personality of the respondents (extroversion and openness). The *second hypothesis* proposed that the more a protégé is extroverted, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way. The ANCOVA results show, that hypothesis 2 is accepted. The predicted main effect of extraversion was significant, $F(1, 155) = 4.25, p < .05, \eta^2 = .027$. The *third hypothesis* proposed that the more a protégé is open to experiences, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way. The predicted main effect of openness was not significant, $F(1, 155) = .202, p = .65, \eta^2 = .001$. This hypothesis had to be rejected. Additionally it is worth to mention that there is no main effect of work experience found in this ANCOVA analysis ($F(1, 155) = 2.38, p = .13, \eta^2 = .015$).

Discussion

Limitations. Although this study and especially the conducted experiment was accomplished with great accurateness, there are some limitations. At first there is a huge difference in gender dispersion within the respondent group. This study is the first one considering the mentors' communication style, thus within this special topic there are until now no findings regarding gender differences. Second, the participants scored quite high on expressiveness and openness on average, this could possibly affect the results. The third limitation of the study is that it was relied on a newly developed study that implicated the

seven different communication styles and remains until now relatively untested and will need further validation. Nevertheless the results of this study are a relevant contribution regarding mentor-protégé relationships in formal mentoring programs.

Conclusion. The influence of protégé personality, mentors' communication style and mentors' work experience on mentor attraction was examined in the present study. The *first hypothesis stated* that protégés in general prefer mentors with higher work experience over mentors with lower work experience. This hypothesis had to be rejected. It seems that the work experience does not influence the protégés' attraction towards the mentor. It is important to note that an influence of work experience of the mentor is not out of the question to influence the protégés' attraction towards the mentor. With a p value of ($p = .096$) a marginal effect of work experience can be expected. *The second hypothesis* was formulated as: "The more a protégé is extroverted, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way". The results of the study show, that this hypothesis is confirmed. This result implicates that a successful mentor-protégé relationship depends on the match of the protégés' personality and the mentors' communication style. Further it was hypothesized in this study that (*H3*) the more a protégés scores on openness, the more he is attracted towards a mentor communicating in an expressive way. This hypothesis had to be rejected, too. This result shows that there is, different than expected, no relation between the protégés' personality *openness* and the mentors' communication style expressiveness. This result could be based on the fact that a highly open individual is defined as tolerant and emotional flexible and with this has lower expectations regarding the mentors' communication style. Although it was expected that open protégés tend to have a higher attraction towards the expressive mentor, the results can be explained with the nature of *openness*.

Implications. The findings of the present study offer several implications for formal mentoring programs within organizations. At first it is shown that the attraction towards a mentor depends on the match of mentors' communication style and the protégés' personality. To avoid difficulties in mentor-protégé relationships and to enhance the chance of a successful relationship, the mentor for a protégé should be chosen based on the protégés' personality trait expressiveness. Further the results indicate that it is not necessary to choose a mentor based on his work experience. The work experience of the mentor does not influence the protégés' attraction towards the mentor, although a marginal influence cannot be ruled out. Of course it has to be ensured that a mentor with lower work experience has enough experience to train the protégé. This study examined only the attraction of a protégé towards a mentor and not the amount of knowledge a mentor is able to relay. The results of the study further imply a reason why formal mentoring relationships usually are not as effective as informal mentoring relationships as stated by Ragins & Cotton (1999); Underhill (2006); Allen et al. (2004). Organizations that arrange formal mentoring programs usually do not match the mentor and protégé based on their communication style and personality. In contrast to informal mentoring, where the protégé is able to choose his mentor on his own, the protégé automatically is able to find a mentor he feels attracted to. The results of the present study show, that in formal mentoring programs the communication style of the mentor and the personality of the protégé should be accounted to arrange a successful relationship. Several previous research (e.g. Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Turban, Doughery & Lee, 2002) examined the influence of gender and age similarity in mentoring relationships. The present study is the first one that extended the role of similarity in mentor-protégé relationships regarding the protégés' personality and the mentors' communication style. Closing this gap within mentoring research is an important step to understand the underlying mechanisms that influence and affect mentoring relationships, especially regarding formal mentoring programs in organizations.

Future research is required to further examine the relation between the protégés' personality and mentors' communication style. One point that should be investigated is the possible influence of gender differences regarding protégés' personality and mentors' communication style. Further, this research could be conducted within real mentor-protégé relationships while considering the perceived effectiveness of the relationship in addition to mentor attraction.

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(Appendix follows)

Appendix

*Scripts of the mentors uses in this study**Script – High Expressiveness, High Work Experience*

Michael Smith, (departmental) Manager, 15 years employed

Before beginning my career with CompanyX I graduated in business in Berlin and later at the Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster I awarded my PhD. Now I have worked for 15 years at CompanyX and meanwhile I am a departmental manager.

As a departmental manager at CompanyX I am responsible for different tasks; my daily work proves to be very diverse. Among other tasks, I take the role of a mentor for young professionals that are starting in my department. One of my strengths is my open-minded and energetic personality. For me, as a departmental manager, the communication between me and my co-workers is of particular importance. My self-assurance and temperamental personality characterizes my style of leadership. To fall silent, shyness and a closed personality are not beneficial for the career, open-mindedness and energy in contrast can be very helpful.

I really enjoy my job as a departmental manager. The decision to work for CompanyX was a very good one. My work is much appreciated and the work environment is excellent.

Script – High Expressiveness, Low Work Experience

Michael Smith, (departmental) Manager, 2 years employed

Before beginning my career with CompanyX I graduated in business in Berlin and later at the Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster I awarded my PhD. Now I have worked for 2 years at CompanyX and meanwhile I am a departmental manager.

As a departmental manager at CompanyX I am responsible for different tasks; my daily work proves to be very diverse. Among other tasks, I take the role of a mentor for young professionals that are starting in my department. One of my strengths is my open-minded and energetic personality. For me, as a departmental manager, the communication between me and my co-workers is of particular importance. My self-assurance and temperamental personality characterizes my style of leadership. To fall silent, shyness and a closed personality are not beneficial for the career, open-mindedness and energy in contrast can be very helpful.

I really enjoy my job as a departmental manager. The decision to work for CompanyX was a very good one. My work is much appreciated and the work environment is excellent.

Script – Low Expressiveness, High Work Experience

Michael Smith, (departmental) Manager, 15 years employed

Before beginning my career with CompanyX I graduated in business in Berlin and later at the Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster I awarded my PhD. Now I have worked for 15 years at CompanyX and meanwhile I am a departmental manager.

As a departmental manager at CompanyX I am responsible for different tasks; my daily work proves to be very diverse. Among other tasks, I take the role of a mentor for young professionals that are starting in my department. I would describe me and my style of leadership as reserved. In general I am a quite silent and closed person. One of my strengths is to wait and see and not to directly interact. Often I fall silent and keep quiet, because I want to give my coworkers the opportunity to act as they prefer and grant them much job autonomy.

I really enjoy my job as a departmental manager. The decision to work for CompanyX was a very good one. My work is much appreciated and the work environment is excellent.

Script – Low Expressiveness, Low Work Experience

Michael Smith, (departmental) Manager, 2 years employed
Before beginning my career with CompanyX I graduated in business in Berlin and later at the Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster I awarded my PhD. Now I have worked for 2 years at CompanyX and meanwhile I am a departmental manager.

As a departmental manager at CompanyX I am responsible for different tasks; my daily work proves to be very diverse. Among other tasks, I take the role of a mentor for young professionals that are starting in my department. I would describe me and my style of leadership as reserved. In general I am a quite silent and closed person. One of my strengths is to wait and see and not to directly interact. Often I fall silent and keep quiet, because I want to give my coworkers the opportunity to act as they prefer and grant them much job autonomy.

I really enjoy my job as a departmental manager. The decision to work for CompanyX was a very good one. My work is much appreciated and the work environment is excellent.