

2

The Role of Personality in Mentoring Relationships

Formation, Dynamics, and Outcomes

Daniel B. Turban

Felissa K. Lee

During the past two decades, considerable research has examined the impact of mentoring relationships at work (see Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003, for recent reviews). A traditional mentoring relationship¹ is an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior, experienced, and knowledgeable employee (i.e., the mentor) who provides advice, counsel, feedback, and support related to career and personal development for a less experienced employee (the protégé) (Kram, 1985; Noe et al., 2002). A recent meta-analysis confirmed earlier qualitative reviews by finding that mentoring relationships are related to both objective and subjective measures of career success (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). More specifically, mentored versus nonmentored individuals reported higher compensation, more promotions, and greater career satisfaction, career commitment, and job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2004). Although such evidence indicates mentoring relationships are beneficial for protégés, little research has investigated processes through which mentoring influences career success, and thus we know little about *how* mentors or protégés can influence the value of mentoring relationships (Day & Allen, 2004). We believe that individual differences, in particular personality characteristics, influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, and thus we discuss the role of personality in mentoring relationships.

Somewhat surprisingly, given the resurgence of personality research in the behavioral management literature, there has been relatively little systematic research investigating the role of personality characteristics in mentoring relationships. For example, Wanberg et al. (2003) noted that it is striking that mentoring research has not examined current models of personality such as the five-factor model of personality (although see Bozionelos, 2004, and Waters, 2004, published after that review). In their review of the mentoring literature, Noe et al. (2002) discussed the individual differences of gender, race, age, and nationality with little mention of personality. These reviews reflect the fact that much mentoring research examining individual differences has examined male-female differences and the effects of cross-gender and cross-race dyads on mentoring outcomes. We agree, however, with Wanberg et al. (2003), who noted that research into the role of protégé and mentor personality characteristics in mentoring relationships should be a research priority.

Better understanding of how protégé and mentor personality characteristics influence mentoring relationship success can help organizations better utilize formal mentoring relationships. Many organizations have attempted to harness the potential benefits of mentoring relationships by introducing formal mentoring programs in which members of the mentoring dyad are "assigned" to one another. Interestingly, however, evidence indicates that the protégés in these formal programs typically do not receive the same benefits as employees who become involved in naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). One explanation relating to why formal relationships are not as beneficial as informal relationships is that some of the beneficial aspects of social attraction may be absent in formally assigned mentoring pairs, suggesting that we need to understand more about what individual differences promote success in mentoring relationships so as to be able to provide a model for more effectively matching employees in formal mentoring programs.

In addition, there is now a stream of research developing on the negative dynamics occurring in some mentoring relationships (see Eby, Chapter 13, this volume). Not all mentoring relationships are beneficial for protégés and mentors, and some relationships can actually be harmful (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004; Eby & McManus, 2004; Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000; Scandura, 1998). Eby and McManus (2004) suggested there is a continuum of dysfunctional relationships ranging from marginally effective, which provide some benefits to protégés and/or mentors, to highly dysfunctional, which can involve harassment, exploitation, and sabotage. Although little is known about whether or how individual differences of protégés or mentors influence the quality (or lack of quality) of mentoring relationships, it seems likely that mentor and protégé characteristics may influence the benefits (and costs) of a mentoring relationship for both protégés and mentors.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to review the limited research investigating the role of personality in mentoring relationships and to discuss various research priorities we believe will advance the understanding of mentoring relationships. First, we outline key findings from the mentoring literature that serve as a foundation for our review. Second, we provide a brief description of the current

state of personality research in organizations. Third, we review existing research on personality and mentoring. Finally, we outline ideas for future research that could advance the study of personality and mentoring. Let us now turn to a description of relevant mentoring research.

Mentoring Relationships and Mentoring Assistance

In her seminal work, Kram (1985) noted that mentors develop their protégés by supporting their tangible career needs and by enhancing their interpersonal skills and inner growth development. More specifically, Kram proposed that mentors provide two distinct, but related, sets of mentoring behaviors to protégés: career and psychosocial functions. *Career functions* enhance the likelihood of the junior colleague becoming successful and include activities such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging work assignments. *Psychosocial functions* enhance the junior colleague's sense of competence and professional identity and include activities such as role-modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. In general, much of the mentoring research has adopted this framework, although there is some evidence suggesting that role-modeling is not a subdimension of psychosocial mentoring, but rather a third distinctive function (Scandura, 1992).

As noted by Kram (1985), involvement in a mentoring relationship can provide mentors with benefits as well as costs (see Allen, Chapter 5, this volume, for a review of research from the mentor's perspective). The potential benefits for mentors include learning, increased job performance, a supportive network, and personal satisfaction and gratification (Allen & Eby, 2003; Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). The potential costs include time and energy drain, as well as the possibility that a poor protégé can reflect poorly on the mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Mentoring relationships can also be costly to protégés, in particular if they become too reliant upon and associated with one mentor who provides inaccurate information or "falls out of favor" in the organization, with subsequent negative ramifications for the protégé (Kram, 1985). Thus, scholars have suggested that protégés should attempt to develop a "constellation" of mentoring relationships (Higgins, 2000; Higgins, Chandler, & Kram, Chapter 14, this volume; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Kram, 1985).

Kram (1983, 1985) proposed that mentoring relationships consist of four phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. The *initiation phase* lasts 6 to 12 months and involves setting expectations about the relationship. The *cultivation phase* typically lasts 2 to 5 years, and during this phase, protégés typically receive a wide range of career and psychosocial functions, which we call "mentoring assistance." During the *separation phase*, the junior colleague seeks more autonomy, and during the *redemption phase*, the dyad members begin to see each other as peers. We believe personality characteristics of both the protégé and the mentor influence the relationship at each phase, as will be discussed in detail below. First, however, we discuss the studies we found that investigated the role of personality in organizations.

Personality Research in Organizations

Although there are various definitions of the concept, in general, *personality* is defined as the relatively stable dispositions (traits) of individuals that contribute to consistency in their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions (Funder, 2001; Leary, 1999). As such, personality is thought to be relatively stable throughout a person's lifetime, in particular during the adult years (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005; Costa & McCrae, 1997). Interestingly, recent evidence suggests that approximately 50% of the variance in personality traits is heritable and thus a result of genetics (for a discussion of such research, see Caspi et al., 2005; Pervin, 2003; Rowe, 1999). We should note, however, that the extent to which personality is relatively malleable or fixed is a debatable issue (Pervin, 2003). Nonetheless, personality researchers who adopt a trait approach, which is the most common approach in organizational research and defines traits as relatively stable individual differences, are interested in how traits lead to consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Costa & McCrae, 1997).

Personality researchers typically distinguish a *trait*, which is relatively stable, from a *state*, which is more transient and malleable (Leary, 1999). The distinction between states and traits is not always clear, however, as some individual differences have been measured both as traits and as domain-specific states. For example, goal orientation has been conceptualized as both a trait and a domain-specific state (see Elliot, 2005, for a review of this literature). Similarly, self-esteem has been conceptualized as a global trait (Rosenberg, 1965) and as a domain-specific variable (i.e., organizational-based self-esteem; Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989). Nonetheless, if traits, as presumed, are relatively stable characteristics, then it seems more likely that personality will influence mentoring relationships than that mentoring relationships will influence personality. For example, Asendorpf and Wilpers (1998) reported that personality influences social relationships but such relationships do not influence personality. As noted, however, some individual differences are more domain-specific and thus may influence and be influenced by mentoring relationships. Ultimately, as we discuss below, longitudinal research is needed to investigate whether the relationship between mentoring and personality is bidirectional.

Although relatively few studies have examined the role of personality in mentoring relationships, research on personality in organizations has enjoyed increasing popularity in recent years. In particular, the five-factor model (FFM) has been credited with helping to revive workplace personality research since the 1980s and has been accepted by many scholars as a comprehensive framework for organizing a wide range of personality traits (Digman, 1996; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1996). The FFM includes conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism. *Conscientiousness* includes qualities such as dependability, achievement striving, and planfulness. *Extraversion* encompasses sociability, assertiveness, ambition, positive emotionality, energy, and adventurousness. *Openness to experience* refers to creativity, open-mindedness, unconventionality, and artistic sensitivity. *Agreeableness* is associated with being cooperative, trusting, compliant, flexible, courteous, and empathic. *Neuroticism*, which is also labeled by its opposite pole, *emotional stability*, includes proneness to negative feelings, such as

anxiety, hostility, depression, personal insecurity, and low self-esteem. Recent meta-analyses have suggested that conscientiousness and neuroticism are related to motivation and performance (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Judge & Illies, 2002). The other factors have been found to be related to work outcomes in specific contexts but are less consistent in predicting outcomes.

Although there is relatively widespread acceptance of the FFM, some have criticized it. One such criticism is that the five dimensions are too broad and heterogeneous to effectively predict certain work-related behaviors (Hough, 1998; Kanfer & Heggstad, 1997). For example, some researchers argue that achievement orientation and dependability—the two main factors within conscientiousness—relate differentially to certain outcomes (Hough, 1998). Similarly, neuroticism incorporates several narrower dispositions (i.e., tendency toward depression, anxiety, hostility) that relate to outcomes in different ways, potentially obscuring significant effects when combined into one broader trait. Critics of the FFM have also argued that a number of important traits do not fit within the framework of the five factors. For example, self-monitoring (Snyder, 1987), a personality variable discussed later in this chapter, is related to a variety of workplace outcomes but cannot be easily categorized within the FFM. Both of these criticisms of the FFM have relevance for the study of personality in mentoring relationships.

Therefore, we suggest that research on personality and mentoring will best be advanced through use of the broad traits within the FFM and the use of additional, more narrowly defined traits that have been shown to have relevance in organizational settings. Further, use of facet scales of the FFM (i.e., subcomponents of the five global traits) may also be appropriate in some cases, helping to pinpoint the source of personality effects (Barrick et al., 2001). We introduce these personality concepts in the section on future research, but, first, we review the existing research on personality and mentoring.

Individual Differences and Mentoring Relationships: What We Know

Table 2.1 provides an overview of studies that have examined relationships of individual differences—other than demographics—with mentoring outcomes. Before examining such studies, we want to highlight a couple of caveats to keep in mind when interpreting them. First, not all of the individual differences studied are personality characteristics as defined earlier (i.e., stable dispositions). We included these characteristics, however, because they seem closely related to personality concepts (e.g., need for achievement) and are thus important to include in our review. Second, all of the studies used a cross-sectional design, and thus the causal direction of effects is uncertain. Although it seems unlikely that a mentoring relationship would impact a fairly stable disposition, mentoring relationships may influence more malleable individual characteristics. As can be seen in the table, relatively little research has examined the role of personality, and, in particular, very little research has examined mentor personality characteristics. In the following section, we review studies that have measured personality, as well as other studies

that provide insight into personality characteristics of mentors or protégés that may influence a mentoring relationship. We organize this literature in terms of (a) a comparison of mentored and nonmentored individuals, (b) personality characteristics related to protégés or mentors attempting to initiate mentoring relationships, (c) protégé and mentor personality characteristics related to perceptions of the relationship, and (d) characteristics of protégés or mentors that were attractive to a mentoring relationship partner.

Comparison of Mentored and Nonmentored Individuals

There is some evidence that individuals who are, or have been, protégés differ in terms of personality characteristics from individuals who have not been protégés. However, these studies are somewhat limited because it is not clear how the relationship developed (i.e., whether the protégé initiated the relationship, whether the mentor sought out the protégé, or both). For example, protégés who initiate mentoring relationships may have different personality characteristics than protégés who are selected by mentors, although research is needed to investigate this proposition. Nonetheless, some evidence indicates that in comparison to nonprotégés, protégés have a higher need for power and for achievement and possess more stereotypically masculine traits and more stereotypically feminine traits (Fagenson, 1989, 1992). In other words, protégés possess greater amounts of both sets of traits than do nonprotégés. Interestingly, a follow-up study using a subset of the data from Fagenson (1992) found that protégés with a high need for achievement, a need for dominance, and high self-esteem were more likely to be involved with *multiple* mentoring relationships (Fagenson-Eland & Baugh, 2001). As noted by Fagenson (1992), such results suggest that becoming a protégé is not a random process and that personality characteristics may differentiate those who become protégés from those who do not.

Initiation of Mentoring

Protégé Characteristics and Initiation of Mentoring

Although the implicit assumption of much of the mentoring research has been that protégés are chosen by mentors, evidence suggests that protégés' personality characteristics influence the extent to which they attempt to initiate mentoring relationships with others. For instance, Turban and Dougherty (1994) found that individuals with an internal locus of control, higher emotional stability, and high self-monitoring pattern initiated, and received, more mentoring (Turban & Dougherty, 1994). In a study conducted in Hong Kong, Aryee, Lo, and Kang (1999) found that extraversion, self-monitoring, and Type A behavior were related to initiation of mentoring but that work locus of control was not related. Although not a measure of actual initiation of mentoring, this area is also informed by a study indicating that undergraduate students reported they were more ready to be protégés when they had better interpersonal skills (Rice & Brown, 1990). Taken in sum,

Table 2.1 Personality and Mentoring Outcomes

<i>Author</i>	<i>Study Characteristics</i>	<i>Personality Measures</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Key Result(s)</i>
<i>Protégé Characteristics</i>				
Aryee, Lo, & Kang (1999)	Field study conducted in Hong Kong with 184 Chinese graduate employees	Type A personality Extraversion Self-monitoring Work locus of control	Initiation of mentoring Mentoring received	Initiation of mentoring correlated with Type A personality, extraversion, and work locus of control. In regression analyses, only extraversion and Type A behavior related to initiation. Mentoring received correlated with extraversion and Type A behavior; only extraversion was significant in regression analyses.
Bozionelos (2004)	Field study with 176 white-collar workers who were administrators in 3 universities in the northwest of England	Agreeableness Conscientiousness Extraversion Neuroticism Openness to experience	Mentoring received	Mentoring received was correlated positively with extraversion and openness to experience and negatively with conscientiousness.
Day & Allen (2004)	Field study with 125 employees of a municipality	Career motivation Career self-efficacy	Protégé status (whether the person ever had a mentor) Career and psychosocial mentoring	Protégé status positively related to career motivation but not to self-efficacy. Career mentoring positively correlated with both career motivation and self-efficacy. Psychosocial mentoring positively correlated with career motivation.

(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued)

<i>Author</i>	<i>Study Characteristics</i>	<i>Personality Measures</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Key Result(s)</i>
Fagenson (1989)	Field study with 246 employees of a large company in the health care industry	Masculinity and femininity	Protégé status	Protégés, in comparison with nonprotégés, had higher scores on both masculinity and femininity.
Fagenson (1992)	Field study of 100 employees in 2 small high-technology service companies	Need for achievement Need for affiliation Need for autonomy Need for power	Protégé status	Protégés reported higher need for achievement and need for power. Protégé status was not related to need for affiliation or need for autonomy.
Fagenson-Eland & Baugh (2001)	A subset of data from Fagenson (1992), analyzing the 46 individuals who reported one or more mentoring relationships	Need for achievement Need for dominance Self-esteem	Number of mentoring relationships	Protégés with only one mentoring relationship had lower need for achievement, need for dominance, and self-esteem than protégés with more than one mentoring relationship.
Godshalk & Sosik (2003)	Data collected from 217 adult MBA students who were full-time employees and their mentors	Learning goal orientation (completed by both protégé and mentor)	Career mentoring Psychosocial mentoring	Both career and psychosocial mentoring were correlated with both protégé and mentor learning goal orientation. In addition, they examined congruence of protégé and mentor learning goal orientation and found that psychosocial mentoring was highest when both the protégé and the mentor had high learning goal orientations.

Author	Study Characteristics	Personality Measures	Dependent Variables	Key Result(s)
Scandura & Ragins (1993)	Field study of 800 accountants who received a mailed survey	Spence Personal Attributes Questionnaire used to measure masculinity (high masculinity and low femininity), femininity (high femininity and low masculinity), and androgyny (when high on both masculinity and femininity).	Whether in a mentoring relationship Career, psychosocial, and role-modeling mentoring	Career mentoring was also higher when both the mentor and protégé had high learning goal orientation in contrast to when they both had low learning goal orientation. Respondents with mentoring relationships were more likely to have androgynous or masculine gender role orientations. Respondents who were androgynous reported more mentoring functions (career development and psychosocial support) than feminine or masculine respondents.
Turban & Dougherty (1994)	Field study of 147 managers and professionals in various occupations	Negative affectivity Self-esteem Self-monitoring Work locus of control	Initiation of mentoring Career and psychosocial mentoring received by protégé	Initiation of mentoring correlated with an internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and low negative affectivity. Career and psychosocial mentoring correlated with an internal locus of control and high self-esteem.

(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued)

<i>Author</i>	<i>Study Characteristics</i>	<i>Personality Measures</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Key Result(s)</i>
Waters (2004)	Field study of 166 mentor and protégé dyads—protégés were administrative and IT staff at a university	Agreeableness Conscientiousness Emotional stability Extroversion Openness to experience	Protégé-mentor agreement of psychosocial support in the relationship	Protégé-mentor agreement was correlated with mentor and protégé agreeableness, openness, extroversion, and conscientiousness.
<i>Mentor Characteristics</i>				
Allen (2003)	Field study of 391 individuals employed in various occupations	Prosocial personality: other-oriented empathy and helpfulness	Experience as mentor Willingness to mentor Career and psychosocial mentoring provided (as reported by the mentor)	Experience as a mentor was correlated with both other-oriented empathy and helpfulness, but only helpfulness was significant in the regression analyses. Willingness to mentor was related (both with correlations and in regression analyses) to empathy and helpfulness. Career mentoring positively related (correlation and regressions) to helpfulness.
Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins (1997)	Field study of 607 first-line supervisors employed by a state government	Locus of control Upward striving	Willingness to mentor	Psychosocial mentoring was correlated with empathy and helpfulness, but only empathy was significant in the regression analyses. Willingness to mentor was related to an internal locus of control and to upward striving.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Study Characteristics</i>	<i>Personality Measures</i>	<i>Dependent Variables</i>	<i>Key Result(s)</i>
Bozionelos (2004)	Field study with 176 white-collar workers who were administrators in 3 universities in the northwest of England	Agreeableness Conscientiousness Extraversion Neuroticism Openness to experience	Mentoring provided (self-report)	Mentoring provided was correlated positively with openness to experience and negatively with agreeableness. In regression analyses, only openness was significant.
Mullen (1998)	Field study of 160 mentors from 17 organizations	Organizational-based self-esteem (OBSE)	Career and psychosocial mentoring provided (as indicated by the mentor)	Mentors with higher OBSE reported providing more mentoring to protégés.
Waters (2004)	Field study of 166 mentor and protégé dyads—protégés were administrative and IT staff at a university	Agreeableness Conscientiousness Emotional Stability Extroversion Openness to Experience	Protégé-mentor agreement of psychosocial support in the relationship	Protégé-mentor agreement was correlated with mentor and protégé agreeableness, openness, extroversion, and conscientiousness.

NOTE. Although we use the term *personality measures*, some of the individual differences measures were not personality measures (e.g., needs). We included studies, however, that measured relatively stable individual differences. Further, although we use the term *dependent variables*, we are not implying that the authors of the study necessarily conceptualized these variables as a dependent variable. For example, authors may conceptualize protégé status as influencing individual differences, such as self-efficacy.

such research suggests that individuals who are more comfortable in social situations are more likely to attempt to form mentoring relationships with others than are individuals who feel less comfortable and/or skilled.

Mentor Characteristics and Willingness to Mentor

Some evidence suggests that individuals who have been in mentoring relationships, either as protégés or as mentors, are more willing to serve as mentors than are individuals who have never been in mentoring relationships (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). More specifically, individuals who have never been in mentoring relationships report greater costs and fewer benefits of such relationships than do individuals who have experience as mentors or protégés (Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Little is known, however, about how mentors initiate relationships with protégés, although some evidence suggests that personality does play a role (Allen, 2003; Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins, 1997). For example, in a field study with 607 first-line supervisors, locus of control and upward striving were related to intention to mentor others (Allen, Poteet, Russell et al., 1997). Further, Allen (2003) found that both helpfulness and other-oriented empathy were related to willingness to mentor others.

Although not directly related to personality, in a qualitative study, mentors reported engaging in mentoring relationships to help others or for the personal satisfaction of mentoring another person (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997). A subsequent study of 391 individuals found that mentors provided more career-related mentoring when they had higher self-enhancement motives and “benefit-other” motives, and more psychosocial mentoring when they had higher benefit-other motives and intrinsic satisfaction motives (Allen, 2003). Such results indicate that mentor motives influence the mentoring provided to protégés (Allen, 2003). Further, such results suggest that mentors may have different reasons (motives) for developing relationships with protégés (see also Allen, Chapter 5, this volume).

Perceptions of the Relationship: Protégé and Mentor Characteristics and Mentoring Received

A few studies have investigated protégé personality characteristics related to protégé perceptions of mentoring received, although in general, the authors typically did not specify whether or how the personality characteristics influenced the process of mentoring. For example, Day and Allen (2004) reported that career motivation was related to both psychosocial and career mentoring received; career self-efficacy was related to career mentoring and marginally related to psychosocial mentoring. They theorized that mentoring may influence motivation and self-efficacy, although since they used a cross-sectional design, they noted that the causal flow could go in the other direction. More broadly, evidence indicates that mentors may provide more mentoring to protégés who are seen as more competent (Mullen, 1998; Mullen & Noe, 1999). Bozionelos (2004) examined the role of the Big Five characteristics in mentoring received and mentoring provided. Individuals' reports of mentoring

received were correlated positively with their extraversion and openness to experience and, interestingly, were correlated negatively with conscientiousness. Study participants also reported the amount of mentoring provided to a subordinate in their organization. Results indicated that self-reported mentoring provided was correlated positively with openness to experience and negatively with agreeableness. Thus, individuals reported *receiving* more mentoring when they were more extraverted, open to experience, and low in conscientiousness; and individuals reported *providing* more mentoring when they were high in openness to experience and low in agreeableness.

In one of the few studies to measure personality characteristics from both the mentor and protégé perspectives, Godshalk and Sosik (2003) investigated the dispositional trait of *learning goal orientation*, defined as the extent to which the individual focuses on learning and developing competency, which, in turn, leads to pursuing challenging tasks. Results indicated that both mentor and protégé learning goal orientation were correlated with psychosocial and career mentoring as reported by the protégé. Furthermore, protégés reported receiving the most psychosocial mentoring when both the protégé and the mentor were high in learning goal orientation. Such results suggest that protégés may have more beneficial relationships when both parties are focused on learning and developing competencies. Although the authors measured what they called “dispositional learning goal orientation,” goal orientation is also domain-specific and malleable (see Elliot, 2005, for a review) and thus may have been influenced by the mentoring relationship, suggesting the need for longitudinal research designs.

Characteristics Attractive to Mentoring Partners

Protégé Characteristics Sought by Mentors

Given the potential costs of being a mentor (i.e., more trouble than it's worth, reflects poorly on the mentor, an energy drain; see Ragins & Scandura, 1999), one might expect mentors to seek out protégés from whom they will obtain more rewards than costs. For example, in an early experimental study, individuals reported greater willingness to mentor protégés with higher versus lower work performance (Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993). Similarly, Allen (2003) found that individuals indicated they were more likely to mentor protégés who were high in ability and high in willingness to learn than to mentor individuals who were low in these attributes. To the extent that personality is related to work performance and to willingness to learn, such results suggest that personality characteristics may be related to attractiveness of an individual as a protégé. More broadly, a qualitative study reported that mentors selected protégés who were motivated and competent, had a strong learning orientation, and possessed personality indicators of being people oriented, honest, confident, and dependable (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997). To summarize, such results suggest that protégé personality characteristics that indicate ability, competence, and willingness to learn are seen as attractive to mentors (see Allen, Chapter 5, this volume, for a review of research investigating what mentors desire in protégés). Clearly, however, research is needed to investigate personality characteristics that influence attractiveness of an individual as a protégé.

Mentor Characteristics Sought by Protégés

Most studies investigating mentoring relationships have obtained measures from protégés, with fewer collecting measures from mentors. Thus, less is known about mentor characteristics than about protégé characteristics. Nonetheless, a series of three experimental studies found that the manipulated interpersonal competence of a potential mentor was related to protégé attraction to the potential mentor (Olian, Carroll, Giannantonio, & Feren, 1988). Although they did not investigate the mechanisms leading to this relationship, Olian et al. (1998) suggested that potential mentors with greater interpersonal competence (a) are seen as better able to provide the psychosocial benefits of mentoring and, (b) because they are better liked and respected, may be better able to promote the career of the protégé (i.e., provide career-related mentoring) than are mentors with less interpersonal competence. Such results suggest that protégés may be attracted to mentors with greater emotional intelligence (see Cherniss, Chapter 17, this volume).

Summary

Although few studies have investigated the role of personality in mentoring relationships, a few tentative conclusions can be drawn from the literature, although given the lack of longitudinal studies, we must be careful in describing the causal directions of such studies. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that protégé personality characteristics influence the extent to which the protégé will attempt to initiate mentoring relationships with others. Specifically, protégés with more confidence (e.g., higher self-esteem, higher perceived interpersonal skills) and who are higher self-monitors are more likely to initiate relationships (Aryee et al., 1999; Fagenson, 1992; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Evidence is mixed, however, concerning whether an internal locus of control is related to initiation of relationships. Such evidence suggests that individuals who are more comfortable in social interactions are more likely to be in mentoring relationships. Furthermore, protégés tend to have a higher need for achievement and dominance than do nonprotégés (Fagenson, 1992). Finally, although there is limited empirical evidence, given the potential costs of mentoring relationships, individuals may be more likely to provide mentoring to protégés who possess personality characteristics that indicate ability, competence, and a willingness to learn (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Olian et al., 1993).

Although fewer studies have investigated mentor characteristics than protégé personality characteristics, evidence suggests that individuals who have a prosocial personality—including other-oriented empathy and helpfulness—are more likely to get involved in mentoring relationships (Allen, 2003). Interestingly, upward striving is related to willingness to mentor others (Allen, Poteet, Russell, et al., 1997), and, given evidence that individual reports of mentoring provided are related to career success measures (Bozionelos, 2004), serving as a mentor may be a valuable career strategy, although more, preferably longitudinal, research is needed. Finally, Bozionelos (2004) found that mentor reports of mentoring were related positively to openness to experience, but surprisingly, negatively to agreeableness, which was opposite of what had been hypothesized. In summary, based on the limited evidence,

it seems that individuals who have greater confidence (Mullen, 1998) and care about others (Allen, 2003) are likely to provide more mentoring.

As is evident by this brief review, some evidence suggests that personality characteristics of both mentors and protégés are related to involvement in and the quality of mentoring relationships, although much remains to be learned. Thus, in an attempt to stimulate further research, we discuss the phases of mentoring and provide a broad overview of how personality may influence mentoring relationships at each of the phases. We then focus on specific personality characteristics that we expect will have an impact on mentoring relationships.

Future Research: A Research Agenda for Personality and Mentoring Relationships

As noted earlier, Kram (1983, 1985) proposed that mentoring relationships go through four phases of development: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. For the purposes of examining the effects of personality characteristics on mentoring relationships, we combine the separation and redefinition phases. The separation and redefinition phases encompass the dissolution and reconfiguration of the relationship such that the causes of the separation can influence how the individuals (i.e., protégés and mentors) redefine the relationship. Since we expect that personality influences the separation and redefinition phases similarly, in our discussion, we describe the role of personality in the *dissolution* (encompassing separation and redefinition) of the mentoring relationship. Thus, we suggest researchers examine the potential effects of protégé and mentor personality characteristics—and their interactive effects—on the initiation of mentoring relationships, the cultivation, and the dissolution (encompassing separation and redefinition) of such relationships.

Personality may influence mentoring relationships, and perceptions of mentoring relationships, in several ways. An individual's (i.e., a protégé's or a mentor's) personality characteristics may influence the relationship, how that individual perceives the relationship, and how the other dyadic partner perceives the relationship. In addition, protégé and mentor personality characteristics may interact with one another such that dyadic members are attracted to (and more effective with) similar others or to others who have complementary personality characteristics. In general, much of the research investigating personality has examined the role of personality on an individual's (typically a protégé's) perceptions of the relationship, usually with a cross-sectional design. Although such research is useful, it is also limited due to same-source method variance concerns. Thus, to more fully understand how personality influences mentoring relationships, we urge researchers to investigate the effects of personality characteristics on the dyadic partner's perceptions of the relationship and to investigate the interactive effects of personality on mentoring relationships.

We next provide an overview of how protégé and mentor personality characteristics may influence mentoring relationships at various phases of development (see Table 2.2). After this broad overview, we provide examples of how specific personality characteristics may influence mentoring relationships at the various phases.

Table 2.2 Conceptual Bases for Relationship of Personality with Mentoring Relationships

Initiation of Mentoring

- **Overview:** Mentoring relationships begin when either the mentor or the protégé, or both, attempt to form a relationship. Thus, personality characteristics that influence a person's willingness to get involved in (or attempt to initiate) a mentoring relationship are important to examine. In addition, personality characteristics that influence the extent to which a person is perceived as a desirable partner will influence the initiation of the mentoring relationship.
- **Protégé.** Protégés that have personality characteristics indicative of proactive behaviors are more likely to attempt to initiate mentoring relationships. Furthermore, protégés with personality characteristics indicative of a positive interpersonal orientation (e.g., agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability) are more likely to attempt to initiate mentoring relationships and are more likely to be sought out by mentors. Individuals who are seen as more competent with greater willingness to learn will be more sought by mentors than individuals who are seen as less competent and less willing to learn.
- **Mentor.** Individuals are more likely to mentor others and to be sought out as a mentor when they have personality characteristics indicative of a strong interpersonal orientation.

Cultivation of Mentoring

- **Overview:** Personality characteristics, of both mentors and protégés that create a safe and supportive climate for learning from one another will result in more positive mentoring relationships.
- **Protégé.** Personality characteristics that reflect interpersonal comfort with others and that encourage others to be comfortable with the protégé will influence the cultivation of the mentoring relationship. Further, protégés who have a strong desire to learn and who seek advice and guidance from their mentor will have a more positive relationship.
- **Mentor.** Mentors with personality characteristics that create a supportive and nurturing environment will have protégés that report more positive mentoring relationships. In addition, mentors who are more sensitive and understanding of the protégé's perspective may provide the protégé with a more positive relationship.

Dissolution and Redefinition of Mentoring

- **Overview:** In general, for a relationship to be redefined successfully, both the protégé and the mentor must have similar viewpoints on how and when the relationship should evolve. Further, each individual must accurately perceive the specific needs and expectations of the other party while renegotiating their respective roles.
 - **Protégé.** Protégés with personality characteristics that are sensitive to others and confident in their ability to function autonomously are more likely to have a positive redefinition of the mentoring relationship.
 - **Mentor.** Similarly, mentors with personality characteristics that make them sensitive to others and who are supportive of their protégé's increasing need for autonomy are more likely to have a positive redefinition of the mentoring relationship. Mentors with personality characteristics that allow (encourage) the relationship to evolve to a peer relationship will experience more positive redefinition of the mentoring relationship.
-

The Role of Personality in Mentoring Phases

Overview

During the *initiation stage* of an informal mentoring relationship, typically one of the two parties (i.e., the potential protégé or mentor) initiates contact with the other person in an effort to generate a mentoring relationship. Since a mentoring relationship can be seen as a social exchange relationship (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001), we expect that both parties will consider the benefits and costs of getting involved in such a relationship. The perceived benefits for both protégés and mentors include the potential for learning from and/or enhancing the development of the other person, having one's prestige and/or career success enhanced through association with the person, experiencing general interpersonal enjoyment of working with the other person, and fulfilling emotional needs through the other person (e.g., desire to be taken care of, desire to feel important). For both parties, there are also potential costs: Mentoring relationships can take considerable time; there is the possibility of affiliating with someone who subsequently performs poorly or is seen in a bad light politically; and a failed relationship may negatively impact how the participants are seen by others. Based on past evidence (Aryee et al., 1999; Turban & Dougherty, 1994), we expect that personality characteristics influence the extent to which an individual will initiate and/or get involved in a mentoring relationship, although longitudinal research investigating such relationships would be useful. Furthermore, as discussed below, we expect that individuals with certain personality characteristics are more likely to be seen as desirable partners, and thus an individual's personality characteristics influence perceptions of costs and benefits of a mentoring relationship with that person. We expect that individuals are more likely to initiate mentoring relationships with prospective partners who are seen as having personality characteristics that will result in more positive relationships.

For those mentoring relationships that make it past the initiation stage, the *cultivation stage* is when the parties develop more familiarity with one another and the mentoring functions are in evidence. Mentoring relationships are most effective when both individuals in the relationship feel comfortable opening up to the other person and sharing aspects of themselves. In particular, protégés will benefit most from these relationships when problems and questions may be shared freely with mentors who, in turn, provide reliable advice and guidance on those issues. Similarly, the protégé will benefit most from a mentoring relationship in which the mentor has the skills and interest to provide effective coaching—both career and psychosocial. We expect that individuals' personality characteristics will influence their interpersonal comfort in relationships and will also influence the degree of comfort felt by their dyad partners. Further, there may be interactive effects of protégé and mentor personality characteristics that result in greater interpersonal ease and, thus, sharing of problems and advice in the relationship. Thus, to summarize, we expect personality characteristics to influence protégés' willingness to seek guidance and mentors' willingness to provide guidance. Similarly, protégés may be more willing to seek advice from mentors with certain personality characteristics, and

mentors may be more likely to provide coaching to protégés with certain personality characteristics. Finally, ease of interaction between the mentor and protégé may be related to the combined effects of their personality types.

During the *dissolution phase*, the protégé typically becomes more independent, and eventually the roles are renegotiated such that protégé and mentor are essentially peers. In terms of interpersonal processes, this shift requires that both parties be accepting of the change and be willing to discuss the change in roles and/or associated feelings. These interpersonal processes are of particular importance for informal relationships and may be less relevant in formal relationships in which the timeline is shorter and externally defined. We expect that personality characteristics of mentors and protégés may influence how their relationships are redefined. For example, personality characteristics may influence the extent to which a protégé and mentor are willing to allow the relationship to evolve into a peer relationship and friendship. Similarly, personality characteristics may influence *when* individuals will want to redefine the relationship. Problems in the relationship may arise if the protégé and mentor have different personality characteristics such that one party is not ready for the relationship to shift and becomes resentful of the other's attempts to redefine roles, resulting in negative feelings.

Having highlighted some key issues that may arise during a mentoring relationship, we now turn to a discussion of the personality characteristics that should have a bearing on these issues. Our suggestions for future research are not intended to represent an exhaustive list, but rather are intended to provide initial guidance in this exciting area of mentoring scholarship. To begin, we provide an extended description of how agreeableness may influence different phases of the mentoring relationship. We subsequently discuss other personality characteristics that we expect to impact mentoring relationships but, given space constraints, provide a less extended discussion of these traits. Although individuals have profiles of traits, we first discuss the possible influence of each trait on mentoring relationships individually, since there is little research examining personality profiles. We then discuss possible effects of personality profiles on mentoring relationships.

Agreeableness and Associated Traits

As a broad trait, *agreeableness* refers to the degree to which an individual is trusting, cares about others, is easy to get along with, and is pleasant to have around (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). As is evident from this definition, this characteristic is fundamentally interpersonal in nature. A moderately high amount of agreeableness tends to mean positive interactions for those with the trait. However, as is true for each of the Big Five traits, being extremely high or extremely low on a trait may create difficulties for the person. Those who are very high on agreeableness tend to be fairly compliant, are concerned about others liking them, attempt to avoid conflict, and are concerned about sparing others' feelings. Those who are quite low on agreeableness may be seen as prone to conflict, self-serving, suspicious of others, and relatively unconcerned with others' feelings. A recent review found that low agreeableness predicted negative relationship outcomes for romantic relationships (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). More broadly, since agreeableness is fundamentally

about one's behavior in social relationships, it should have relevance for all phases of the mentoring relationship.

In the initiation phase, individuals who are more agreeable should receive more interest from others (i.e., potential protégés or potential mentors), as they would be seen as more enjoyable to spend time with and, in general, may be expected to care more about the well-being of others. Further, the higher individuals are on agreeableness, the more likely they should be to respond to others' attempts to initiate relationships, either because they care about helping others (say, in the case of a potential mentor) or because they do not want to create conflict with other persons by denying them their requests (such as in the case of a potential protégé). Thus, individuals higher on agreeableness would be more sought out for a mentoring relationship and would be more willing to get involved in a relationship if sought out by others.

In the cultivation phase of mentoring, higher agreeableness should make it more likely that participants in the mentoring relationship will interact positively and resolve differences of opinion fairly smoothly. By contrast, if just one individual in the relationship is low on agreeableness, there may be problematic interactions and possible dissolution of the relationship due to conflict, resentment, or general lack of enjoyment. It also may be that being extremely high on agreeableness would place constraints on the effectiveness of the relationship if the highly agreeable person (perhaps in particular a mentor) is reluctant to express concerns and provide feedback to the other individual. Similarly, high agreeableness may lead individuals to maintain relationships longer than is productive. This dynamic could be especially strong if the highly agreeable individual is the protégé, who typically has less power in the relationship.

The dissolution phase may be affected by agreeableness in one of a few ways. For instance, those who are moderately high on agreeableness, being pleasant to interact with at other stages of a mentoring relationship, are likely to be mindful of addressing the needs of their mentoring partners in the dissolution phase. However, as noted earlier, extremely high agreeableness may make an individual stick with the relationship longer than that person wants to—meaning that the dissolution phase comes later in time—or agree to having greater contact than the individual wants after formal roles have changed. By contrast, an individual who is extremely low on agreeableness may experience the dissolution phase of a mentoring relationship rather quickly or experience a greater number of “dissolutions” than one might expect given the individual's apparent technical skill and level of ambition.

While agreeableness is a useful trait to examine at the global level, there are several narrower traits that may be considered facets of agreeableness and may be useful for exploring more specific phenomena. For example, *reciprocation wariness* is a personality variable that measures the extent to which a person fears being exploited in relationships. Considerable evidence indicates that reciprocation wariness influences involvement and behaviors in social exchange relationships (Cotterell, Eisenberger, & Speicher, 1992; Eisenberger, Cotterell, & Marvel, 1987; Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Perugini, Gallucci, Presaghi, & Ercolani, 2003). We expect that individuals high in reciprocation wariness are less likely to attempt to initiate mentoring relationships with others and are less willing to mentor others than are individuals with lower reciprocation wariness.

In the initiation stage of mentoring relationships, reciprocation wariness may function as a moderator of other characteristics that would normally prompt initiation of a mentoring relationship. For instance, a senior employee may be “high energy” and sociable, and even want to see junior employees succeed. However, concern on the part of the more senior employee about what will be expected of him or her in the long run may cause this (wary) person to hold back from making connections with others in a mentoring context, either informally or in terms of willingness to participate in a formal mentoring program. A potential protégé may be achievement oriented and self-confident yet never approach senior employees for informal guidance out of a fear of being exploited. In that participation in informal mentoring relationships has been linked with a variety of long-term success outcomes, such reluctance to initiate contact with others may have a negative impact on long-term career success.

Perspective taking (Davis, 1980, 1983), which also may be considered an aspect of agreeableness, is a cognitive variable that involves attempting to consider issues from others’ viewpoints. Being high on perspective taking should facilitate mentors’ attempts to help protégés learn, such as by parsing tasks in a manner that is helpful for a beginner, giving feedback in ways that are helpful, and perceiving and building upon individual differences in how different protégés are motivated. When protégés have high perspective taking, they may be better able to attract and maintain relationships with mentors, understanding how to provide added value for mentors.

Empathic concern (Davis, 1980, 1983), which is also within the scope of agreeableness, deals primarily with emotional experience in having concern for others’ feelings and difficulties. This characteristic should be particularly relevant to explaining the willingness of senior employees to engage in mentoring relationships (Allen, 2003), particularly with those junior employees who are not “stars” in terms of performance. Further, mentors who have greater empathy may be more understanding about personal problems and be more willing (and better able) to provide the psychosocial mentoring functions. However, developing a reputation of being empathetic may also become problematic for these mentors if people lower in competence tend to seek them out for guidance and mentoring.

In sum, we expect that the global trait of agreeableness, and the narrower traits of reciprocation wariness, empathy, and perspective taking, impact the formation, cultivation, and dissolution of mentoring relationships. Indirect support for such expectations is provided by Allen (2003), who found that empathy and helpfulness (components of a prosocial personality) were related to willingness to mentor others. We encourage additional research examining agreeableness and some of its components across the various phases of mentoring relationships.

Emotional stability is a trait that includes the tendency to be relatively calm, free from troubling emotions, and self-assured. Being low on emotional stability (i.e., high on neuroticism) suggests that the person tends to experience a range of negative emotions, such as sadness, anger, and anxiety, and to struggle with feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1993). Evidence from romantic relationships indicates that being low on emotional stability (neuroticism) predicts negative relationship outcomes such as conflict and dissatisfaction (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). We expect that being low on emotional

stability is likely to impede progress at all stages of the mentoring relationship and to be part of a pattern of “dysfunctional mentoring” (Eby & McManus, 2004). However, we expect emotional stability to have different implications for protégés than for mentors in the relationship.

For protégés, being insecure and anxious is likely to be negatively related to attempts to initiate contact with a potential mentor, because these people may assume that they do not have much to offer a senior employee or may be too nervous to approach the potential mentor (see Turban & Dougherty, 1994). In addition, a junior employee who is low on emotional stability may project a poor professional image, thereby making it less likely that the junior employee will be approached by a potential mentor. Alternatively, the junior employee may be perceived as a liability because of behaviors that are an outgrowth of low emotional stability, perhaps handling conflicts poorly, experiencing frequent stress-related illness, or downplaying abilities and successes.

Throughout the cultivation stage of mentoring, a protégé who lacks self-confidence and routinely avoids challenges because of negative feelings may project an image of someone who is not successful, making it hard for the mentor to show ongoing confidence in the protégé’s abilities. Alternatively, if protégés low on emotional stability are quite vocal about their feelings, the mentor might feel drained by the need to provide ongoing counseling and support (psychosocial mentoring). A protégé who is low on emotional stability may also have more difficulty than others becoming independent and renegotiating the boundaries of the mentoring relationship when it is time to modify roles.

When a senior employee (potential mentor) is low in emotional stability, that person may be avoided by potential protégés who perceive the senior person to be a potential liability. Further, mentors who are low in emotional stability may have difficulty cultivating relationships on a long-term basis and may develop a reputation as being “difficult” among other employees. If a mentor is very sensitive to perceived slights and is also prone to retribution, the relationship may become very unpleasant for the protégé and perhaps become entirely counterproductive. Similarly, mentors low in emotional stability may experience difficulty with the changes brought about by dissolution of the relationship. To summarize, although little research has investigated the role of emotional stability in mentoring relationships, we believe it may be an important personality characteristic to investigate, in particular for dysfunctional relationships.

Extraversion includes the tendency to be sociable, have high energy, experience positive emotions and, like agreeableness, is a trait that is central to interpersonal processes (Watson & Clark, 1997). Although few studies have investigated whether personality predicts the popularity and status of adults, some evidence indicates that extraversion is related to those social factors (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Thus, extraversion may influence the desirability of another person as a mentoring partner. In addition, we expect that extraversion should predict individuals having the interest and energy to participate in informal mentoring relationships. In particular, people who are higher on extraversion should be more likely to initiate mentoring relationships, perceiving that the activity will be an enjoyable (interactive) experience. Further, they should be more likely to feel they will have energy to

devote to such relationships, which will be adopted in addition to other required work activities. The tendency to experience positive emotions should enhance the development of the relationship during the cultivation stage, in that people who experience and display positive emotions should be more attractive to others than those who do not. It is unclear whether extraversion of either the protégé or mentor will influence the redefinition of the relationship, however.

Conscientiousness involves being achievement oriented, detail oriented, and organized and is likely to influence mentoring relationships because it is related to and signals competence, which both protégés and mentors tend to appreciate (Olian et al., 1993, 1988). In terms of initiation, those who engage in more conscientious behavior should be more attractive potential partners because they are seen as competent. Further, during the cultivation phase, both mentors and protégés who are conscientious are more likely to earn the trust of their mentoring partners because they can be counted on to produce quality work and follow through on commitments.

Those who are high on *openness to experience* are creative, intellectual, open-minded, and appreciate many forms of art (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Research evidence reveals a positive relationship between openness to experience and successful training outcomes in the workplace (Barrick et al., 2001; Salgado, 1997), suggesting that those who are high on this dimension enjoy learning new things and so are motivated to participate fully in training opportunities (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In that mentoring relationships involve opportunities to learn from another person (particularly in the case of a protégé) and necessitate some understanding and acceptance of work styles and interests different from one's own (particularly in the case of a mentor), those who are higher on openness to experience should be more interested in initiating mentoring relationships. Further, it is possible that those who are very low on openness to experience are perceived as difficult to work with during the cultivation stage of a mentoring relationship.

A *learning goal orientation* (mastery goal orientation), although not part of the FFM, can be seen as a trait that is related to, but narrower than, openness to experience. Achievement goal theory/goal orientation theory addresses the process by which goals are pursued (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Church, 1997; VandeWalle, 1997). Those with a strong learning goal orientation are highly interested in mastering new skills and are typically willing to risk failure in order to achieve that end. This trait should facilitate initiation of mentoring, in that (like openness to experience) both the potential protégé and mentor will view the prospect of learning from a new person as a rewarding experience. Further, those with a higher learning orientation should enjoy the process of learning to work with a new person, appreciate the new skills they are learning, and enjoy the process involved, even if these activities do not transfer immediately into tangible career gains. This enjoyment should promote a sense of reward and facilitate a continued cultivation process. In support of such logic, Godshalk and Sosik (2003) found that both protégé and mentor learning goal orientations were related to protégé reports of psychosocial and career mentoring received.

Further, when both the protégé and mentor are highly learning orientated, perceived similarity should be increased, in that both people value learning and can

tolerate the failure that often occurs as part of this process. Although they did not investigate perceived similarity, Godshalk and Sosik (2003) found that career and psychosocial mentoring were highest when both the protégé and mentor were high in learning goal orientation. Such evidence suggests that learning orientation may be an important personality characteristic in mentoring relationships, or at least the cultivation of such relationships; thus, we encourage further research investigating the role of goal orientation in mentoring relationships. Based on recent conceptualizations of the goal orientation construct, we encourage researchers to examine the measures by Elliot and McGregor (2001), who propose that the learning goal orientation has an approach and avoidance dimension similar to how performance goals are conceptualized (VandeWalle, 1997).

Our intent in discussing the role of certain personality characteristics in mentoring relationships is to provide examples of how personality may impact such relationships (see Table 2.3). Although we have discussed predominantly direct effects of personality on mentoring relationship outcomes, we encourage researchers to investigate interactive effects of personality (i.e., personality profiles) and also to investigate similarity/complementarity of mentor and protégé personality characteristics. For example, recent evidence indicates that conscientiousness is related to helping behaviors only when the person has a positive interpersonal orientation, as evidenced by high agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability (King, George, & Hebl, 2005). Extending such results to mentoring relationships, perhaps highly conscientious individuals will mentor others only when they also are high in agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability. In addition, research is needed to investigate how patterns of mentor and protégé personality characteristics influence outcomes. For example, although we speculated that extraversion is important in initiating and cultivating mentor relationships, perhaps only one individual needs to be extraverted in order to provide the initial momentum for two individuals to begin interacting. Further, perhaps a detail-oriented, conscientious person might complement a creative, open-to-experience individual in terms of generating work products and providing learning opportunities for both parties. We urge researchers to examine the effects of both similarity and complementarity of mentor and protégé personality characteristics. We now turn to a discussion of how future research on these topics might be conducted.

Suggestions for Design of Future Research (Or, How Do We Get There From Here?)

As noted in a previous section, we believe it is important to select personality characteristics that parallel the dependent variables in terms of specificity. In addition, future research will benefit from longitudinal designs and examining moderators of the effects of personality on outcomes.

In terms of methodology, use of longitudinal designs may allow for more detailed assessment of the role of personality in mentoring relationship dynamics. We expect that personality (i.e., relatively stable traits) will influence behaviors at various stages of the mentoring relationship (see Table 2.3). However, mentoring relationships may also have an impact on more malleable individual differences,

Table 2.3 Examples of Potentially Important Personality Variables at Different Phases of the Mentoring Relationships

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Protégé Personality Characteristics</i>	<i>Mentor Personality Characteristics</i>
Initiation	Agreeableness Reciprocation Wariness Conscientiousness Emotional Stability Extraversion Self-Monitoring	Agreeableness Reciprocation Wariness Emotional Stability Extraversion
Cultivation	Agreeableness Perspective-taking Conscientiousness Emotional Stability Extraversion Openness to Experience Learning Goal Orientation	Agreeableness Perspective-taking Empathic Concern Conscientiousness Emotional Stability Extraversion Openness to Experience Learning Goal Orientation
Dissolution/Redefinition	Agreeableness Emotional Stability	Agreeableness Emotional Stability

NOTE. The table suggests possible main effects of personality variables at various mentoring relationships phases. As described more fully in the text, however, it seems very likely that personality profiles of both protégés and mentors may influence the development of their relationships. For example (and there are many other possible examples), conscientiousness and agreeableness may interact such that mentor conscientiousness is related positively to protégé perceptions of mentoring functions received when agreeableness is high but is negatively related when agreeableness is low (see King et al., 2005). In addition, mentor and protégé characteristics may interact with one another to influence mentoring relationships. For example, an introverted protégé may be able to form a relationship with an extraverted mentor (in particular, if the introverted protégé is highly conscientious).

such as career self-efficacy or motivation. Tracking a cohort of business school graduates over a period of years may allow for assessment of the type and range of informal mentoring relationships that are developed and how individual differences influence and are influenced by mentoring relationships. In addition, the use of a longitudinal design may be especially useful in the context of a formal mentoring program, in which a wider range of personality traits and degrees of dyad similarity may be present.

We also encourage researchers to collect data from both members of relationships (i.e., protégés and mentors). Collecting data from both parties of the dyad will allow for investigation of actual similarity effects as well as minimize or perhaps reduce concerns with monosource method variance. For example, actual deep-level similarity (e.g., Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998) in underlying qualities such as personality traits and values may influence perceived similarity reported by mentoring partners, which is related to positive mentoring outcomes (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). In addition, actual similarity in personality traits may facilitate relationship

dynamics, especially for traits that are most directly related to goal choice, work style, and overall values (such as learning goal orientation). However, Glomb and Welsh (2005) suggested that complementarity of individuals may result from both similarity and dissimilarity in traits (e.g., similarity in affiliation and differences in dominance). They found that subordinates were most satisfied with their supervisors when supervisors were high in control (dominance) and subordinates were low to moderate (i.e., when they were dissimilar). In addition, dyads in which both members have similar and low levels of certain traits, such as emotional stability and learning goal orientation, may not have effective relationships. Thus, researchers should consider the profile of personality traits of dyad members and the traits on which they may be similar and dissimilar. In any case, to investigate such issues, we encourage researchers to assess both mentor and protégé personality characteristics. In addition, measurement of personality via secondary sources (such as peer ratings) may add credibility to such personality assessment.

We also recommend that researchers consider potential moderators of the personality-outcome links in mentoring relationships. For instance, *time spent* in a mentoring relationship may influence the importance of personality similarity between mentor and protégé (Turban et al., 2002) or the impact of individual personality characteristics on outcomes. In addition, the relationship between personality characteristics and outcomes may be moderated by *other personality characteristics or interpersonal processes*. For instance, a recent study found that the relationship between conscientiousness and performance is moderated by social skills, such that conscientiousness is more strongly related to job performance when social skills are high and is unrelated or negatively related to job performance when social skills are low (Witt & Ferris, 2003). Such results suggest that social skills influence behavioral manifestations of conscientiousness. In a similar way, perhaps the (hypothesized) positive relationship between agreeableness and mentoring cultivation processes is augmented by the presence of high extraversion. That is, a disagreeable person may be all the more difficult to tolerate if that person is also extraverted, as their disagreeableness may be expressed quite freely. Finally, *context* is likely to be an important moderator of personality-outcome relationships. For example, extraversion may be less important for the initiation of formal versus informal mentoring relationships. Further, although speculative, it may be that mentor personality characteristics have less influence on protégé initiation of mentoring relationships for the protégé with a larger or more diverse constellation of mentoring relationships (Higgins & Kram, 2001). For example, a protégé who has a supportive network of mentoring relationships may be more likely to attempt to initiate a mentor relationship with an emotionally unstable and disagreeable mentor who can provide career opportunities than would a protégé who does not have a supportive network.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have attempted to provide a review of the current state of personality research in the mentoring literature and to provide some direction in terms of how to proceed in this line of research. Although limited research on personality and

mentoring processes has been conducted to date, there are indications that this is a promising arena of future study. In particular, advances in the use of personality concepts to understand other aspects of work behavior may be applied to understanding mentoring dynamics and outcomes more thoroughly. We hope that we have provided some helpful ideas for mentoring scholars to consider as they develop future studies.

Note

1. As noted by Wanberg, Welsh, and Hezlett (2003), however, although mentoring is the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, there are various other types of developmental relationships at work. People seek out and receive career-related support not only from mentors but also from other people, such as peers, subordinates, and supervisors (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Kram & Isabella, 1985). However, the focus of this chapter is on the traditional mentoring relationship, and so we use the term *mentoring* throughout the chapter.

References

- Allen, T. D. (2003). Mentoring others: A dispositional and motivational approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *62*, 134–154.
- Allen, T. D., & Eby, L. T. (2003). Relationship effectiveness for mentors: Factors associated with learning and quality. *Journal of Management*, *29*, 469–486.
- Allen, T. D., Eby, L. T., Poteet, M. L., Lentz, E., & Lima, L. (2004). Career benefits associated with mentoring for protégés: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*, 127–136.
- Allen, T. D., Poteet, M. L., & Burroughs, S. M. (1997). The mentor's perspective: A qualitative inquiry and future research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *51*, 70–89.
- Allen, T. D., Poteet, M. L., Russell, J., & Dobbins, G. H. (1997). A field study of factors related to supervisors' willingness to mentor others. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *50*, 1–22.
- Allen, T. D., Russell, J. E. A., & Maetzke, S. B. (1997). Formal peer mentoring: Factors related to protégés' satisfaction and willingness to mentor others. *Group & Organization Management*, *22*, 488–507.
- Aryee, S., Lo, S., & Kang, I. L. (1999). Antecedents of early career stage mentoring among Chinese employees. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *20*, 563–576.
- Asendorpf, J. B., & Wilpers, S. (1998). Personality effects on social relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1531–1544.
- Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The big five personality dimensions and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, *44*, 1–26.
- Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K., & Judge, T. A. (2001). Personality and performance at the beginning of the new millennium: What do we know and where do we go next? *International Journal of Selection & Assessment*, *9*, 9–30.
- Bozionelos, N. (2004). Mentoring provided: Relation to mentor's career success, personality, and mentoring received. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *64*, 24–46.
- Caspi, A., Roberts, B. W., & Shiner, R. L. (2005). Personality development: Stability and change. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *56*, 453–484.

- Chao, G. T., Walz, P. M., & Gardner, P. D. (1992). Formal and informal mentorships: A comparison of mentoring functions and contrast with nonmentored counterparts. *Personnel Psychology, 45*, 619–636.
- Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Professional manual for the NEO PI-R and NEO-FFI*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.
- Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1997). Longitudinal stability of adult personality. In R. Hogan, J. Johnson, & S. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 269–290). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Cotterell, N., Eisenberger, R., & Speicher, H. (1992). Inhibiting effects of reciprocation wariness on interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 67*, 658–668.
- Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *JSAS Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10*, 85.
- Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44*, 113–126.
- Day, R., & Allen, T. D. (2004). The relationship between career motivation and self-efficacy with protégé career success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 64*, 72–91.
- Digman, J. M. (1996). The curious history of the five-factor model. In J. S. Wiggins (Ed.), *The five-factor model of personality: Theoretical perspectives* (pp. 1–20). New York: Guilford Press.
- Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review, 95*, 256–273.
- Eby, L. T., & Allen, T. D. (2002). Further investigation of protégés' negative mentoring experiences. *Group & Organization Management, 27*, 456–479.
- Eby, L. T., Butts, M., Lockwood, A., & Simon, S. A. (2004). Protégés' negative mentoring experiences: Construct development and nomological validation. *Personnel Psychology, 57*, 411–447.
- Eby, L. T., & McManus, S. E. (2004). The protégé's role in negative mentoring experiences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 65*, 255–275.
- Eby, L. T., McManus, S. E., Simon, S. A., & Russell, J. E. A. (2000). The protégé's perspective regarding negative mentoring experiences: The development of a taxonomy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 57*, 1–21.
- Eisenberger, R., Cotterell, N., & Marvel, J. (1987). Reciprocation ideology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 74–750.
- Elliot, A. J. (2005). A conceptual history of the achievement goal construct. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 52–72). New York: Guilford Press.
- Elliot, A. J., & Church, M. A. (1997). A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 218–232.
- Elliot, A. J., & McGregor, H. A. (2001). A 2 × 2 achievement goal framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 501–519.
- Ensher, E. A., & Murphy, S. E. (1997). Effects of race, gender, perceived similarity, and contact on mentor relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 50*, 460–481.
- Ensher, E. A., Thomas, C., & Murphy, S. E. (2001). Comparison of traditional, step-ahead, and peer mentoring on protégés' support, satisfaction, and perceptions of career success: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 15*, 419–438.
- Fagenson, E. A. (1989). The mentor advantage: Perceived career/job experiences of protégés vs. nonprotégés. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10*, 309–320.
- Fagenson, E. A. (1992). Mentoring: Who needs it? A comparison of proteges' and non proteges' needs for power, achievement, affiliation, and autonomy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 41*, 48–60.

- Fagenson-Eland, E. A., & Baugh, S. G. (2001). Personality predictors of protégé mentoring history. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 31*, 2502–2517.
- Funder, D. C. (2001). Personality. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 197–221.
- Glomb, T. M., & Welsh, E. T. (2005). Can opposites attract? Personality heterogeneity in supervisor-subordinate dyads as a predictor of subordinate outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 749–757.
- Godshalk, V. M., & Sosik, J. J. (2003). Aiming for career success: The role of learning goal orientation in mentoring relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*, 417–437.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1993). The structure of phenotypic personality traits. *American Psychologist, 48*, 26–34.
- Graziano, W. G., & Eisenberg, N. (1997). Agreeableness: A dimension of personality. In R. Hogan, J. Johnson, & S. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 767–793). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Harrison, D. A., Price, K. H., & Bell, M. P. (1998). Beyond relational demography: Time and the effects of surface- and deep-level diversity on work group cohesion. *Academy of Management Journal, 41*, 96–107.
- Higgins, M. C. (2000). The more the merrier? Multiple developmental relationships and work satisfaction. *Journal of Management, 19*, 277–296.
- Higgins, M. C., & Kram, K. E. (2001). Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: A developmental network perspective. *Academy of Management Review, 26*, 264–288.
- Higgins, M. C., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Constellations and careers: Toward understanding the effects of multiple developmental relationships. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22*, 223–247.
- Hough, L. M. (1998). Personality at work: Issues and evidence. In M. D. Hakel (Ed.), *Beyond multiple choice: Evaluating alternatives to traditional testing for selection* (pp. 131–166). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Judge, T. A., & Illies, R. (2002). Relationship of personality to performance motivation: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*, 797–807.
- Kanfer, R., & Heggestad, E. D. (1997). Motivational traits and skills: A person-centered approach to work motivation. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 19*, 1–56.
- King, E. B., George, J. M., & Hebl, M. R. (2005). Linking personality to helping behaviors at work: An interactional perspective. *Journal of Personality, 73*, 585–607.
- Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal, 26*, 608625.
- Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work*. Boston: Scott, Foresman.
- Kram, K. E., & Isabella, L. (1985). Mentoring alternatives: The role of peer relationships in interpersonal development. *Academy of Management Journal, 28*, 110132.
- Leary, M. R. (1999). The scientific study of personality. In V. J. Derlega, B. A. Winstead, & W. H. Jones (Eds.), *Personality: Contemporary theory and research* (pp. 3–26). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Lynch, P. D., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. (1999). Perceived organizational support: Inferior versus superior performance by wary employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*, 467–483.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1996). Toward a new generation of personality theories: Theoretical contexts for the five-factor model. In J. S. Wiggins (Ed.), *The five-factor model of personality: Theoretical perspectives* (pp. 1–20). New York: Guilford Press.
- Mullen, E. J. (1998). Vocational and psychosocial mentoring functions: Identifying mentors who serve both. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 9*, 319–339.
- Mullen, E. J., & Noe, R. A. (1999). The mentoring information exchange: When do mentors seek information from their protégés? *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 233–242.

- Noe, R., & Greenberger, D. B., & Wang, S. (2002). Mentoring: What we know and where we might go. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 21, 129–173.
- Olian, J., Carroll, S., & Giannantonio, C. M. (1993). Mentor reactions to protégés: An experiment with managers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 43, 266–278.
- Olian, J., Carroll, S., Giannantonio, C. M., & Feren, D. (1988). What do proteges look for in a mentor? Results of three experimental studies. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 33, 15–37.
- Ozer, D. J., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2006). Personality and the prediction of consequential outcomes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 401–421.
- Perugini, M., Gallucci, M., Presaghi, F., & Ercolani, A.P. (2003). The personal norm of reciprocity. *European Journal of Personality*, 17, 251–283.
- Pervin, L. A. (2003). *The science of personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford Press.
- Pierce, J. L., Gardner, D. G., Cummings, L. L., & Dunham, R. B. (1989). Organization-based self-esteem: Construct definition, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 622–648.
- Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. (1993). Gender and willingness to mentor in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 19, 97–111.
- Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. (1999). Mentor functions and outcomes: A comparison of men and women in formal and informal mentoring relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84, 529–550.
- Ragins, B. R., Cotton, J. L., & Miller, J. S. (2000). Marginal mentoring: The effects of type of mentor, quality of relationship, and program design on work and career attitudes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 1177–1194.
- Ragins, B. R., & Scandura, T. A. (1999). Burden or blessing? Expected costs and benefits of being a mentor. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20, 493–509.
- Rice, M. B., & Brown, R. D. (1990). Developmental factors associated with self-perceptions of mentoring competence and mentoring needs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 31, 293–299.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rowe, D. C. (1999). Heredity. In V. J. Derlega, B. A. Winstead, & W. H. Jones (Eds.), *Personality: Contemporary theory and research* (pp. 66–100). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Salgado, J. F. (1997). The five-factor model of personality and job performance in the European community. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 30–43.
- Scandura, T. A. (1992). Mentorship and career mobility: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 169–174.
- Scandura, T. A. (1998). Dysfunctional mentoring relationships and outcomes. *Journal of Management*, 24, 449–467.
- Scandura, T. A., & Ragins, B. R. (1993). The effects of sex and gender role orientation on mentorship in male-dominated occupations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 43, 251–265.
- Snyder, M. (1987). *Public appearance/private realities*. New York: Freeman.
- Turban, D. B., & Dougherty, T. W. (1994). Role of protégé personality in receipt of mentoring and career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 688–702.
- Turban, D. B., Dougherty, T. W., & Lee, F. K. (2002). Gender, race, and perceived similarity effects in developmental relationships: The moderating role of relationship development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61, 240–262.
- VandeWalle, D. (1997). Development and validation of a work domain goal orientation instrument. *Educational & Psychological Measurement*, 57, 995–1015.
- Wanberg, C. R., Welsh, E. T., & Hezlett, S. A. (2003). Mentoring research: A review and dynamic process model. *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management*, 22, 39–124.

50 MENTORING RESEARCH

- Waters, L. (2004). Protégé-mentor agreement about the provision of psychosocial support: The mentoring relationship, personality, and workload. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *65*, 519–532.
- Watson, D., & Clark, L. A. (1997). Extraversion and its positive emotional core. In R. Hogan, J. Johnson, & S. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 767–793). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Witt, L. A., & Ferris, G. R. (2003). Social skill as a moderator of the conscientiousness-performance relationship: Convergent results across four studies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*, 809–820.