

Running Head: DEVELOPING LEADERS THROUGH MENTORING

Developing Leaders Through Mentoring:
A Brief Literature Review

Carol C. Leavitt

Capella University Ph.D. Candidate

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1131 Mesa Vista Drive

Ivins, UT 84738

Telephone: (435) 773-7337

Email: cleavitt@infowest.com

Abstract

Our rapidly-changing, ambiguous, global business arena demands a unique and evolving set of insights and capabilities by which leaders may effectively navigate this new terrain. Mentoring can accomplish exactly that, as its processes orient, train, and advance the skills, knowledge, and experiences of aspiring leaders. Best utilized, mentoring is one important component in a larger, strategic initiative to build a cohesive and collaborative workforce, develop agile and savvy global leaders, and create a continuous learning culture that can effectively adapt to organizational and global change. The key research questions that were considered for this literature review evaluating 15 scholarly articles on mentoring pertain to its “best practices” in three areas: 1) The unique *traits and behaviors* that effective mentors demonstrate; 2) the most productive *relationship structures* that exist between mentors and protégés; and 3) the concrete developmental *outcomes* that mentoring produces for the protégé, the mentor, and the sponsoring organization? This literature review, focused on the evolution of mentoring within the organizational context, spans the period from 1985 forward. It presents the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study of mentoring and analyzes the historical evolution of mentoring theory. Additionally, it demonstrates the structures, functions, and outcomes of mentoring relationships that benefit protégés, mentors, and organizations, and notes how mentoring tangibly contributes to the practice of leadership. Finally, it identifies the design limitations and theoretical shortcomings of the existing research, and makes recommendations for the future study of mentoring.

Mentoring as an Evolving Phenomenon

The term “mentor” originated in Greek mythology, when Ulysses responded to the cry of battle in the Trojan War and left his son’s care, education, and protection in the dedicated hands of a trusted friend, Mentor. Since that time, the word *mentor* generally implies teacher, advocate, adviser, guide, sponsor, counselor, role model, and champion. History is rife with examples of how mentoring has been undertaken by leaders desiring to help develop their followers, parents or guardians wishing to advance the skills of their progeny or charges, and elders carrying out their responsibilities to groom and develop the next generation.

The phenomenon of mentoring as a developmental process in organizations is relatively new; it was first mentioned in Dalton, Thompson, and Price’s (1977) research as one of the four stages of professional careers. A number of articles and studies in the early 1980’s led to an explosion of interest and research on this topic such that, in the last 25 years, mentoring has emerged as an important process for student enrichment in academia, for professional maturation in the disciplines of sociology and psychology, and for leadership development in the context of organizational behavior. It is the last of these which is the focus of this literature review.

Mentoring plays an important role in today’s organizational setting. It is used as an orienting and integration process for new hires, as a method of acclimation and socialization following the onboarding process, and as a training and development tool for managers and leaders. The fact that our business environment has progressed into a globally-competitive marketplace underscores the imperative for companies to leverage the value of mentoring as a developmental activity for leaders. This rapidly-changing, ambiguous, global business arena demands a unique and evolving set of insights and capabilities by which leaders may effectively

navigate this new terrain. Mentoring is a powerful means by which to accomplish exactly that in an accelerated fashion.

The key research questions that were considered for this literature review evaluating 15 scholarly articles on mentoring pertain to understanding the “best practices” of mentoring along three primary dimensions: 1) What are the unique *traits* that effective mentors possess and what are the unique *behaviors* that successful mentors demonstrate? 2) What are the most productive *relationship structures* that exist between mentors and protégés? 3) What are the concrete developmental *outcomes* that mentoring produces for the protégé, the mentor, and the sponsoring organization? The research involved, however, did not necessarily address the subject of mentoring along those clear lines of delineation; there were discoveries and elucidations across all three of these dimensions in many of the studies. Yet, this author found a distinct pathway in which the theory unfolded and built on what had come before. The literature review that follows, focused on the evolution of mentoring within the organizational context, spans the period from 1985 forward. The literature and concepts are presented chronologically so that the reader may find it easy to follow the evolution and expansion of theory. The timeframe is split into three distinctive periods to denote “Foundational Discoveries,” “Newer Frameworks,” and “Emerging Theories.”

A Brief Historical Overview of Mentoring Theory

The early theories in mentoring, referenced in the “Foundational Discoveries” section of this literature review, focused on defining mentor traits and behaviors and establishing introductory models of the mentoring relationship. Two key structures emerged: 1) traditional (hierarchical) relationships – which were well-established in the domains of psychology and

academia – where formal, hierarchical practitioner/intern or teacher/student relationships were common; and 2) peer (lateral) relationships, a newer, less structured, and more spontaneous form of mentoring relationship. A key finding in this era was that, no matter the structure of the relationship, mentors generally perform two primary functions in support of their protégés – career development and psychosocial support.

The “Newer Frameworks” section recounts how, at the dawn of the 21st century, researchers turned their attention to the developmental outcomes from mentoring as they began to define its value-added benefits for the protégé and the organization. Examples include job skill, competency development, and career enhancement for protégés (Eby, 1997; Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001) and job satisfaction, perceived career success, and retention for organizations (Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, & Barksdale Jr, 2006; Ensher, et al., 2001; Lankau & Scandura, 2002). They began to witness the implications of a changing global work environment that created more ambiguity and complexity for workers and leaders alike. The body of literature during this period galvanized mentoring as an important and effective process by which to prepare and develop leaders to be successful in this unique environment.

Finally, given what scholars had learned about the value of outcomes for protégés from the mentoring experience, they soon became concerned with how that could translate into tangible benefits for the organization, with particular interest in the context of the knowledge age. Enhanced knowledge-sharing among mentors and protégés was lauded as a key outcome that created a substantial competitive advantage for organizations (Bryant & Terborg, 2008). A new form of mentoring in which younger associates advised older workers was revealed, and

researchers discovered the benefits of career rejuvenation and enhanced job satisfaction as outcomes for mentors (Pullins & Fine, 2002; Stevens-Roseman, 2009).

The literature search included the phrases mentor, mentoring, mentors, leader* mentor*, mentor* structures, mentor* relationships, mentor* programs, mentor* outcomes, mentor* benefits, mentor* in organizations, barriers to mentoring, and value of mentor*. Bodies of literature tapped include research from the business and organizational, academic, and socio/psychological disciplines. Databases utilized in this search include EBSCO/Business Source Complete, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest Psychology Journals, SAGE Journals Online, and others. This review begins with a clarifying definition of mentoring and identifies the predominant theoretical constructs that supported the literature on mentoring. It then proceeds through the three distinctive periods of mentoring research, noting how the various studies have contributed to the practice of leadership. Finally, this literature review identifies the design and theoretical limitations of the existing research, and makes recommendations for future study in the phenomenon of mentoring.

Mentoring Defined

Researcher Sharan Merriam (1983) stated that “mentoring appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings” (p. 169). Because the implications for determining best-practices in mentoring span a number of disciplines, it is important to clearly define its meaning for use in this literature review. In 1983, the predominant paradigm of mentoring in organizations was that of a senior individual taking a junior individual under his or her wing, known as a hierarchical mentoring relationship (and often referred to as “traditional” mentoring). At that time, Merriam

(1983) defined mentoring as “a powerful emotional interaction between an older and younger person, in a relationship in which the older mentor is trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the younger” (p. 162). Yet, as this paper reveals, other researchers soon discovered that the structure of the mentoring relationship was not merely limited to a hierarchical dyad. Thus, for the purposes of this literature review, the definition of mentoring is put forth as follows: Mentoring is a personal relationship in which a more experienced and/or knowledgeable individual (mentor) acts as a counselor, role model, teacher, and champion of a less experienced or knowledgeable individual (protégé), sharing advice, knowledge, and guidance and offering support and challenge in behalf of the protégé’s personal and professional development.

Predominant Theoretical Frameworks that Support Mentoring

In the course of this research, two theories stood out as key frameworks by which to explore the mentoring process and relationships. First, social learning theory notes that an individual develops within a scope of social relationships consisting of a core group that influences the individual’s new behavior and evolution of self-confidence (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Additionally, social learning theory suggests that managers (and thus, hierarchical mentors) may act as role models for subordinates and facilitate protégés’ learning of technical and interpersonal skills necessary for advancement within the organization (Eby, 1997; Koocher, 2002). Further, social learning theory serves as a context by which emulating a mentor’s behaviors influences protégés’ learning, as “protégés who admire their mentors and view them as role models may be more attentive to their mentors’ behaviors and more likely to try behaviors

that they observe their mentors accomplishing successfully. Through observation and imitation, protégés may strengthen their own skills” (Lankau & Scandura, 2002, p. 787).

Second, social exchange theory is thought to be foundational to mentoring, as it contends that an individual associates with another if he thinks it will be rewarding for himself (i.e., he is drawn to the other person to experience those social rewards) (Brashear, et al., 2006).

Reciprocity, typically seen in mentoring relationships, is also an important element of social exchange theory (Ensher, et al., 2001, p. 421).

Other theories arose, but not at the same level of frequency as the two above. Social cognitive theory’s tenet that individuals learn by observing the consequences others receive as a result of their behaviors, and that vicarious reinforcement accelerates learning, has implications for mentoring, as does socialization theory, “the process through which newly hired employees adapt to their work environments by learning the culture and values of the organizations and developing the skills needed for their new jobs” (Hezlett, 2005, p. 508). Transformational leadership theory was referenced in the context of mentoring in terms of how managers can inspire subordinates by assuming the roles of coach, teacher, and mentor. Leader-member exchange theory (LMX) demonstrates applicability to mentoring, as it notes how managers selectively develop strong bonds with some subordinates and act favorably in developing their strengths and careers. In the context of LMX theory, mentors are known for perceiving high-potential protégés and spending more time – and more quality time – with them than with those having perceived lower potential (Ensher, et al., 2001, p. 435). These and other theoretical frameworks relevant to mentoring are explicitly referenced in the literature review that follows.

Foundational Discoveries

Early research on mentoring attempted to lay the foundation of knowledge about these unique relationships within organizations by defining what mentors do and clarifying the mentoring relationship. Researcher Kathy Kram had undertaken one of the earliest studies on mentoring in which she recognized the traditional, hierarchical structure of the mentoring relationship and originated the “two factor” mentoring theory, identifying two key dimensions on which mentors contribute to protégés’ development: career (job skills, information sharing, feedback, etc.) and psychosocial (self-esteem, confidence, emotional support, etc.) (Kram, 1983). Her follow-on, seminal study two years later with Lynn Isabella centered on three important research questions: 1) Why do individuals establish and maintain peer relationships? 2) Can distinctive kinds of peer relationships be identified? 3) What are the functions of peer relationships at different career stages? Their results introduced a new structure of mentoring relationship – that of peer-to-peer mentoring – and suggested that distinctive types of peer relationships exist and contribute uniquely to protégé development at different career stages.

In this research, Kram and Isabella (1985) utilized the framework of social learning theory, noting that the individual develops within a scope of social relationships consisting of a core group that influences the individual’s new behavior and evolution of self-confidence (p. 111). In that context, they developed a new continuum of three types of peer relationships that correlated to three phases in an individual’s career path, and outlined the unique developmental functions offered during those various career stages. In essence, they urged not just one, but multiple mentoring relationships – both simultaneously and successively – throughout one’s career for developmental support. They coined a new phrase that is still referenced today, calling these “relationship constellations” (p. 129). Additionally, a new perspective emerged

from this research, noting that the peer mentoring relationship is reciprocal, not providing only one-way value to the protégé, but also identifying benefits for the mentor. This outcome is significant in that it helps both protégé and mentor develop a continuing sense of competence, responsibility, and identity (p. 118).

Building on Kram's (1983) initial two-factor framework, researcher Terri Scandura (1992) researched an important new dimension of mentoring: the link between mentors providing career and psychosocial support and the concrete career mobility outcomes of protégés involved in a management development mentoring program. Career mentoring was proven significantly and positively related to managers' promotion rates, and psychosocial support was significantly and positively related to managers' salary levels. This study was helpful in demonstrating that Kram's two-factor theory had "teeth" in terms of tangible outcomes for protégés.

In this same year, researchers Tammy Allen, Joy Russell, and Sabine Maetzke (1997) introduced a new measurement factor – protégés' satisfaction with a formal peer mentoring program and their resulting willingness to mentor others in the future. The researchers expanded on existing theory by developing new scales based on Kram's (1983) two-factor theory that measured career support & psychosocial support; they also measured protégés' time with mentors, satisfaction with mentors, satisfaction with previous mentors, and willingness to mentor in the future. Their results supported Kram's (1983) view that mentoring is "a series of developmental activities with different mentoring functions being of relative importance at different stages of development" (Allen, et al., 1997, p. 498). While it was determined that the amount of time spent with the mentor was not as important to the protégé's satisfaction as the

quality of the relationship, the results determined that the degree of career and psychosocial functions provided were significantly related to the protégé's overall satisfaction with the mentoring relationship.

Foundational Discoveries – Tangible Contributions to the Practice of Leadership

Though Kram and Isabella's (1985) research is over 25 years old, for scholars interested in understanding the roles of leaders in complex, dynamic, and changing environments, their work seems fresh and significant. They expanded our view of leadership development by proposing a different configuration to the traditional mentoring relationship. That is, relationships with peers (as differentiated from "hierarchical" mentoring relationships) offer an important alternative to personal and professional growth. Further, these researchers suggested that these peer relationships are neither static nor finite – they can evolve with the protégés career path and offer a range of developmental support for growth at each stage. One of the most important implications to come from this for protégés, peer mentors, and the human resources personnel who develop leaders is the ease of access to this additional mentoring resource, as peers are far more available to fellow workers than are hierarchical mentors. Kram & Isabella's (1985) work is seminal – it sets a high standard as the baseline mentoring research upon which others will build for decades to come.

Allen et al.'s (1997) conclusion that the degree of career and psychosocial functions provided by mentors significantly correlated to the protégé's overall satisfaction with the mentoring relationship was a key outcome, as determining the variable(s) associated with a satisfying mentoring experience can contribute to significantly improving – even tailoring – mentoring programs in the workplace (p. 489). The results also indicated that students are likely

to have a higher need for support and encouragement (psychosocial needs) than for career-related needs, echoing Kram and Isabella's (1985) assertion that mentoring functions must necessarily adjust and vary according to unique phases in the protégé's life and career.

This study has important implications for human resources or administrative leaders who aim to develop – or currently administer – mentoring programs in organizations. For example, as formal mentoring programs are becoming more popular, there is an opportunity for administrators to more fully understand which functions are most meaningful in mentoring relationships at various times in the protégé's career path, and coach and train mentors to focus on those functions at those times in order to be most effective. Additionally, this study provided insight into a unique, new approach to mentoring – team-based mentoring – offering yet another choice of developmental processes by which to advance the skills and capabilities of leaders. Expanding our view of types of mentoring relationships, the findings suggest that mentoring does not have to occur exclusively in a dyadic form to be effective. This can create efficiencies at the workplace, for example, if a team of mentors provides guidance and support to a larger number of managers or leaders, providing appropriate coverage and access to protégés while not over-demanding one mentor's time and energy resources to the extreme.

Newer Frameworks

The literature within this 10-year period primarily extended the mentoring literature and developed new theory by examining mentoring in the context of the turbulent, changing workplace. For example, Lillian Eby's study (1997) noted unprecedented global changes that were forever altering organizational structure, work design, and strategy. Different than Kram and Isabella's (1985) work, her study noted that very unique changes in the organizational world

necessitated a different way of approaching career paths. Fewer opportunities for upward advancement due to flattening of organizations, involuntary job loss, and increasing need for job search required development of a more diversified set of transportable skills to be marketable inside and outside organizations (Eby, 1997, p. 125). Referencing Kram's (1983) earlier work, the author developed a two-by-two typology of alternative forms of mentoring that placed job-related vs. career-related mentoring functions on the x axis and hierarchical vs. lateral mentoring relationship type on the y axis to identify different types of skill development used in mentoring. Based on this typology, the author presented specific examples of alternative forms of mentoring that could be used to help individuals and organizations adapt to organizational change.

A number of theoretical constructs served as frameworks for Eby's (1997) research: 1) social learning theory suggested that manager-mentors (hierarchical) may act as role models for subordinates and facilitate protégés' learning of technical and interpersonal skills necessary for advancement within the organization; 2) transformational leadership theory illustrated how some managers can inspire subordinates by assuming the roles of coach, teacher, and mentor; and 3) leader-member exchange theory (LMX) posited that managers selectively develop strong bonds with some subordinates and act favorably in developing their strengths and careers. This valuable research enhanced earlier theory by placing the structure of the mentoring relationship and the types of skill development within each structure into a framework or model that clarified and defined four specific mentoring relationship archetypes.

At the turn of this century, researchers Angela Young and Pamela Perrewe (2000) reported on their rather ambitious study that expanded existing theory by developing a new framework for examining the process of forming and maintaining mentoring relationships, with

specific attention given to the exchange of behaviors between mentors and protégés. Further, the authors developed a model depicting antecedent factors leading to a mentoring relationship, the exchange of behaviors by mentors & protégés throughout the relationship, and tangible outcomes for the individuals, dyad, and organization (Young & Perrewe, 2000, p. 179). Specifically, they posited that individual characteristics, relationship factors, career factors, environmental factors, and relationship type (formal vs. informal) influence protégés' and mentors' willingness to engage in the mentoring relationship. This results in role behaviors in different mentoring phases which, when measured against expectations, contribute to overall perceptions of the mentoring relationship and the ultimate outcomes from it. Further, the authors noted the cyclical nature of mentoring relationships due to their observations that mentoring *outcomes* impact the *antecedent* factors. The authors cited a number of theoretical foundations for their work: social exchange theory supports the premise that, within the context of social interaction, there is a giving and receiving of tangible and intangible costs and benefits; interpersonal relationship theory forwards the notion that individual characteristics are held to have a strong influence on the level of attraction between two people and their resulting willingness to engage in a relationship together; and social cognition theory suggests that individuals' aspirations, goals, and actions are closely tied to the personal relationships they form.

The next year, a new type of mentoring relationship was identified and tied to outcomes in Ensher, Thomas, and Murphy's (2001) examination of the effectiveness of various types of mentors and mentor support on protégés' satisfaction with their mentors, jobs, and perceived career success. While traditional, or hierarchical, and peer mentoring relationships had been the standards in all of the previous research, the authors introduced the "step-ahead" mentor, which

is defined by an individual who is one level above the protégé in the organizational hierarchy (Ensher, et al., 2001, p. 420). They split Kram's (1983) two-factor theory into three factors – vocational, role-modeling, and social support – and measured them against type of mentor, reciprocity of the relationship, satisfaction with mentor, perceived career success, and protégé job satisfaction. The results demonstrated that role modeling, reciprocity, and vocational support predicted protégés' satisfaction with their mentors. Vocational support was a significant predictor of protégés' job satisfaction and perceived career success. Protégés were more satisfied with traditional mentors, and also demonstrated higher job satisfaction due to significantly more vocational and role modeling support from these mentors than from peer or step-ahead mentors. These results contradict the literature's previous conclusions that peer mentors offered the most effective and satisfying functional support and relationships than did hierarchical mentors (Allen, et al., 1997; Kram & Isabella, 1985).

This study was grounded in the theoretical framework of social exchange theory, which assumes that individuals form, maintain, and/or terminate relationships with each other based on the perceived ratio of benefits to costs in the relationship. Reciprocity, originally identified in mentoring relationships by Kram and Isabella (1985) and highlighted in Ensher et al.'s work (2001), is also an important element of social exchange theory (p. 421). The authors also noted that leader-member exchange theory (LMX) comes into play when mentors perceive high-potential protégés and spend more time – and more quality time – with them than with those having perceived lower potential (p. 435). Per Kram and Isabella's (1985) original notion of relationship constellations, these authors urged protégés to develop a network of mentoring relationships to be sustained throughout their careers.

Once again, Kathy Kram emerged as a theory innovator when, in 2001, she teamed with Monica Higgins to introduce a new typology for mentoring. Like Eby in 1997, these authors cited the increasingly competitive nature of the business environment, changing organizational structures, advancing technologies, and other factors as creating significant pressures for individuals to look beyond organizational boundaries to multiple sources for mentoring support and knowledge and skill development as they navigate their careers. Higgins and Kram (2001) expanded on Kram and Isabella's (1985) work regarding relationship constellations in which individuals receive mentoring assistance from many people at any one time, including senior colleagues, peers, family, and community members. Their new mentoring construct was named "developmental networks," which they defined as those relationships the protégé names at a particular point in time as being important to his or her career development; they are simultaneous rather than sequential.

The authors developed a new framework that consisted of a 2X2 grid depicting two primary dimensions: 1) the diversity of individuals' developmental networks, low and high, on the y axis; and 2) the strength of their developmental relationships that make up those networks, low and high, on the x axis (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 268). The resulting four types of networks defined by the grid were: 1) receptive; 2) traditional; 3) opportunistic; and 4) entrepreneurial. Antecedents, mediating processes, and outcomes were identified for each of these developmental network structures. The key premise was that protégés need to have a variety of developmental networks across the four types to maximize their personal learning and attain the valuable outcomes from these mentoring relationships. The authors referred to social network theory – which suggests that individuals create varying networks of associates and

friends to serve their socialization needs – to present mentoring as a multiple developmental relationships phenomenon. Social network theory suggests that individuals can benefit from simultaneously having strong ties and broad resources.

The next year, a team of researchers were interested in these two new questions regarding mentoring: How does learning take place through the mentoring process; and 2) How does that learning contribute to protégés' competence and effectiveness at work? On the latter question, Lankau and Scandura (2002) were particularly interested in the mentoring outcome factors of role ambiguity, job satisfaction, intention to leave, and actual turnover for protégés. Their results noted two types of personal learning that occurs through mentoring: 1) relational, about the interdependence and connectedness of one's job to others; and 2) personal skills development, to develop new skills and abilities that enable better work relationships. They discovered that these are both largely influenced by relationships with others in the organization (p. 780). These two personal learning variables were positively correlated to job satisfaction and negatively correlated to job ambiguity, intention to leave, and actual turnover.

It was discovered that one of the most important ways that learning occurred in mentoring was through role modeling, which was directly associated with skill development for protégés (p. 787). The authors noted that, in support of social learning theory, emulating a mentor's behaviors influences protégés' learning. They stated that, "Protégés who admire their mentors and view them as role models may be more attentive to their mentors' behaviors and more likely to try behaviors that they observe their mentors accomplishing successfully. Through observation and imitation, protégés may strengthen their own skills" (p. 787).

In 2005, a ground-breaking study was undertaken from a new angle – the formal mentor’s perspective – and examined who mentors are (essential traits) and what mentors do (essential functions) in four different types of organizations: academic, business, military-armed forces, and military-academic. Traits and functions had already been studied for twenty years, but adding the potential impact of the industry context was pioneering. Interestingly, while Smith, Howard, and Harrington (2005) performed an early factor analysis in their research, results yielded three underlying mentor behavior factors – trainer, activist, and support – thereby expanding existing theory on mentor traits and behaviors. The first two factors correspond to Kram’s (1983) career functions, while the latter parallels her psychosocial function. Smith et al. (2005) made the link between transformational leadership theory’s leader behaviors and the mentoring functions. Their outcomes supported previous research revealing core mentor traits – integrity and empathy – which are also key characteristics of transformational leaders.

Smith et al.’s (2005) results identified that industry context and gender significantly influence perceptions of the ideal formal mentor characteristics. Too, since the study was conducted from the viewpoint of mentors (not protégés), it was found that formal mentors place more importance on mentor traits than on mentor behaviors. One important conclusion was that psychosocial support behaviors were significantly more important to formal mentors than career functions (p. 46), which has also been posited as true from the protégé’s perspective in past research.

In the same year, Sarah Hezlett (2005) was also measuring what protégés learned from mentors, and how they learned it. Her results revealed a total of 41 factors that protégés had learned from mentors, with the majority being skill-based learning (61%), followed by cognitive

learning (26.8%), and the least involving affective learning (12.2%). Skill-based learning is defined as interpersonal, organizational, communication, problem-solving, and supervisory skills; cognitive learning is characterized by increased organizational knowledge and cognitive strategies; and affective learning includes examples shared that are reflective of heightened motivation (pp. 507-508).

The author noted that social learning theory and social cognitive theory are important frameworks for understanding some, but not all, protégé learning. Individuals learn by observing the consequences others receive as a result of their behaviors. Vicarious reinforcement accelerates learning, as individuals do not have to experience trial and error of their own. Additionally, Hezlett (2005) cited the use of socialization theory to describe “the process through which newly hired employees adapt to their work environments by learning the culture and values of the organizations and developing the skills needed for their new jobs” (p. 508).

One of the most important and illuminating conclusions that shed new light on how protégés learned was the revelation that learning occurred most frequently through protégé observation of mentors (29.3%), followed by learning from mentors’ explanations (24.4%), and, finally, by protégés interacting with their mentors (17.1%).

The research to date had measured various facets of mentoring relationships in a number of settings (including academic, non-profit, military, and business), but woefully few studies had yet been conducted in the specific domain of a sales organization. Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, and Barksdale embarked on a study in 2006 to investigate the effects of mentoring in a sales setting. Additionally, their ground-breaking research measured mentoring outcomes from three unique mentoring sources, which had not been differentiated prior to this research: 1) manager

mentors inside the organization; 2) peer mentors inside the organization; and 3) mentors outside the organization. Additionally, performance outcomes from mentored vs. non-mentored sales persons were measured, as were commitment to the organization and levels of intention to leave the organization.

The results of this study indicated that sales people who had *manager* mentors *inside* the organization had high performance and a low intention to leave. Those with *peer* mentors *inside* the organization also had low intention to leave but lower performance. Sales people with mentors *outside* the organization had high performance and a high intention to leave. Sales people with *no* mentor had low performance and a high intention to leave. The bottom line of the results suggested that *manager* mentors *inside* the organization produce the best results, which contradicts the earlier research indicating that peer mentoring relationships are most effective and valuable. The important conclusion was that different types of mentors have differing effects on protégé performance, organizational commitment, and protégé intention to leave (Brashear, et al., 2006, p. 14).

The authors suggested their study was grounded in two primary theoretical contexts: 1) social exchange theory, which is thought to be foundational to mentoring, contends that an individual associates with another if he thinks it will be rewarding for himself (i.e., he is drawn to the other person to experience those social rewards); and 2) social learning theory emphasizes interactive and observational learning, which help the protégé acquire valuable behaviors and increase confidence to perform job tasks. This study supports these theories because it links mentoring to work-related outcomes through associative and behavioral learning (p. 9).

In 2007, Brad Johnson conducted a different kind of study than the previous research in two significant ways: 1) his study was a literature review on mentorship; and 2) the context for his research was in graduate education. Johnson (2007) desired to make the connection between *advising and mentoring* in academic settings as a model for how practicing psychologists might frame the connection between *supervision and mentoring* in the clinical setting. His study identified the specific implications of taking a transformational approach to clinical supervision – with an emphasis on collaborative or transformational mentoring, in the ilk of transformational leaders. The author explained how effective mentoring relationships in the academic world are grounded in the theoretical tenets of transformational leadership theory: transformational leaders inspire followers' values and incite them to become leaders in their own right; they build strong emotional connections to followers, as do mentors. Other similarities between transformational leaders and collaborative mentors that can translate to supervising psychologists include: supervisors deliberately partner with followers to guide them through transitions and hurdles; supervisors work to hone competencies among followers; supervision requires maturity, competence, and flexibility to balance supportive, coaching, and evaluative roles (p. 262).

Key conclusions include: 1) supervisory mentoring should facilitate professional identity development; 2) per Higgins & Kram's (2001) work, supervisory mentoring is one component of a developmental network; 3) transformational supervision requires specific competencies; and 4) transformational supervision must delicately balance advocacy and evaluation (pp. 263-265).

While this study's primary focus was to make a compelling case advocating for the transference of best practices in mentoring in an academic setting to mentoring in the clinical setting, it also

served to make a distinctive and powerful connection between best practices in mentoring and qualities of transformational leadership.

Newer Frameworks – Tangible Contributions to the Practice of Leadership

Researchers from this decade of studies on mentoring called to the rapidly changing and complex business environment to suggest that mentors are a unique and valuable resource to help develop the personal and professional learning required for success. They also reiterated the implications from a number of previous studies that emphasized the importance of organizations examining the various mentoring mechanisms that can facilitate learning and development that contributes to important job attitudes and competitive advantage. Higgins and Kram (2001) introduced valuable new thinking about the mentoring phenomenon in an attempt to further clarify its complex nature and create accelerated success in the development of leaders. Protégés were encouraged to look beyond the structure of traditional mentoring to these other relationships within bigger, developmental networks, to gain the personal learning support they need to forward their careers and contribute to organizational competitive advantage.

The implications of much of the research in this era are powerful for counselors and human resource management (HRM) professionals who play a key role in helping employees develop mentoring relationships. For example, these professionals can provide protégés information regarding the dramatically changing nature of business and careers; they can urge employees to take the initiative to seek out alternative mentoring relationships; and they can establish formal mentoring programs to advance employees' careers. Ensher's (2001) study could be very useful to mentoring program administrators and mentors and protégés alike as a

conceptual framework by which to design, implement, and evaluate formal and informal mentoring programs.

Researchers Smith et al. (2005) added new definition to the mentor's functions and created an original model of mentor traits which could be useful as an assessment tool for organizational administrators of formal mentoring programs. The real value of their study is that it takes a step toward systematically operationalizing the role expectations of each participant in formal mentoring programs – mentor, protégé, administrator, and the organization. Synchronicity in expectations about the mentoring relationship could advance organizational learning and accelerate the development of effective relationships. Pre-training of mentors and counseling for participants, urged by the authors to be included throughout the phases of the mentoring process, could boost role confidence and impart best practices for both participants. Additionally, the new lists of mentor traits and mentor functions could be useful assessment tools for those who develop formal mentoring programs.

Hezlett's (2005) revelations that protégés learned through observation of mentors, mentors' explanations, and interacting with mentors has significant implications for both mentors and mentoring program administrators. For example, mentors and program administrators could benefit from having a "catalogue" or roadmap of learning and developmental activities and events that are delivered through the most effective means of interactions with protégés. Finally, Johnson's (2007) study that made a powerful connection between best practices in mentoring and qualities of transformational leadership could serve as the criteria for both selection and evaluation of mentors, as well as a set of strong behavioral guidelines and training content for preparing mentors for their important roles as leadership developers in the corporate arena.

The implications for leadership development in Young and Perrewe's (2000) study were clear: a measured, positive evaluation of the mentoring relationship contributes to better design and implementation of mentoring programs at work. For example, it can be invaluable to organizational administrators who develop mentoring programs but don't understand all of their dimensions, characteristics, and issues. If these administrators can become aware of factors contributing to mentoring relationship success – the variety of possible mentoring relationship iterations, and other factors – then they will have a clear framework from which to model an effective and valuable mentoring program.

Emerging Theories

This final grouping of studies occurred in the last three years, and two out of the three were steeped in the emerging requisites for leaders in a changing, complex, and dynamic organizational context. These researchers were concerned with determining, given what we know about the value of outcomes for protégés from the mentoring experience, how that translates into tangible benefits for the organization, and particularly those benefits that are most pertinent in the knowledge age.

Scott Bryant and James Terborg (2008) offered empirical support for a new outcome from peer mentoring for organizations – knowledge-creation and sharing. Their multi-phased experiment included delivering peer-mentoring training (with pre- and post-surveys to measure its effectiveness in teaching mentoring skills), soliciting feedback from protégés, gaining inputs from mentors' managers regarding the mentors' performance, and a survey to measure perceptions of knowledge creation and sharing within the organization.

Bryant and Terborg's (2008) results suggested that there is a significant relationship between higher perceived levels of peer mentoring competence and behaviors, and higher perceived levels of knowledge creation and sharing. This means that knowledge is shared in peer mentoring relationships, which become more important to fostering knowledge creation and sharing in the organization – which leads to competitive advantage. This research expands on Kram's (1983) original theory that peer mentoring can create valuable outcomes for the protégé and also for the organization.

The authors posited that most peer mentor knowledge is tacit, learned from personal experience, and not recorded in any database (Bryant & Terborg, 2008, p. 13). Peer mentoring helps organizations capture and utilize current knowledge by turning tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and sharing it with others. This provides a key source of innovation and new ideas in organizations. Thus, organizations that are able to raise their employees' levels of peer mentoring competency through training can increase knowledge creation and sharing toward competitive advantage. This highlights the importance of organizations training peer mentors to develop competency and effectiveness in their roles.

The next year, Harvey, McIntyre, Thompson-Heames, and Moeller (2009) teamed to add to Bryant and Terborg's (2008) theory by exploring one common (traditional/hierarchical) and one emerging (reverse) form of mentoring relationships, and also introduce a new form of mentoring relationship – reciprocal mentoring. Traditional mentoring is defined as the personal relationship in which a more experienced (sometimes older) organization member acts as “a guide, teacher, role model, or sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) member” (Harvey, et al., 2009, p. 1345). This traditional mentoring has a long history of improving individual

learning and career development. However, the authors highlighted that the increasingly competitive nature of the global market (referred to as “hypercompetitive”) (p. 1344) requires continuous gaining and sharing of knowledge effectively throughout the organization. They posited that, “a successful global organization will have to possess a complex combination of technical, political, social, organizational, and cultural competencies beyond those found in organizations of the past” (p. 1344).

Harvey et al. (2009) asserted that mentoring can become a strategic tool used to create organizational knowledge and assist in the knowledge transfer process, which contributes in a big way to competitive advantage in today’s complex and dynamic markets. They referenced a key theoretical framework – global dynamic capabilities theory – which states that firms who can create difficult-to-imitate combinations of resources (including knowledge and learning throughout a global organization) will have a global competitive advantage (p. 1346). Knowledge assets are key, as are adaptation, rapid response, and flexibility. Corroborating the work by Bryant and Terborg (2008) they concluded that, since successfully transferring knowledge from one individual to another is a key source of competitive advantage, mentoring is an underlying means to accelerate learning and turn the tacit knowledge into an explicit resource.

The authors also suggested that a newer form of mentoring has emerged – reverse mentoring – whereby newer, junior employees team up with more experienced managers or employees to help the older worker to understand technology or the changing marketplace (pp. 1350-1351). While traditional mentoring allows for transfer of knowledge in an organization, reverse mentoring brings new energy, enthusiasm, and cutting-edge content knowledge from outside the organization into it. The authors also introduced a third, very new form of mentoring

– reciprocal mentoring – whereby information is exchanged dynamically on a regular basis between the mentor and protégé, creating mutual positive effects. This allows for two-way sharing and creating of knowledge. The authors promoted this type of double-loop learning, and offered a six-step plan for implementing a global mentoring program for female managers.

While the third form of mentoring – reciprocal mentoring – was introduced with fanfare as ultra-new, it is actually a spin on the older mentoring tenet introduced over 25 years ago by Kathy Kram and Lynn Isabella (1985) – the reciprocal nature of peer mentoring relationships. The importance of knowledge gaining and sharing for competitive advantage in organizations is also not a new concept, but it was argued robustly and enthusiastically in the context of global dynamic capabilities theory by these researchers.

The final study presented in this literature review, conducted in 2009, measured a unique dimension not covered in the previous research: specific outcomes for *mentors*, that emanate from engaging in mentoring relationships. The purpose of Ellen Stevens-Roseman's (2009) study was to implement and measure the impact of an intervention – Older Mentors for Newer Workers (OM4NW) – on the life satisfaction of aging workers, with implications for workplace retention. Her results demonstrated statistically significant differences in life satisfaction measures between the intervention group vs. the control group.

The author referenced role theory as an underlying construct for her research, which notes that a person's position in society will influence well-being (p. 420). Research has demonstrated a positive association between the work role and later life satisfaction, which can influence life in terms of overall well-being. In that context, an important conclusion from this research includes the notion that older workers, increasing in number as people live longer and

work longer, can gain from the work role – specifically, a mentoring role – a positive influence on life. The author also referenced continuity theory as a framework for her study, which states that when behavioral patterns and personality characteristics can be maintained across adulthood from younger years to older age, this “continuity” supposedly promotes well-being. When continuity in the sense of usefulness, level of respect, and meeting one’s own expectations is achieved, life satisfaction can rise (Stevens-Roseman, 2009, p. 420). The role of work can affect overall life, and the resulting satisfaction may well serve the workplace.

Emerging Theories – Tangible Contributions to the Practice of Leadership

Two of the three studies examined in this period acknowledged the importance of mentoring as a method for knowledge-sharing in organizations. Bryant and Terborg (2008) noted that organizations which are able to raise their employees’ levels of peer mentoring competency through training can increase knowledge creation and sharing toward competitive advantage. Harvey et al. (2009) added another dimension of knowledge-sharing through mentoring – that of younger mentors enlightening older workers with respect to technology and other modern business phenomena – to open up more opportunities by which to develop that competitive edge. This highlights the importance of organizations training mentors to develop competency and effectiveness in their roles. An important conclusion of this work is especially pertinent in a high-tech environment: information systems are one method for storing and sharing knowledge, but the interpersonal nature of peer mentoring provides for the dynamic, continuous creation and sharing of ideas that cannot be replaced by networked computers (Bryant & Terborg, 2008, p. 26).

Finally, given the graying of the Baby Boomer generation and the delays in retirement for aging workers due to financial concerns, Stevens-Roseman's (2009) study shed important light on the unique benefits to mentors, particularly those who are older workers, for participation in the mentoring relationship. It became clear that the aging workforce has the potential to benefit the workplace, with older workers operating as training and developmental resources, while younger workers can make a significant contribution, too, by helping the older workers understand and embrace technological and emerging market advances.

Shortcomings / Limitations of the Existing Research

Among the 15 scholarly articles examined for this literature review, there was a healthy mix of research methodologies: three studies were qualitative; five were quantitative; two used mixed (qualitative and quantitative) methodologies; and five developed new theory in the study of mentoring. As can be expected in research, these studies were not without limitations. In fact, two key types of limitations were found in the existing literature: shortcomings in research design centers on research methods that impede the quality of the study's observations, conclusions, and/or outcomes; and shortcomings in theoretical frameworks refers to gaps or holes that are evident in – or areas that are not covered by – the existing literature. Key themes across both of these dimensions, as they relate to the 15 studies in this literature review, follow.

Shortcomings in Research Design

Most of the studies presented in this literature review use self-reported measurements (e.g., Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Ragins & Kram, 2007). It is possible, with the frequent use of these designs, that correlations are inflated due to common method variance, though it has been found to be less problematic in measuring some factors more than others. Examples include

when it measures affective experiences or individuals' self perceptions (Ensher, et al., 2001, p. 435). Future research might effectively include other sources as data inputs for the specific measure(s) to be achieved. Interviews and observation methods are recommended.

Additionally, cross-sectional design is used quite frequently, which limits any inference of causation between the variables. For example, some of the correlational research may suggest a link between mentoring and another factor (such as an outcome), but does not imply a causal relationship, such as in Scandura's (1992) study that linked mentoring and career success, in which no direct causal relationship could be established. Future research involving longitudinal design might more clearly establish causation between mentor functions and protégé career outcomes or other factors.

Other limitations include small sample size, low response rate to surveys, and research in only one type of work setting, which raise issues of sample representativeness and influence on some or all of the study's variables (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Missing data from participants is also a problem when fewer can be included in the study due to missing items from surveys (Smith, et al., 2005). Sometimes, but not always, mean substitution can present a solution, but its use is limited by the significance (size) of the missing items. Also, limitations are presented when research is conducted over longer periods of time, which are primarily associated with the masking of intervening factors that may have affected the variables examined in the study (Brashear, et al., 2006). Finally, the "disappointment factor" among control group participants – from not being selected for the intervention group – can exert bias or otherwise influence the study's outcomes.

Shortcomings in Theoretical Frameworks

In the last 25 years, the literature on mentoring has predominantly focused on mentoring in Western contexts. This is problematic in terms of being able to support generalization of Western findings beyond Western samples or borders – a matter of utmost importance given the globalization of organizations in our current business environment. This also raises important issues of race and gender access to mentoring relationships and other leadership development opportunities. One issue is the woeful unavailability of mentoring at the workplace to minority populations and leaders (Ely and Rhode in Nohria & Khurana, 2010). Because mentoring is known as a valuable function that assists in developing leadership identity and capability, its absence or scarcity among these populations put them at a distinct disadvantage with respect to job advancement and career opportunities. Further, this seriously limits our ability to extrapolate our understanding of the antecedents and conditions under which learning occurs through mentoring in non-White, non-male populations, as well as what are its key behavioral success factors, outcomes, and other important measures in these unique populations. One example is Scandura's (1992) study whose participant population was 97% male, which does not come close to reflecting the gender ratios in mid-level management in the larger business context.

The mentoring literature also has focused almost exclusively on the dyadic exchange between mentors and protégés. Beyond Allen et al.'s (1997) study that included team-based mentoring, very little research targets team or multi-participant mentoring. With the looming prospects of downsizing, as well as the very real possibilities of organizational restructuring – or “flattening” – and outsourcing, fewer opportunities to engage in a mentoring relationship may exist for aspiring leaders. Recommended future research includes revisiting Higgins and Kram's (2001) multiple relationship phenomenon of “developmental networks” to address these possible

research questions: How do these multiple relationships form across a broad spectrum of environments? How do protégés strengthen the ties with their mentors through the years? How do protégés weaken the ties with and conclude their relationships with mentors – under what circumstances and for what reasons? Which types of developmental network relationships produce which specific career outcomes for protégés? How do developmental networks and the ensuing career outcomes for protégés change over time? Since these researchers have declared mentoring a reciprocal relationship, what do mentors specifically learn from protégés? What other types of work relationships might contribute to personal and professional learning? Interestingly, the complexity that is added with multiple mentoring relationships mirrors the new complexities and ambiguities in global organizations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the gaps in the literature identified above, the phenomenon of mentoring is ripe for further study in myriad dimensions. Since Kathy Kram (1983) originally introduced the concept of peer mentoring as a viable alternative to hierarchical mentoring, there has been a drive to explore the nature and benefits of this type of mentoring relationship. Yet, the literature is not comprehensive in its coverage. Potential research questions that would help explore the missing pieces include: What are the individual psychological and organizational structural, process, and other conditions that encourage or inhibit developing spontaneous peer relationships? For example, Kram and Isabella (1985) noted that individuals with a negative posture toward authority may be more inclined to develop peer mentoring relationships than engage in a traditional, hierarchical mentoring relationship, or those who compete with peers may prefer to form hierarchical relationships (p. 130). At the organizational level, how do variations in the

organization's setting, policies, climate or culture, processes, rewards structures, politics, work design, and other factors affect the nature and ease of forming peer relationships?

Bryant and Terborg's (2008) study revealed the value of information-sharing and learning in the mentoring relationship, noting its particular importance in the knowledge age in creating competitive advantage for organizations. From their ground-breaking work, research questions arise as to what other tangible benefits, that are highly pertinent to complex organizations in the knowledge age, are accessible through mentoring, and what are the process, structure, and other conditions necessary by which to fully exploit them?

Additionally, with the rising popularity of *virtual* developmental and educational experiences, this researcher is particularly interested in the concept of virtual mentoring. Specifically, it is important to know what constructs exist to aid in perpetuating the mentoring function in geographically-dispersed organizational environments. The literature has hardly begun to look into the convergence of technology, the globalized business world, and the value of mentoring. How does the advancement of technology impact our ability to implement this important developmental activity in any workplace? What different or additional skill sets are required of the mentor – and also of the protégé – in order to make virtual mentoring work? What additional accommodations or conditions are necessary in order to make virtual mentoring a viable developmental process? How does mentoring affect virtual teams? Can virtual teams be collectively mentored? What are the outcomes to be acquired through virtual mentoring that are differentiated from face-to-face mentoring?

A related research issue is the opportunity to look at new forms of mentoring. Harvey et al. introduced the new form of mentoring relationship – “reverse” mentoring – in which a

younger employee offers perspective about newer technologies and emerging markets to the older employee. It is possible to consider that there are other forms or iterations of mentoring that also are yet to be discovered. What unique types of “pairings” are conducive to successful mentoring outcomes in the global climate? In the high-tech age? In addition to technology and emerging markets, what are the other distinctive themes or phenomena around which new types of mentoring relationships would form? All of the above issues relating to the knowledge age pose open-ended and complex questions that are likely best answered through qualitative research methods, the most notable being phenomenological study and narrative inquiry.

Harvey et al.’s (2009) research noted the challenge for female leaders to gain the opportunity of developmental activities in the workplace, with mentoring being one of them. In light of additional reading on the issues of gender and leadership diversity, a number of key questions arise regarding women and mentoring. How do women find effective mentors? What are the primary barriers to engaging in mentoring relationships for women? How are women’s social networks emerging and what are their tangible contributions to leadership and advancement opportunities? The open-ended, iterative processes involved in qualitative research establish it as an appropriate form of inquiry into these complex issues that cross boundaries of organizational, leadership, and socio/psychological behavior. For this research, a number of methodologies seem quite appropriate. This researcher might be able to approach it through the heuristic process, being herself a female leader in the corporate world. It may also be approached through narrative inquiry, as there are myriad accounts of successful mentoring relationships involving female leaders in organizations. Phenomenological research would also

be appropriate, as it would allow the researcher to deeply understand participants' experiences with mentoring as a leadership development process.

That being said, mentoring is a relatively new phenomenon in organizations, and the literature has not done much more than scratch the surface of the discoveries and theories to be developed relative to this component of leadership development. Numerous questions remain unanswered and many gaps in theory might be filled with new frameworks, typologies, and models by which to characterize this function. Grounded theory research involving interviews and observation would be highly effective in exploring this emerging phenomenon.

Conclusion

Organizations in today's business environment face a variety of unique circumstances that create a new set of challenges for leaders, such as corporate restructuring, changing technologies, domestic and international expansion, and virtual and contingent employment, to name a few. This rapidly-changing, ambiguous, and complex global business arena demands a unique and evolving set of insights and capabilities by which leaders may effectively navigate this new terrain. Mentoring is a powerful means by which to accomplish exactly that in an accelerated fashion. An important component of leadership development, its processes orient, train, and advance the skills and experiences of aspiring leaders. Additionally, mentoring exposes protégés to networks of contacts, special assignments, and other opportunities that serve longer-term, career-enhancing objectives.

This literature review analyzed the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study of mentoring, provided a thorough analysis of the historical evolution of mentoring theory, and

demonstrated the structures, functions, and outcomes of mentoring relationships that provide value-added benefit for protégés, mentors, and organizations alike.

Research to date has emphasized mentoring's powerful, positive implications for success through its very tangible contributions to the practice of leadership. Yet, this is only the beginning – there is much that remains to be explored with respect to mentoring structures, relationships, contexts, functions, antecedents, formats, outcomes, conditions for success, and more. Thousands of companies today are implementing mentoring programs to achieve management development objectives. The more progressive organizations recognize its importance as one component in a larger, strategic initiative to build a cohesive and collaborative workforce, develop agile and savvy global leaders, and create a continuous learning culture that can effectively adapt to organizational and global change.

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