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Scientific abstract – *Personal Values in Mentoring Relationships*

We develop and aim to empirically test a theoretical model of the role of personal values in mentoring relationships. The benefits of mentoring are well-documented (e.g., Allen et al., 2004), ranging from psychological advantages to instrumental advantages (e.g., Kram, 1983). However, to date, little is known about the role that individual differences among mentors and mentees play in the quality of mentoring relationships and their impact. Moreover, a number of meta-analytic estimates show that while the effects of mentoring are positive, they are relatively small (e.g., Eby et al., 2013).

We suggest that personal values (Schwartz, 1992) of mentors and mentees account for differences in the quality and outcomes of mentoring relationships. In our model, we integrate the literature on mentoring outcomes and the emerging literature on mentoring styles (e.g., Richter et al., 2013). We suggest that mentors’ personal values predict mentoring styles, with self-enhancement values associated with more authoritarian styles and lower involvement in the relationship, and self-transcendence values associated with less authoritarian styles and higher involvement. While the literature on styles of mentoring tends to suggest that some styles (i.e., less authoritarian) are more effective than others, we argue that the personal values of mentees moderate the associations between mentoring style and mentoring quality and between mentoring style and outcomes. Specifically, we suggest that openness-to-change values in mentees are associated with a stronger advantage when matched with a less authoritarian mentoring style, while conservation values in mentees are associated with a stronger advantage when matched with a more authoritarian style.

The studies we propose are designed to empirically test this hypothesis, which results from the theoretical model. In the lab studies, participants will consider participating in mentoring relationships either as mentors (in which case we will assess their anticipated mentoring behaviors) or as mentees (in which case we will assess their responses to behaviors by their potential mentor). In these studies, personal values will be either measured or manipulated to examine their effect. We also propose to conduct three longitudinal field studies in order to investigate ongoing mentoring relationships. In these studies, mentoring will be conducted in a variety of contexts that will allow us to assess the model’s robustness and to consider contextual factors that may have particular effects on the associations between mentoring behaviors and mentoring quality and outcomes. The first study will be conducted as part of an academic mentoring program, where the mentoring process is relatively structured and its goals are straightforward (namely, to help mentees with their academic courses). The second study will involve professional mentoring of students by prominent graduates. In this scenario, the goals of the mentoring process are broader, but the context is stable, and mentoring is conducted in groups rather than dyads. Finally, we will test our model in the context of entrepreneurial mentoring for startup founders in accelerator programs (Yitshaki & Drori, 2018). Here, mentoring is provided in a highly-dynamic environment and mentees are diverse in terms of their startup field, stage of professional development, experience and background.