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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 to instrumental (e.g., Kram, 1983) advantages. However, little is known to-date about the role individual differences play in the quality of mentoring relationships and their outcomes. 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 these mentoring relationships. In our model, we integrate the literatures of mentoring outcomes and the immerging literature of 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. And while the literature of mentoring styles 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 mentoring style-mentoring quality and outcomes associations. Specifically, we suggest that openness-to-change values of mentees are associated with a stronger advantage of less authoritarian mentoring styles, while their conservation values are associated with a stronger advantage of more authoritarian styles.

The studies we propose are designed to empirically test the hypothesis that result from the theoretical model. In the lab studies, participants will consider participating in mentoring relationships either as mentors (where we will assess their anticipated mentoring behaviors) or as mentees (where we will assess their responses to the behaviors of their potential mentor). In these studies, personal values will be either measured or manipulated to assess their effect. We also propose to conduct three longitudinal field studies to investigate ongoing mentoring relationships. In these studies, mentoring is conducted in different contexts that will allow us to assess the robustness of the model and consider contextual factors that might have unique influence on the associations between mentoring behaviors and mentoring quality and outcomes. The first will be done in an academic mentoring program where the process is more structured and its goals are straightforward (help mentees in their courses). The second will be done in professional mentoring of students by prominent graduates, where goals 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 within accelerator programs (Yitshaki & Drori, 2018). Here, mentoring is provided in highly-dynamic environment with high diversity of mentees’ characteristics (in terms of startup field and stage and founders experience and background).