

Assessing the Need for a Formal Mentoring Program: The Effect of Age and Sex

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This paper examined the results of a needs analysis conducted by a hospital located in southeast Texas which focused on the potential benefits of a formal mentoring program for younger and female employees. Relying on the current literature regarding the Millennial generation (Gen Y) and the differences in career opportunities and mentoring needs between men and women, this study found that sex but not age may predict the mentoring needs of employees.

1. Introduction

Mentoring relationships have existed for centuries in which an older, more experienced person provided advice and guidance to a younger, less seasoned individual. In the context of work and career development, the study of mentoring generally focused on the benefits and disadvantages of mentoring for both mentors and their protégés. While the mentoring relationship traditionally developed informally between two employees, more recently Human Resource departments have attempted to implement formal mentoring programs with varying degrees of success. Critical to the successful establishment of a mentoring program is a determination of whether the program is needed, the focus of the program, how participants are selected and matched, the desired outcomes of the program, and the tools needed to measure those outcomes. Unfortunately, these steps are often ignored.

The purpose of this study is to examine the results of a needs analysis prior to implementation of a formal mentoring program. While prior research had studied whether a mentoring program would be useful in a university setting (Von der Borch, et al., 2011), no study has focused on the need for mentoring in an employment context. Formal mentoring programs are expensive and time-consuming both from the Human Resources perspective of creating and administering the program and for the actual participants in the program. Before embarking a mentoring agenda, a needs assessment should be conducted to identify key areas where mentoring might be beneficial. This paper takes the view that a demographic emphasis in a needs assessment might prove useful to determine whether certain segments of the employee population might be better served than others by a formal program.

Section 2 of the paper reviews the literature on mentoring, both formal and informal, and the benefits to the mentor, mentee, and the organization. It examines two demographic groups within an organization, Millennials and women, and presents two hypotheses regarding how these

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groups might benefit from a mentoring relationship. Section 3 describes our research model, design, and methods. Section 4 presents the results and an analysis of those results. Section 5 concludes the paper with implications from our findings and suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings and Literature Review

The study of mentoring relationships in the business context was first explored by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978), in which the authors traced the career development of men to include their relationships with older, more experienced employees at an early stage of their careers. Over the following 27 years, numerous studies examined the effects of mentoring, most concluding that mentoring leads to successful career outcomes, determined by objective measures such as promotions and compensation, as well as more subjective indicators, such as job satisfaction, self-competence, and a sense of professional identity (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Thus, younger employees were encouraged to seek out mentoring relationships within their organizations in order to enhance their careers (Burke & McKeen, 1989; Douglas & McCauley, 1999). For some employees, seeking out and developing a nurturing relationship with a supervisor or even a more unfamiliar higher level employee may be difficult; yet failure to experience the benefits of mentoring may put these employees at a disadvantage vis-a-vis other employees. As a result, Human Resource departments have increasingly considered implementation of formal mentoring programs where junior employees are deliberately partnered with more senior employees. Ideally, these relationships should produce the same benefits as those which evolve more informally in the workplace; however, evidence exists that this might not always be the case.

When formal mentoring programs are established, specific goals or results of the mentoring process should be considered. Notably, prior research identified three important mentor functions: assistance in career development, psychosocial support, and role modeling (Scandura, 1992). Career development focused on the mentor's provision of external support, including sponsorship and visibility which enhanced the protégé's ability to develop his or her career leading to career advancement. Psychological encouragement centered on counseling and friendships that help develop the mentee's personal feelings of competence and acceptance (Hansford, Tennent, & Ehrich, 2002; Kram, 1983). Role modeling may straddle both functions in providing the mentee with an external example of a successful career as well as direction to achieving job satisfaction and fulfillment. All three functions are considered critical to the mentoring process and should be considered by Human Resources in developing a formal mentor program.

2.1 Mentoring in Business

While mentoring has been studied in various contexts, the business literature most often provides the setting for a discussion of the benefits of mentoring in terms of career development and success. For purposes of this paper we use the definition of a mentor suggested by Burlew (1991: p. 214) as "anyone who provides guidance, support, knowledge, and opportunities for whatever period the mentor and protégé deem this help to be necessary." In general, the literature is favorable to the mentoring relationship. An early empirical study by Roche (1979) found that of 1,250 executives responding to a survey, two-thirds stated that they had a mentor at

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some point in their career. Further, those who had a mentor reported that they earned more money at earlier stages of their career than those who did not and were happier with their careers.

Mentoring studies are generally consistent that employees with mentors are likely to have more positive experiences in their job performance, job attitudes, and personal learning (Groves, 2007). Using Kram's (1988) distinction between career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring, Allen et al.'s meta-analysis (2004) found that objective career success indicators including compensation and promotions were related to career mentoring while job and career satisfaction and intentions to stay with the company were related to psychosocial mentoring behaviors such as counseling, friendship, and confirmation. In a similar meta-analysis, Hansford, et al. (2002) found that more than 90% of the mentoring research reported positive outcomes, most frequently career satisfaction and promotions, precipitated by career-specific advice such as coaching, ideas, feedback, and strategies. According to the study, benefits of mentoring also included challenging assignments, improved skills and performance, and access to resources. Mentors were able to direct their mentees to recognize the importance of identifying powerful resources within the organization and provided instructions in developing political skills and influence strategies (Ragins, 1997). Newcomers who can bypass the "red tape" through their access to a higher level manager were likely to experience more career success earlier in their careers (Kanter, 1984).

Approximately 20% of the benefits reported in the Hansford, et al. (2002) study centered on the more psychosocial benefits stemming from the mentor's personal interest in the protégé's well-being. The study found that behaviors, which included counselling, listening, support, understanding, and encouragement, resulted in mentees' experiencing increased self-confidence and personal growth. The authors found that the mentoring relationship is often cyclical in nature, with the success of the protégé leading to the mentor's more proactive role than merely advice-giver and growing into that of supporter and nominator leading to even more career success (Wright & Werther, 1991).

Fewer studies focused on the benefits of mentoring for mentors. Overall, many of the benefits were the same as for mentees including career satisfaction, career growth, personal fulfillment, increased confidence, revitalized interest in work, financial rewards, and opportunities for promotion (Douglas, 1997; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennant, 2004; Hansford, et al., 2002). In many cases the personal benefits to the mentor were derived from the success of the protégé, leading to feelings of accomplishment and psychological returns of admiration and legacy (Wright & Werther, 1991). By shaping the careers and personal development of their protégés, mentors felt rejuvenated in their own careers (Leveinson, et al., 1978). In addition, mentors reported favorable outcomes involving collaboration, networking, collegiality, and the sharing of ideas among colleagues (Hansford, et al., 2002).

Employers encourage the use of mentors because effective mentorships often result in organizational benefits, such as more effective use of human resources, through information exchanges between mentor and mentee and additional sources of training and career development tools (Wright & Werther, 1991). Hansford et al. (2002) further pointed to the economic benefits to the organization such as improved productivity by employees and

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increased profits. These favorable results could be attributed to lower turnover, the ability to attract more qualified employees, enhanced employee motivation, or improved customer service (Murray & Owen, 1991). The promotion of organizational commitment and team spirit as well as improved intraorganizational communications were also cited by the authors as potential benefits to the company. More recent research suggests that mentoring programs are critical to transferring knowledge or information within the organization (Yusof & Ahmad, 2012).

Not all mentoring relationships have positive results, and under some conditions can actually be detrimental to the mentor, mentee, or both (Long, 1997). Levinson et al. (1978) noted that people and their needs change over time, resulting in an acrimonious, or at best, ambivalent break in the relationship. Mentoring can also be highly selective and elitist in nature, with mentors' selecting those younger employees who are recognized as having high potential or are similar to themselves (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). Thus, the process can be viewed as unfair especially by those not gaining the benefit of a mentoring relationship.

Although mentoring is generally thought of as a spontaneous relationship between mentor and mentee, formal mentoring programs have been initiated in organizations which appreciate the value of mentoring in enabling both learning and growth of junior employees (Ehrich, et al., 2004). These formal programs are defined as "planned, structured, and coordinated interventions within an organization's human resource policies" (Ehrich, et al., 2004, p. 521) and are mostly aimed at compensating for the homosocial nature of traditional mentoring which tends to exclude females and minorities (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). In formal mentoring programs, the organization plays an intervening role in facilitating mentoring relationships by providing an infrastructure, through the pairing, training, and other support of the mentoring process (Allen, Finkelstein, & Poteet, 2009). Often, formal mentoring programs are specifically directed at expanding leadership opportunities especially for employees of diverse backgrounds (Olson & Jackson, 2009). Similar to informal arrangements, formal mentoring relationships are expected to engender the same benefits to mentors, mentees, and organizations, most notably personal fulfillment, career advancement, learning and feedback, and organizational effectiveness (Douglas, 1997).

However, research on formal mentoring programs has observed that such programs do not produce the same positive results on a consistent basis as informal arrangements (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). Inherent in formal programs is the need to match mentors with mentees which would otherwise occur naturally in the environment. This can lead to a mis-pairing of dyads, especially when mentors and protégés are demographically dissimilar (Olsen & Jackson, 2009). Merriam (1983) observed that the forced matching of mentors and mentee is inconsistent with the basic premise of the mentoring relationship – that two people are attracted to each other and want to work together. As noted by Wright and Werther (1991, p. 27), formal programs can become "outright failures" because the "chemistry" between the mentor and mentee is lacking.

Formal programs also assume that both mentors and mentees will be committed to the program. Compulsory participation in a program may cause tensions especially where there is inadequate training or management support (Long, 1997). Although organizations may present their programs as voluntary, due to the shortage of qualified mentors, older employees may feel pressured to assuming the role of mentor and thus not view the process as one particularly

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favorable for their personal development (Parise & Forret, 2007). In fact, formal mentoring programs have been found to have potential negative effects not necessarily present in traditional mentoring such as unrealistic mentee expectations, lack of time and training on the part of the mentor, inadequate support by upper management, a feeling of resentment by those not chosen to participate in the program, and a poor reflection on the mentor in the event of the mentee's failure (Keele, Buckner, & Bushnell, 1987).

2.2 Application of Formal Mentoring Programs to Millennials and Women

Given the reasons cited for the potential failure of formal mentoring programs, the effectiveness of such programs is largely dependent on the manner in which they are developed and maintained (Groves, 2007). While many studies point to the success of formal programs as dependent on the degree of the mentors' willingness to engage in a mentoring relationship (e.g., Weinberg & Lankau, 2011), research also needs to focus on the readiness of the potential mentee to participate in the program. This paper contributes to the extant literature by describing a needs assessment that was developed to ascertain whether a formal mentoring program was needed by employees of a public hospital and, further, examines this question by focusing on two groups of employees: Millennials and females.

Mentoring is often examined from the perspective of the stages of a person's career. At the apprentice stage, one is looking for guidance and is focused on learning and following directions (Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977). Young adults are often insecure about their competence and ability to function effectively in their new corporate environments (Kram, 1988). Thus, mentoring is most important during this early stage of career development when limited experiences can be guided by the counsel of an older, more experienced mentor (Wright & Werther, 1991). A young adult, perhaps in his or her first job, is trying to form an occupational identity and developing a relationship with a role model can help clarify the protégé's career directions and ambitions (Kram, 1983). Similarly, newness to the organization requires assistance in learning the nuances of the company including the "technical, interpersonal, and political skills" not readily observable in the environment (p. 609). Early research by Roche (1979) showed that the vast majority of successful executives had mentoring relationships under the age of 40 and within the first 15 years of their careers; further, most mentors were reported to be either immediate supervisors or department or division heads. Those executives earned more money at a younger age and were more likely to have a career plan.

Younger employees in today's workforce, those under the age of 35, are generally referred to as the Millennial generation or Gen Y, those employees born between 1980 and 2000. What sets this generation apart from Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists, is that those born after 1980 have been exposed to advances in technology since birth, with the emphasis on the expansion of instant communication through cellphones and social networking. Millennials began using computers between the ages of 5 and 8, 72% of them report that they check e-mail at least once a day, and 78% browse the Web for fun (Jones & Madden, 2002). There are an estimated 92 million Millennials (Alsop, 2008), and by 2025, Millennials will represent 75 percent of the global workforce (Schwabel, 2012).

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With respect to employment, Millennials expect meaningful work and opportunities to advance. They will not be satisfied with unchallenging work (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). They want more than a paycheck and seek personal fulfillment with a company whose values match their own (Hershatler & Epstein, 2010). They also value professional growth which entails challenging assignments and promotions. Millennials place a high degree of importance on personal satisfaction and are primarily driven by individual needs and desires (Twenge, 2006). In studies of job satisfaction, despite Millennials' high expectations regarding their work environment and mobility, studies have found that they are somewhat more satisfied with their jobs and have higher optimism about their career development than previous generations (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010). Unlike prior generations, Millennials do not have the same sense of organizational commitment and loyalty. They do not enter the workforce with the mindset of their first job as their career. They are much more likely to change jobs during their careers even if it does not mean better pay or advancement (Lyons, Schweitzer, Ng, & Kuron, 2012). Further, if they feel unchallenged or underappreciated, they will not think twice about leaving a job even if they do not have another job offer (Alsop, 2008). Given the prior research on the positive effects of mentoring for junior employees and the characteristics of the Millennial generation the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Employees in the Millennial generation will value the benefits of a formal mentoring program more favorably than employees of other generations.

H1b: Employees in the Millennial generation will perceive a need for a formal mentoring program more than employees of other generations.

Studies of women's progress in business note that the existence of a glass ceiling blocks their advancement in the upper echelons of business (Cunningham, 1992). In its broad study of discrimination against women in the workplace, the Department of Labor's Glass Ceiling report identified several internal barriers preventing career development among women in large corporations. These included lack of access to training and other developmental activities, limited access to informal communication networks, few rotational opportunities to line or revenue-producing positions, and traditional jobs in staff or highly technical positions (DOL, 1991). Later research further confirmed that differences in male and female career progress stem from the inability of women to establish mentoring relationships as well as lack of networks and career enhancing assignments (Crampton & Mishra, 1999; Marlow, Marlow, & Arnold, 1995; Tharenou, 1999).

Based on this research, the presence of mentors during a woman's career appears to be critical to her success. In her seminal book on women in business organizations, Kanter (1977) stressed the importance of having a mentor or a godfather. She noted that women without a support system or a mentor generally did not fare as well as those who had such a sponsor. A study of 25 female managers provided similar findings in that all women in the study revealed that they had a mentor, a male boss, and that the relationship was very strong and lasted until the mentee reached her mid-thirties (Henning & Jardim, 1977). Halcomb (1980) concluded that for women, it is even more critical to have a mentor earlier in her career than for young men because during the early stages of her career, a young woman is less likely to understand the "game-playing techniques" such as image building and being an effective team member (p. 15). In fact, Roche

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(1979) found that women had more mentors than men suggesting that women need a network of sponsors rather than just one primary advisor. In the case of mentoring opportunities for young female employees, the challenge is that there are fewer female role models in the workforce and that male managers may be more reluctant to mentor an employee of the opposite sex (Sheehy, 1976). In addition, differences with respect to the societal expectations in how men and women behave in certain situations and the typical professional problems facing men and women create limitations to the extent an older male can provide role modeling to a younger female employee (Kram, 1988). Thus, we would expect that females would both perceive the benefit of and appreciate the need for forming mentor relationships more than men.

H2a: Female employees will perceive that a formal mentoring program is more beneficial than will male employees.

H2b: Female employees will perceive the need for a formal mentoring program more favorably than male employees.

3. The Methodology and Model

The research site was a large public hospital located in southeast Texas. As part of a needs assessment for implementing a formal mentoring program, a survey was sent out, via Survey Monkey, to 960 employees, and 184 usable responses were received, for a response rate of 19.17%. Demographics of the respondents were as follows: 74% were females; 62% Caucasian; 17% Hispanic; 11% Asian; 9% African American; 52% exempt; 26% under age 35 (Millennials); 49% between 35 and 52 (Gen Xers); 24% between 53 and 65 (Baby Boomers); and less than 1% over age 65. A comparison of the respondents with the overall employee population of the hospital revealed no significant differences with respect to demographics.

The questionnaire contained 21 questions designed to ascertain employees' need and readiness to participate in a formal mentoring program. We generally followed the questions contained in the needs analysis conducted by Von der Borch et al. (2011). Because of the hospital's concern over burdening employees with too many questions in the survey, however, the questionnaire was limited to two questions regarding the value employees perceived of a formal mentoring program (Cronbach $\alpha = .728$) and to three questions regarding their perceived need for a mentor (Cronbach $\alpha = .826$). Additional questions were included to determine whether employees already had a friend or mentor at work (Cronbach $\alpha = .810$) and whether they perceived that they had sufficient training and direction (Cronbach $\alpha = .777$). All 21 questions contained in the survey are provided in the Appendix, although not all were used in this research. Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the relevant variables are provided in Table 1.

4. Results/Analysis

The first set of hypotheses was tested using binary logistic regression with the dependent variable set at 1 if the respondent was under the age of 35, otherwise 0. Contrary to expectations, employees in the Millennial generation were less likely to perceive a mentor to be useful than older employees ($p < .05$). Younger employees were also more likely to report that they had a mentor who provided guidance with respect to their careers. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was

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not supported. The results also showed that although Millennials were less likely to perceive that they had adequate training to do their jobs, they were also less likely to perceive a need for additional training. Thus, Hypothesis 1b was not supported. Results of significant values from the regression are reported in Table 2

The second set of hypotheses was also tested using binary logistic regression with the dependent variable set at 1 if the respondent was female, otherwise 0. The results show that women were more likely to perceive the benefits of a formal mentor for their career thus supporting Hypothesis 2a. Women were also more likely than men to have a mentor providing emotional support but less likely to have a work-related mentor. However, none of the needs variables were significant in the equation, providing no support for Hypothesis 2b. Results of the significant values from second regression are reported in Table 3.

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Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Means	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I Understand My Job	4.3172	.9366	1											
I Have Sufficient Training	4.0430	.9519	.609**	1										
My Supervisor Gives Me Direction	3.9785	1.0703	.427**	.600**	1									
I Know What Is Expected of Me	4.0646	.9564	.460**	.496**	.434**	1								
I Know How to Be Successful	3.9946	1.1125	.271**	.281**	.254**	.371**	1							
I Have a Career Mentor	2,7849	1.2890	.017	.166*	.153*	.182*	.259**	1						
I Have a Work Mentor	2.9570	1.3429	.015	.145*	.172*	.166*	.253**	.910**	1					
I Have a Mentor for Emotional Support	2.6935	1.2204	.010	.086	.148*	.124	.301**	.721**	.783**	1				
I Need More Training	3.8495	1.0998	-.153*	-.133	-.021	-.042	.419**	.133	.113	.131	1			
I Need Someone for Work Counsel	3.6505	1.1104	-.215**	-.211**	-.093	-.172*	.370**	.113	.160*	.204**	.704**	1		
I Need More Management Support	3.5645	1.1985	-.194**	-.230**	-.248**	-.188*	.217**	.065	.055	.174*	.520**	.624**	1	
A Mentor Would Be Useful	3.1774	1.2415	-.174*	-.180*	-.070	-.078	.083	.193**	.219**	.314**	.328**	.465**	.357**	1
Mentors in General Are Good	3.7473	1.1651	-.015	-.005	-.035	.092	.128	.338**	.380**	.409**	.206**	.362**	.238**	.573**

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Table 2: Results of Regression Analysis on the Effect of Age on Mentor Needs and Expectations (Gen Y =1, Else 0)

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
I have sufficient training	-1.311	.348	14.215	1	.000	.270
I could use additional training	5.559	.252	4.922	1	.027	.572
I can talk to my supervisor	.693	.37`	3.480	1	.052	1.999
I have a career related mentor	1.183	.424	7.762	1	.005	3.263
A mentor would be useful	-.433	.443	4.255	1	.039	1.860
I can do my job without help	.351	.192	3.354	1	.067	.704
Mentors are good for careers	-.019	.222	.008	1	NS	.981

N=184, Chi Sq=35.712, R Sq=.175 (Cox and Snell), .251 (Nagelkerke), 2LL=186.581 Hosmer and Lemeshow=.813, Percent Predicted=76.9. We used the Wald test statistic.

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis on the Effect of Sex on Mentor Needs and Expectations (Female =1, Male = 0)

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
I have a career related mentor	.237	.319	.553	1	NS	.927
I have a work related mentor	-.1079	.374	8.338	1	.004	.340
I have a mentor for emotional support	.743	.261	8.807	1	.004	2.103
A mentor would be useful	.352	.178	3.925	1	.048	1.442
Mentors are good for careers	.071	.170	.349	1	NS	1.074

N=184, Chi Sq=21.051, R Sq=.107 (Cox and Snell), .156 (Nagelkerke), -2LL=193.454, Hosmer and Lemeshow=.914, Percent Predicted=73.5. We used the Wald test statistic.

Examining the Wald statistic and significance statistics in Table 2, we see that younger employees are more likely to perceive a need for training. Yet they also report that they do not need additional help to do their job, and the coefficient for whether a mentor would be useful is negative, indicating that Millennials neither value nor perceive a need for a formal mentoring program. Thus, neither Hypothesis 1a or 1b is supported. The Wald and significance statistics in Table 3 show that while women may have a mentor for emotional support, they do not have work-related mentors and perceive mentors to be useful, thus supporting Hypothesis 2a but not 2b.

The effectiveness of a formal mentoring program is dependent on adequate planning and infrastructure (Hegstad & Wentling, 2006). The first step in the program should be a thorough needs assessment to determine whether a formal mentoring program is necessary and the goals to be achieved (Allen, et al., 2009). Because successful mentoring programs must be designed to meet the expectations and outcomes desired by both participants and the organization, the next step is to determine who should be selected to participate in the program as protégés or mentors. This process involves identifying not only the likely candidates who will benefit from a formal

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mentoring program but also their overall readiness to become involved in a mentoring relationship.

In this study, the focus was on the readiness of potential protégés to participate in a formal mentoring program, specifically with respect to Millennial employees. Although scholarly research agrees that mentoring is most useful in the early stages of an employee's career (Kram, 1983; 1988; Roche, 1979; Wright & Werther, 1991), the Millennial respondents in our study were significantly less likely to value mentoring relationship. This finding is contrary to our Hypotheses 1a and 1b and to previous findings of a trend toward younger employees seeking out mentors (Roche, 1979), but is consistent with Wright and Werther's (1991) observation that younger employees often do not see the need to develop a mentoring relationship. According to these scholars, many young workers are in the process of "establishing their own identity independently from their parents . . . [and] are striving to be masters of their own destiny" (p. 26). This independence may be more prevalent among Millennials who often appear to be self-reliant, demonstrating a higher level of narcissism, self-esteem, and assertiveness than their parents and grandparents (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).

Potential mentees may be apprehensive about the possible benefits that might be derived from the mentoring relationship when they do not have the ability to select the persons who will serve as their mentors. Ragins (1997) noted that a shared identity is critical in the mentoring relationship and there is less motivation to enter and remain in a diversified relationship. For example, minority employees may be reluctant to accept a mentor of a different race or religion. Male employees may not be comfortable with a female mentor. This apprehension is likely to be more prevalent with younger, less experienced employees who have had fewer opportunities to work with employees unlike themselves. The nature of the workforce surveyed could have also trigger some anomalies in the responses as many younger employees were either residents or fellows; they may have experienced mentoring in their medical or graduate school programs and thus did not feel the need for further mentoring at this stage of their careers.

The female employees in our study, more than male employees, did appear to appreciate the value associated with their participation in a formal mentoring program even if they did not perceive an overall benefit of a mentoring program, thus supporting Hypothesis 2b. Women might recognize the need for mentoring because of past discrimination and the inability to advance their careers. Women may also be more attuned to the lack of networking opportunities, especially those needed for advancement into the upper echelons of management (Cunningham, 1992). Previous research has pointed out the difficulties for women in developing meaningful mentoring relationships. It has been suggested that women benefit more from having a male mentor because males are generally more powerful in organizations and thus can open opportunities for their protégés that female mentors cannot (Ragins, 1997). As a result women with male mentors reported higher levels of compensation and promotions (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). However, barriers to a male-mentor/female mentee relationship include the possible unwillingness of men to mentor employees of the opposite sex for a variety of reasons, including the potential for the relationship to develop into an emotional or physical attraction (Hale, 1995). Formal mentoring programs might be an approach to overcome such constraints. Further, even though there is some evidence that female/female mentoring dyads may result in more psychosocial benefits from the relationship (Hale, 1995), the dearth of qualified senior women managers to act as mentors and a reluctance among women to assume mentoring responsibilities are additional

obstacles facing potential female mentees, thus contributing to their recognition of the benefits of a formal program.

5. Conclusion

The study has some limitations in that it was based solely on surveys from employees at a single organization and that our response rate was less than 20% producing only 184 observations. It is possible that a public hospital differs from for-profit companies in both the expectations and the prior training and experience of its employees. We are also mindful that our measures, although indicating reasonably high internal consistency, were rather parsimonious and did not undergo rigorous validity checking that would be preferred for a large-scale statistical analysis. Nevertheless, our study provides insights into the mentoring process that suggests further study of the needs assessment of employees who may participate in a formal program. This includes not only larger studies but studies that explore more deeply into the specific types of mentoring that younger employees need at the early stages of their careers and organizational tenure as well as the progression of needs of women as they advance in both years of experience and organizational rank. Moreover, although not the focus of this study, mentoring scholars have urged the inclusion of race and the impact of diversified mentoring relationships in empirical research, especially in formal programs, which run contrary to the traditional interpersonal-attraction framework that forms the basis of most mentoring research (Blake-Beard, Murrell, & Thomas, 2007).

This paper makes contributions to management research from both a theoretical and practical perspective. First, it extends the growing research on the Millennial generation, especially as they impact the work environment. Prior research suggested that formal mentoring programs will be especially effective for younger employees in need of assistance both with respect to both advancement in their careers and understanding the inner-workings of their companies. However, our findings indicate that these assumptions may not hold true for Millennial employees who have high expectations when it comes to their careers, assuming they will receive good pay and benefits and high prospects for advancement without necessarily “paying their dues” (Hershatler & Epstein, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

In addition, this paper extends the previous research on the success of formal mentoring programs. Previous studies suggested that mentoring program design should be examined from the perspective of the mentor because the success of formal programs is largely dependent on the willingness of, and support to, mentors and on whether mentors believed that the benefits of the program outweigh the time and effort to the mentor (Parise & Forrett, 2008; Weinberg & Lankau, 2011). The findings from this paper suggest that more research is needed to pinpoint the needs of the mentee to provide the training of mentors and matching of mentor-mentee pairs more effectively and to achieve the objectives of the program, thus contributing to the mentors' satisfaction with the program and their likelihood of mentoring protégés in the future. In addition, one of the key factors contributing to mentoring success relates to perceptions of mentors whether their protégés desire their assistance (Parise & Forrett, 2008). Assurance that participants selected for the program are truly ready, rather than through a selection process based solely on age or sex, might relieve some of the frustrations that mentors experience and

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enhance their overall commitment (Allen & Eby, 2008), which in turn ensures more satisfying outcomes for both mentors and mentees.

Our findings also have implications for Human Resource managers considering the implementation of a formal mentoring program. Previous studies have recommended several elements that HR should consider in developing a mentoring program including 1. Clear communication of goals and purposes; 2. An explanation of the roles, expectations and responsibilities; 3. Adequate resources and support; 4. Training; and 5. Careful selection criterion for mentors (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999). However, if the mentee finds little value in the mentoring relationship, the advice of the formal mentor may be viewed as “burdensome” and, even if helpful, may actually cause distance between the mentor and mentee (Wright & Werther, 1991, p. 29), thus thwarting the objectives of the program. Therefore, a selection process that focuses on the needs and objectives of the mentees is equally important.

While the tendency of younger employees seeking mentoring relationships may have peaked with the Baby Boomer generation (cf. Roche, 1979), formal mentoring programs targeting women might experience more success. Human Resource managers may find that mentoring programs targeted at career advancement for women and minorities reap more benefits (Cunningham, 1992; Olson & Jackson, 2009). Although minorities were not the focus of this study, previous studies have pointed out the need for mentors for minority protégés and the difficulties associated with mixed-race mentoring dyads (Thomas, 2001). This study suggests that the design of a formal mentoring program must start first with determining the readiness of potential mentees *before* the process of pairing mentors and protégés. While our results did not support a significant difference between Millennials or women with other segments of the employee population with respect to their perceived need for training, counseling, or career development, we nevertheless suggest that a critical function of the preliminary analysis is to recognize those specific needs identified by potential mentees so that proper training and matching can occur.

Future research might include a more fine-grained analysis of workforce divisions based on sex and age. For example, it is possible that younger male employees might perceive their mentoring needs differently than younger females. In addition, examination of other employee characteristics based on race or national origin might reveal specific segments of the workforce population who would benefit from a formal mentoring program. The more the human resource manager can tailor the formal mentoring program to meet the needs of individual employees, the more effective the program will be in achieving its objectives.

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Appendix

1. I have a clear understanding of my job.
2. I have received the necessary training to do my job.
3. My supervisor given me direction and help to do my job.
4. I can talk with my supervisor when I need help in doing my job.
5. I have friends at the Hospital with whom I can talk about my job.
6. I understand what is expected in order to succeed at the Hospital.
7. I believe I can have a successful career at the Hospital.
8. I think I would benefit by having additional training in my current job.
9. I think I would benefit if I had someone to talk to about my work.
10. I think I would benefit if I had more support from managers at the Hospital.
11. I feel confident that I can do my job without help from others.
12. I believe that the performance evaluation process at the Hospital is fair.
13. I currently have a mentor to whom I can go for career advice.
14. I currently have a mentor to whom I can go to discuss work related matters.
15. I currently have a mentor to whom I can go for emotional support.
16. I have been effectively mentored at some point in my career.
17. I believe it would be useful for me to have a mentor assigned to me under a formal mentoring program.
18. If I had a mentor assigned to me, it would not matter if the mentor was a man or a woman.
19. If I had a mentor assigned to me, the age of the mentor would not matter.
20. If I had a mentor assigned to me, the race or national origin of the mentor would not matter.
21. In general, employees who have a mentor progress in their career more quickly than those who do not have a mentor.