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Academic Paper

# The effect of perceived values on negative mentoring, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success

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## Abstract

This study addresses how perceived mentor and protégé values affect negative mentoring, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success. Results indicate that protégés with mentors perceived to have self-enhancement values experienced more negative mentoring while protégés with mentors perceived to have self-transcendence values experienced less negative mentoring. Those who experienced negative mentoring had less organizational commitment, job satisfaction and perceived career success. It was also found that negative mentoring indirectly mediated between perceived mentor values and the protégé outcomes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived career success).

## Keywords

values, negative mentoring, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived career success,

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## Introduction

In a fast-paced environment in which keeping high potential employees may be difficult, mentoring may create an opportunity for organizations to retain quality employees. Research suggests that mentoring relationships are linked with job satisfaction, career success, organizational commitment, and other benefits such as decreased stress (Allen, Eby, Potett, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Underhill, 2005). However, research by Welsh and Dixon (2016) suggests that for mentoring to be effective, organizations need to support mentoring relationships. This may include doing more than just creating opportunities for mentoring. Organizations may need to consider the quality of the relationships that are developing. Recently, researchers have explored negative aspects of mentoring (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004, & Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russel, 2000). Research suggests that negative mentoring may result in outcomes such as decreases in job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and career development among other things (Eby & Allen 2002;

Eby et al. 2004). However, negative mentoring is a newer concept and more research is needed to determine how individual characteristics of the mentor and protégé affect it. This study will address how perceived mentor and protégé values affect negative mentoring which affect behaviors such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and career success.

## Literature review

Currently most employees change jobs about 12 times in their careers (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2019). This number will most likely increase in the coming years, indicating that keeping highly skilled employees has become difficult in our fast-paced job changing economy. Things that contribute to job change may include; perceived career success, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Research indicates, lack of opportunities for advancement and development may predict employee turnover and dissatisfaction (Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1996; Bigliardi, Petroni, & Dormio, 2005). This may be especially true in a work environment in which workers are more interested in opportunities to progress their career success over safer traditional career progression routes (Guan, Arthur, Khapova, Hall, & Lord, 2019). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to not only perform better (Harrison, Newman, Roth, 2006; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Riketta, 2008), but have lower turnover, lower absenteeism, and less tardiness (Harrison et al., 2006), making job satisfaction and perceived career success key functions for employment success.

Organizational commitment is also important to organizations as it relates to reduced turnover and absenteeism, and increased performance and organizational citizenship (Harrison et al., 2006; Luchak & Gellatly, 2007; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982). Organizational commitment is defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Steers, & Porter 1982, p. 27). Researchers such as Payne and Huffman (2005) have found that mentored employees had higher affective and continuance commitment than non-mentored employees. Affective commitment refers to a person’s emotional attachment to the organization whereas continuance commitment refers to one’s knowledge of the costs of leaving that organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). For the purpose of this study, only affect commitment was evaluated. It was part of a larger study in which only affect commitment was measured.

Numerous studies have been done evaluating the benefits of mentoring. Several studies have addressed the effects of mentoring on career success (Blickle, Witzki, & Schneider, 2009; Higgins, Dobrow, & Chandler, 2008; Peluchette and Jeanquart, 2000; Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Wallace, 2001) job satisfaction (Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Robinson & Reio, 2012; Seibert, 1999), and organizational commitment (Joiner, Bartram, & Garreffa, 2004; Payne and Huffman, 2005). Many of these findings indicate that mentoring increases job satisfaction, perceptions of career advancement opportunities, and positively affects organizational commitment (Allen et al., 2004; Underhill, 2005). Other mentoring benefits have also included a decrease in work stress and work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2004).

## Negative mentoring

The benefits of mentoring may showcase mentoring in a positive fashion. However, Scandura (1998) explains that mentoring relationships may not always be positive and that the benefits that come from mentoring relationships may depend greatly on the relationship quality. Within the last 15-20 years more research has addressed relationship quality. One of those areas of research has been a focus on negative mentoring.

Negative mentoring relationships may be classified as relationships in which one party member, usually the protégé, has negative experiences with the other member. It is also possible that

protégés may experience both positive and negative experiences with the same mentor. Eby et al., (2004) and Eby et al., (2000) explored aspects of unsatisfying mentoring relationships, which they termed “negative mentoring experiences.”

Eby, et al. (2004) and Eby, et al. (2000) suggest several metathemes that led to negative mentoring experiences; the first of such is a mismatch between dyads. This may include differences in values, work styles, or personality between the mentor and protégé. The second metatheme is that of distant behavior, which may result in excluding protégés from meetings or paying little attention to the protégé. The third metatheme, manipulative behavior, included two components, power and politicking. Through power, the mentor may use his or her position of authority to express power over protégé. With politicking, the mentor may take advantage of the protégé or sabotage the protégé to further their career. The fourth metatheme included lack of mentoring expertise, and the fifth metatheme included any personal issues that the mentor may have had that kept them from being a good mentor. Regardless of the cause, the result of negative mentoring may be protégé depression, job withdrawal, decreases in support, (Eby et al, 2004) decreases in job satisfaction, turnover and increases in stress (Eby & Allen, 2002).

The newness of the negative mentoring concept has left it open for research. Although a few studies have addressed negative mentoring (Burk & Eby, 2010, Eby & Allen, 2002, Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008; Washington & Cox, 2016) research has not addressed specific values of the mentor that may be associated with negative mentoring.

## Values

Rokeach (1973) defined a value as “an enduring belief that a specific code of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (p. 5). Schwartz (1992) theory groups values into categories of: (a) self-direction - valuing independent thought, exploration, and creativity, (b) stimulation - a need for variety and favourable level of activation, (c) hedonism - the value of “organismic” needs and pleasure in the satisfaction of these needs or pleasure and enjoyment of life, (d) achievement - personal success through the demonstration of competence, (e) power - an emphasis on the attainment of a position in the social system, (f) security - a need for safety, harmony, and stability in relationships, (g) conformity - restraint of actions, and violation of expectations and norms, (h) tradition - respect, obligation, and acceptance of traditions or customs, (i) benevolence - concern for the welfare of friends and family or others in daily interaction, and (j) universalism - a person’s ability to understand, appreciate, and tolerate people. Schwartz further defined values by separating the 10 value categories by motivation. Schwartz proposed that certain internal drives promote certain values, and he created four motivational dimensions for the values: self-enhancement, self-transcendence, openness to change, and conformity. The two that are of interest to this study are self-transcendence and self enhancement. Individuals who endorse the values of hedonism, power, and achievement are said to be motivated by self-enhancement, whereas individuals who endorse benevolence and universalism are said to be motivated by self-transcendence.

Research on personalized and socialized charismatic leaders has addressed values/motivations lending support to the above statement by indicating that personalized leaders tend to focus on personal gain valuing power and expressed authority, whereas socialized leaders tend to focus on others, valuing people and the greater good (Howell, 1988; Howell & Shamir, 2005). Overall, research suggests that leaders who are only interested in self gain may be more harmful (Howell & Avolio 1992; O’Connor, Mumford, Clifton, Gessner, & Connelly, 1995). Whereas leaders who focus on others are more effective or more transformational (Brown, Trevenio, & Harrison, 2005). Mentoring is no exception as research suggests that mentors who possess more transformational leadership are more effective (Chun, Sosik, & Yun, 2012, Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

In general, research suggests that qualities that are of interest in mentors include: being people oriented, understanding and respecting others, an interest in developing others (Allen & Poteet, 1999), being caring and selfless (Osterberg, Swigris, Weil, & Branch, 2015), providing guidance and support, and behaving ethically (Bailey, Voyles, Finkelstein, Matarazzo, 2016). Research suggests that characteristics that may not be effective in mentoring include mentor characteristics of power and abuse (politicking) which can lead to negative mentoring (Eby et al., 2000). Washington and Cox (2016) addressed motivations of the mentor that may affect negative mentoring, suggesting that mentor motivation can play a key role in effective mentoring relationships, citing self-enhancement motivations such as furthering ones' own career as a possible cause for negative relationships.

Therefore, it might be expected that self-enhancement values such as power, achievement, and hedonism lead to more negative mentoring behavior. These values may promote a person's individual gain and may be more likely to engage in distancing behavior and manipulative behavior, both known causes of negative mentoring. Whereas self-transcendence values such as benevolence and universalism may reduce negative mentoring behavior, as they may promote helping behavior. Mentors with self-transcendence values may be less likely to engage in behaviors that would cause negative mentoring.

## Hypotheses

This study explores how values affect negative mentoring and its effect on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career support. It is hypothesized that protégés with mentors perceived to have self-enhancement values will experience more negative mentoring behavior, while protégés with mentors perceived to have self-transcendence values will experience less negative mentoring behaviors. It is also hypothesized that negative mentoring will be associated with decreases in organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success. The relationship between values, negative mentoring, and organizational commitment may operate in a causal model relationship where values (self-enhancement/self-transcendence) affect negative mentoring which then affects protégé outcomes. This would imply that negative mentoring mediates the relationship between each of the value variables (self-enhancement and self-transcendence) and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success.

## Methodology

### Participants and procedure

Participants consisted of professional men and women with career mentors. One hundred and fifty-seven participants completed the study; however, only one hundred and twenty-one completed the negative mentoring scale. This scale was added after data collection had begun. Participants were 19 years of age or older with the average age of 36 (SD = 10.03). The majority of participants were female (71.3%), and most were Caucasian (91.1%).

Participants were recruited through (a) e-mail, (b) social network pages, (c) a university alumni on-line newsletter, (d) university distribution list, (e) postal mail, and (f) a snowball approach. There were no differences in dependent variables or mediators due to recruitment source. Age, company tenure, gender, and race were also collected from participants.

Data was collected through an on-line survey. Participants were informed that mentoring relationships were being studied and that their responses would be confidential. Some participants were also asked to forward the on-line survey link to others in their social or professional network.

## Materials

### Mentoring

At the beginning of the study, participants were given a definition of mentoring and were asked if they had at least one person they perceived as a mentor in their career/profession. They responded with a yes or no answer. Those who had a mentor, were asked to select their most current mentor and respond to questions with that particular person in mind. Only those who were currently still in a mentoring relationship or had ended the relationship less than five years prior were included in the study. Participants were asked to answer questions relating to the time they were mentored.

### Organizational commitment

Commitment was measured using the short form of the organizational commitment scale developed by Mowday et al. (1982). Participants were asked to answer questions about organizational commitment during the time they were mentored. Items were measured on a seven-point scale. The items had adequate internal consistency,  $\alpha = .94$ .

### Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured using the three item Hackman and Oldham (1974) general job satisfaction survey. A sample question includes (e.g., "Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job"). Items were measured on a seven-point scale,  $\alpha = .94$ .

### Perceived career success

Perceived career success was measured by Turban and Dougherty (1994). A sample item is "how successful has your career been." The first three items of the four-item measure were measured on a five-point response scale. For the last question participants gaged their career success as either above, behind, or on-schedule. Questions were combined into one scale using standardized scores,  $\alpha = .80$ .

### Negative mentoring

Negative mentoring was measured using a six-item measure based on the Eby et al. (2000) negative mentoring experience taxonomy (see appendix A for complete measure). Eby et al. (2000) suggested that negative mentoring may be caused by the following components: incompatibility, manipulation behavior, distancing oneself, lack of expertise, and personal issues outside the organization. The scale used in this study measures each of these behaviors with one item each except for manipulation behavior, which was assessed by two items, power (item 4) and politicking (item 3). These two items were averaged together before creating the total negative mentoring score. Participants were asked to rate if they had experienced any of these behaviors within their mentoring relationship on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) The scale items had good internal consistency,  $\alpha = .87$ .

### Self-enhancement and self-transcendence values

A modified version of the Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) Short Schwartz Value Survey measured self-enhancement and self-transcendence values. The survey consisted of the 10 value categories, however, only 5 were used for this study. Participants were asked to rate each of the values on a six-point scale ranging from 0 (*not important*) to 5 (*of supreme importance*). Participants were also asked to rate what they perceived their mentor's values to be using the same survey. The values of power, achievement, and hedonism are motivated by one's own self-gain, and were combined for both the protégé and the mentor to form self-enhancement. The values of universalism and benevolence contain underling motivations of helping others and were combined to create the self-

transcendence category. Reliabilities were not calculated as the values are separate constructs. However perceived mentor self-enhancement and self-transcendence values correlated negatively with each other for mentors ( $r = -.14, p < .05$ ) supporting the theory that these values stem from competing motivations (Schwartz, 1994) and are opposite each other.

## Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations were analyzed for study variables (see Table 1). Perceived career success correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ) and organizational commitment ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ), indicating that those who felt they had success in their career were also satisfied with their job and were committed to their organization. Organizational commitment also correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = .58, p < .05$ ) indicated that those who were satisfied with their jobs were also committed to their organization. Negative mentoring correlated negatively with job satisfaction ( $r = -.32, p < .05$ ), perceived career success ( $r = -.22, p < .05$ ) and organizational commitment ( $r = -.37, p < .05$ ). Indicating that those who experienced negative mentoring were less satisfied with their jobs, perceived less success in their career, and were less committed to the organization. These correlations support what was hypothesized. Negative mentoring also correlated negatively with perceived mentor self-transcendence values ( $r = -.23, p < .05$ ) and positively with perceived mentor self-enhancement values ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ), supporting predictions that protégés with mentors perceived to have self-enhancement values would experience more negative mentoring while those with mentors perceived to have self-transcendence values would report less negative mentoring.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and correlations among measured variables<sup>a</sup>**

Variables	Mean	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Organizational Commitment	5.76	1.16	.58	.25	-.37	.05	-.03	.04	.07
2 Job Satisfaction	5.76	1.16		.25	-.32	-.14	.01	-.06	.08
3 Perceived Career Success+	-0.00	0.78		-	-.22	.11	-.03	-.01	.02
4 Negative Mentoring	1.44	0.59		-	-	.12	-.02	.25	-.23
5. Protégé Self-Enhancement Value	2.87	0.81		-	-	-	.01	.53	-.09
6 Protégé Self-Transcendence Value	3.66	0.90		-	-	-	-	.06	.36
7 Perceived Mentor Self-Enhanc Value	2.95	1.21		-	-	-	-	-	-.14 <sup>a</sup>
8 Perceived Mentor Self-Transc Value	3.59	0.93		-	-	-	-	-	-

Note.  $n = 157$  for all variables except negative mentoring  $n = 121$ , + z score  $r > .20, p < .05$ , <sup>a</sup>  $p < .05$  one tailed

Protégé and perceived mentor self-enhancement values were correlated positively ( $r = .53, p < .05$ ) as were protégé and perceived mentor self-transcendence values ( $r = .36, p < .05$ ), indicating that protégés perceived themselves to have similar values to those of their mentor. These correlations may indicate that perceived mentor values were a result of the protégés own values. Therefore, additional analyses were done to control for protégé values when evaluating perceived mentor values.

To control for protégé values, negative mentoring was regressed on perceived mentor self-transcendence values while controlling for protégé self-transcendence values. The regression analysis indicated that the model was significant, ( $F(2,120) = 3.58, p < .05$ ), and the regression weight for perceived mentor self-transcendence values remained significant after controlling for protégé values ( $b = -.16, t(120) = -2.67, p < .05$ ). Negative mentoring was also regressed on perceived mentor self-enhancement values while controlling for protégé values. The regression analysis indicated that the model was also significant, ( $F(2,120) = 3.77, p < .05$ ), and the regression weight for perceived mentor self-enhancement values was significant after controlling for protégé values ( $b = .12, t(120) = 2.38, p < .05$ ). These analyses further support hypothesis one, indicating that protégés with mentors perceived to have self-enhancement values experienced more negative mentoring, while those with mentors perceived to have self-transcendence values experienced less negative mentoring.

Analyses were conducted to test if negative mentoring mediated the relationship between perceived mentor values and each of the protégé outcome variables (organizational commitment, satisfaction, and perceived career success). Since mentor self-enhancement and self-transcendence values were not related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or perceived career success, mediation was explored using bootstrapping through Preacher and Hayes (2008) indirect macro program. Bootstrapping uses non-parametric resampling and confidence intervals to determine if the indirect effect of the IV on the DV through the mediator is different from zero. One thousand bootstraps estimates were request for each analysis. Bias corrected and accelerated bootstrap confidence intervals were used as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Efron (1987).

Models were assessed to determine if negative mentoring mediated between mentor self-transcendence values and each of the protégé outcome variables while controlling for protégé self-transcendence values. The model indicates that negative mentoring did indirectly mediate between mentor self-transcendence and job satisfaction (Point Estimate = .096, .051 SE, [CI 95%, .01, .21]). The model also indicated that negative mentoring mediated between mentor self-transcendence and perceived career support (Point Estimate = .041, .023 SE, [CI 95%, .00, .10]) and mediated between mentor self-transcendence and organizational commitment (Point Estimate = .109, .05 SE, [CI 95% .03, .22]).

Models were also assessed to determine if negative mentoring mediated between mentor self-enhancement values and each of the outcome variables while controlling for protégé self-enhancement values. All models were significant. Negative mentoring indirectly mediated between mentor self-enhancement and job satisfaction (Point Estimate = -.215, .048 SE, [CI 95%, -.22, -.01]), between mentor self-enhancement and perceived career support (Point Estimate = -.032, .02 SE, [CI 95%, -.12, -.01]) and between mentor self-enhancement and organizational commitment (Point Estimate = -.100, .05 SE, [CI 95% -.25, -.02]).

## Discussion

The current study extends research on negative mentoring by investigating the perceived values of the mentor that may be associated with negative mentoring as well as outcomes of negative mentoring. This study found that protégés who experienced negative mentoring perceived less career success, were less satisfied with their jobs, and were less committed to the organization in the sense that they were less emotionally attached. This is consistent with Eby and Allen (2002), who found that negative mentoring was associated with higher turnover and lower job satisfaction. In general, the association found by this study between negative mentoring and organizational outcomes indicates that negative mentoring may affect more than just protégé learning and experiences, giving organizations a stronger reason to care about the effects of negative mentoring as it may lead protégés to look for employment elsewhere or engage in other behaviors associated with less affect commitment such as cyber loafing, moonlighting, and absenteeism (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2010).

Results also indicate that those who perceived their mentor to have self-enhancement values, which are values that support more individual gain, experienced more negative mentoring. This is consistent with research by Eby at al., 2000 who indicated that characteristics such as power may lead to negative mentoring and Washington and Cox (2016) who suggested that a focus on self-enhancement may affect negative mentoring. In opposition, it was also found that protégés who perceived their mentors to have self-transcendence values, which consist of values that support more helping behaviors, experienced less negative mentoring. This also seems consistent with research indicating mentor characteristics such as being caring (Osterberg et al., 2015), or understanding and people oriented (Allen & Potett, 1999) are more effective. These results were



supported even when controlling for protégé values, indicating that these results were not a byproduct of the protégés values.

Last, the study indicates that negative mentoring mediated between mentor values and each of the outcome variables, indicating that protégés with mentors perceived to have self-transcendence values experienced less negative mentoring and this in turn increased their organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and perceived career success. In reverse, protégés with mentors perceived to have self-enhancement values experienced more negative mentoring and in turn had lower job satisfaction, less organizational commitment, and less perceived career success. These mediated models may indicate the first steps in a causal model suggesting that mentor values may affect negative mentoring which in turn may affect organizational outcomes.

These results of this study differ from much of the previous research of negative mentoring which has focused on value/attitude similarity between mentor and protégé as a possible cause of negative mentoring (Eby and Allen 2002; Eby et al. 2000; Eby et al. 2004). This study indicates that though mentors and protégés overall did have similar values, certain perceived values of the mentor (self-enhancement) alone may predict negative mentoring.

## **Implications**

Results of this study may help researchers understand more about negative mentoring and ways to decrease it. One option for decreasing negative mentoring may be to choose mentors who have self-transcendence values as the study results suggest that mentors with perceived self-transcendence values were associated with less negative mentoring. Another option may be to train mentors to display behaviors that reflect more self-transcendence values. Schwartz (1992) explains that although people differ in importance placed on certain values, all individuals possess varying degrees of the 10 values and research by Lord & Brown (2004) indicate that leaders who emphasize specific behaviors can activate specific values within individuals, suggesting that it may be possible to teach mentors to activate self-transcendence values by focusing on self-transcendence behaviors when working with protégés, even if the mentor values self-enhancement in other aspects of their life. Training may be especially relevant as Eby et al., (2000) suggests that lack of mentor expertise was also associated with negative mentoring. Though overall both of these options may help reduce negative mentoring.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

Although there are some limitations to this study, many of these limitations indicate pathways for future research. One limitation is that only perceived mentor values were measured. Research indicates that in some instances perception is more important than actual values, particularly with matching people (Edwards, Cable, Williams, Lambert & Shipp, 2006). Future researchers may want to measure values from the mentor's perspective as well as from the protégé's perspective. If actual values and perceived values were measured from both mentors and protégés, a better understanding of if one's actual values are similar to one's perceived values could be achieved. Overall, this would enhance what we know about mentor and protégé values. The study did indicate that overall protégés have values similar to those of their mentor. It is possible that protégés or mentors seek out someone with values similar to their own. It's also possible that protégés for example, may project their values onto their mentor. Protégé values were controlled for in this study to account for this, but a measure of both actual and perceived values from both the mentor and protégé may provide more information.

Another possible limitation of this study is that it really only addresses negative mentoring. It's possible that negative mentoring and positive mentoring are not on a continuum. Therefore, although there is a negative relationship between perceived mentor self-transcendence values and negative mentoring, this may not necessarily indicate that mentors with perceived self-

transcendence values are associated with positive mentoring. More research is needed that explores the connection between values and both positive and negative mentoring.

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## Appendix A

Did you experience any of the following in your relationship with your mentor? KEY:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

My mentor...

- a. Seemed to be incompatible with me (differences in values, personality, or life, etc.)
- b. Distanced him or herself from me (paid little attention to me, was more concerned about themselves, kept me out of the loop, etc.)
- c. Took advantage of me to further their own career (i.e. took credit for my work, lied to me, sabotaged me, etc.)
- d. Used power that he or she has over me (intimidated me, made me do their work, withheld work or responsibility from me, etc.)
- e. Did not have the expertise to help me (lacked mentoring skills, job skills, information about the organization, etc.)
- f. Had personal issues that kept him or her from being a good mentor (dislike for the organization, personal problems or interferences, negative attitude, etc.)