

Personality, Perceived Benefits, and Willingness to Mentor in Formal Programs

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ATTN: EFFECTIVE MENTORS WANTED



One way to enhance on-the-job learning and development is to design formal mentoring programs in ways that foster effective dyadic relationships and encourage employees to proactively build mentoring networks for themselves (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992).



Identifying qualified mentors is particularly salient as protégés have reported greater negative experiences with individuals participating as formal mentors compared to informal mentors (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005). **It is essential for practitioners to structure formal mentoring programs such that they will attract mentors who possess the attributes that will result in successful mentoring relationships.**

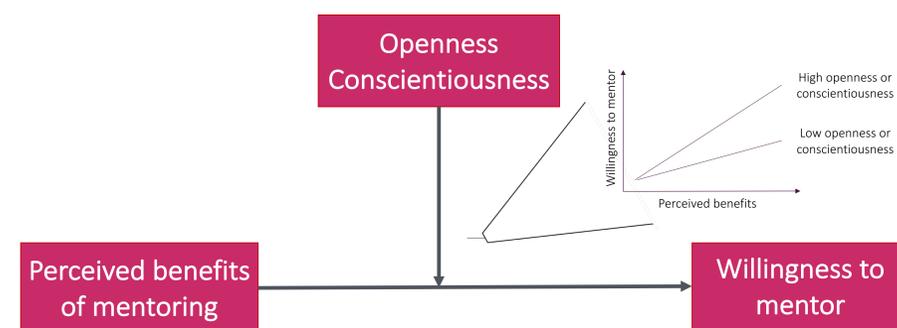


Given that **open and conscientious individuals are more likely to both volunteer and perform successfully as a mentor** (Niehoff, 2006; Wanberg, Kammemeyer-Mueller, & Marchese, 2006), the next step is to design formal mentoring programs that feature elements that will attract, motivate, and support potential mentors with these attributes.

HYPOTHESIZED MODEL



Openness to experience and conscientiousness will moderate the relationship between perceived benefits of mentoring and willingness to mentor.



METHOD

PARTICIPANTS



Participants ($N = 280$) were required to be at least 18 years old and be employed at least part-time with 5+ years work experience. The sample was 50.7% male and 49.3% female, ranging from 19 to 68 years old ($M = 32.65$, $SD = 10.47$).

DATA: AMAZON MTURK



Evidence suggests that online data sources can provide reliable and representative data (Behrend, Sharek, Meade, & Wiebe, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Thus, participants were reached via Amazon Mturk and received \$1.20 compensation upon completion of a 10-minute survey.

MEASURES



Willingness to mentor was measured with a 4-item survey (Ragins & Cotton, 1993); **perceptions of benefits of mentoring** with 21 items from a 41-item survey (Ragins & Scandura, 1999); and **personality** with 8 items each for openness and conscientiousness from Saucier's (1994) 40-item survey.

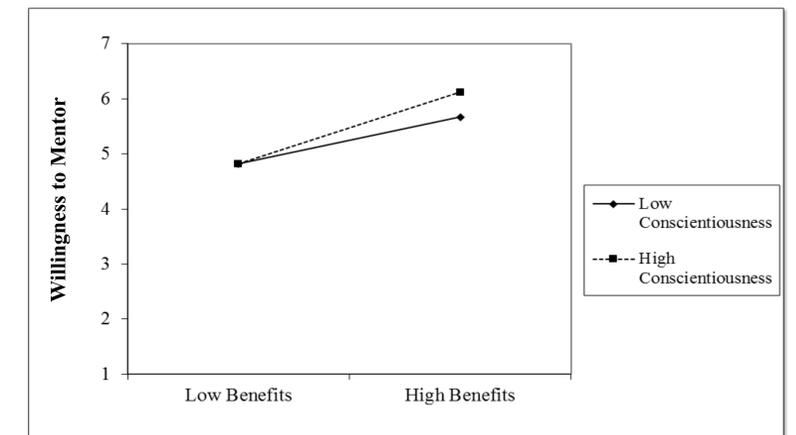
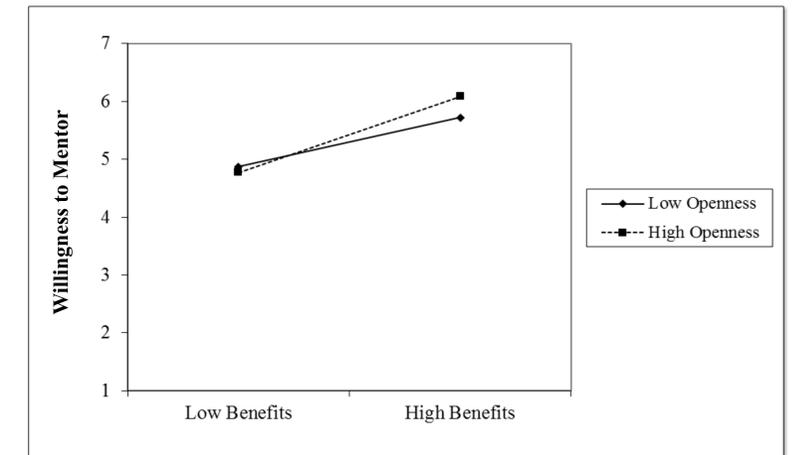
RESULTS



Openness and conscientiousness were positively correlated with both perceived benefits of mentoring and willingness to mentor (all $p < .01$), which were also correlated with each other ($r = .541$, $p < .001$).



After controlling for prior mentoring experience, openness ($B = .13$, $p = .021$) and conscientiousness ($B = .11$, $p = .036$) moderated the perceived benefits-willingness to mentor relationship. As hypothesized, at higher levels of openness and conscientiousness, the positively-sloped line representing perceived benefits predicting willingness to mentor was steeper than at low levels of openness and conscientiousness.



DISCUSSION



Based on these results, one way to recruit quality mentors is to offer and emphasize the benefits of investing in a protégé when marketing the program. It is important to note that **highlighting the benefits of serving as a mentor will especially attract those with the desirable characteristics of openness and conscientiousness** as evidenced by the moderation.



One area for future research is to explore the specific features of formal programs that will effectively attract and retain qualified, effective mentors.