

Examining mentoring relationships within select sport management protégé networks

Jacqueline L. Beres, University of Windsor

Jess C. Dixon (Advisor), University of Windsor

Management/leadership

May 29, 2009

25 minute oral

Abstract 2009-110

2:00 PM

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Mentoring research has increased considerably within the past 30 years (Dickinson & Johnson, 2000). Many scholars, however, have noted that the majority of mentoring knowledge has been gained through studies completed in business and industrial settings (i.e., Dickinson & Johnson; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). In contrast, fewer studies have explored the nature of mentoring relationships in academia (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Schlosser & Gelso, 2001). Moreover, Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) stated that there had been "little emphasis on the mentoring process in educational institutions with particular reference to sport" (p. 25). Pastore (2003) further emphasized the critical importance of mentoring, calling it an "essential area" for sport management educators. This study will address the aforementioned gap in the mentoring literature by examining the nature of select mentoring relationships within the sport management academy. Drawing upon her studies of mentoring in organizational settings, Kram (1988) described two broad categories of mentoring functions: career functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions are those functions that enable career advancement while psychosocial functions enhance the protégés' sense of competence, identity and effectiveness in professional roles (Kram).

The benefits of mentoring, which are experienced by both protégés and mentors, have been widely reported. When compared with their non-mentored peers, mentored individuals report higher salaries, greater career satisfaction, and more promotional activity (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Roche, 1979; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). In academia, mentors guide doctoral students in their research and training, help them network with others in their field, and assist with eventual job searches (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000). Similarly, benefits to academic mentors include increased productivity, networking opportunities as protégés advance, personal satisfaction from protégés' successes, and greater respect from peers for fostering talent (Johnson & Nelson, 1999; Kram, 1988).

Despite the many benefits of mentoring listed above, protégés may encounter negative experiences. Weaver and Chelladurai (1999) identified a number of barriers that may prevent the successful formation of mentoring relationships, including (un)availability of effective mentors, stereotypes, and fear of sexual connotation. Although there is little agreement on the influence of gender in mentoring relationships, some authors have found that members of cross-gender mentoring relationships report a greater number of complexities than those in same-gender relationships (Kram, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). Furthermore, while additional research in this area must be completed (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000), it has been suggested that members of cross-gendered mentoring relationships could potentially encounter difficulties with sexual attraction and how the relationship is perceived by others (Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Johnson & Nelson, 1999).

Recently introduced into mentoring literature, a protégé network can be defined as "the compilation of a single mentor's protégés who have subsequently experienced upward career mobility" (Mott, Porschitz, Sherman, & Manz, 2007, p. 4). In order to expand this emerging area of research, Dixon & Mott (2008) created protégé networks for sport management doctoral advisors and their doctoral students. More specifically, the researchers mapped doctoral advisors (mentors) with their past doctoral students (protégés), most of whom are now sport management faculty themselves. Based on the aggregate size of the lineages, protégé networks were grouped into four clusters and these clusters form the basis of the sample used in this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of mentoring relationships within sport management. More specifically, the characteristics of the mentoring relationships within a select number of sport management protégé networks will be examined. In addition, the importance, as well as the actual provision of specific mentoring functions within these particular protégé networks will be explored (Kram, 1988).

The qualities sport management mentors desire in prospective protégés and similarly, the qualities protégés sought in prospective mentors will also be investigated (Johnson & Huwe, 2002). Lastly, perceived barriers to mentoring, both within cross-gendered and same-gendered relationships will be studied (Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). As described above, the sample for this study is based upon the four clusters of protégé networks created by Dixon & Mott (2008). The top two clusters, which contain six lineages, have been selected for analysis based on aggregate protégé network size and scholarly productivity. Despite their small composition with respect to the total number of protégé network members, these mentors and protégés were very productive when compared to members of the sport management academy as a whole. While these lineages comprised only 2% of the overall sport management protégé network population, members of these lineages produced almost 30% of the publications within the journals studied by Dixon & Mott (2008). In addition, these mentors and protégés received over one

2009 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2009)

quarter of the NASSM recognition and contributed to over 20% of the editorial service for the journals used to determine scholarly productivity.

In order to examine the nature of selected mentoring relationships within the sport management academy, surveys and semi-structured interviews will be used. Surveys will be sent to both the mentors and protégés within the six selected lineages. Survey respondents will provide demographic data such as age, gender, and race.

Descriptive statistics will be used to discover characteristics of the mentoring relationships within these protégé networks. For example, the number of cross-gendered and same-gendered mentoring relationships will be determined. Survey questions will inquire about mentoring functions and perceptions of barriers within mentoring relationships. Survey items will also elicit the qualities mentors seek in prospective protégés and the qualities protégés desired in potential mentors.

Comparisons will be made between responses within a single protégé network as well as across protégé networks. Using the same lineages, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with each of the six mentors and two of their protégés. One male and one female protégé from each lineage will be selected on the basis of their current location. Themes emerging from these interviews will serve to enhance the quantitative data obtained through the survey responses.

This study will expand what is currently known about mentoring relationships in sport management as a discipline. The findings may also act as the basis for subsequent, more detailed analyses of mentoring within this field. In addition, prospective doctoral students searching for a doctoral dissertation advisor might benefit from the insight gained on mentoring relationships. Lastly, current sport management faculty may increase their understanding of the mentoring functions and barriers experienced by some protégés within sport management, and could potentially incorporate these findings when advising their own students.