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## **PROTÉGÉS' NEGATIVE MENTORING EXPERIENCES: CONSTRUCT DEVELOPMENT AND NOMOLOGICAL VALIDATION**

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Two studies were conducted to operationalize the construct of negative mentoring experiences, establish content validity, and test theory-based predictions associated with a nomological network of related variables. As predicted, the negative experiences of mentor Distancing Behavior and Lack of Mentor Expertise were more often reported in the separation phase and among protégés in formally arranged mentoring relationships. All types of experiences were related to career-related support, psychosocial support, and learning, with Distancing Behavior being most highly related to career support and learning. Significant correlations were also found with relational complementarity, social exchange perceptions, intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and psychological job withdrawal. Negative mentoring was also distinct from positive mentoring, general workplace stress, and dissatisfying social relationships at work, providing discriminant validity evidence. Finally, negative mentoring had explanatory power in predicting protégé outcomes over and above positive mentoring. The findings are discussed in terms of future research on mentoring as well as applied practice.

Mentoring refers to an intense interpersonal relationship between a senior, more experienced individual (the mentor) and a junior, less experienced individual (the protégé) whereby the mentor provides career and personal guidance to the protégé (Kram, 1985). Mentors provide two types of support to protégés. Career-related support involves the mentor actively working to increase the protégé's visibility within the organization and providing high quality developmental experiences. Psychosocial support refers to the extent of intimacy, friendship, and trust between mentor and protégé. Mentoring is associated with salary growth,

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career progression, job and career satisfaction, and turnover intentions, among other protégé outcomes (for a review see Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lima, & Lentz, 2004).

Although the benefits of being mentored are well documented, research has called into question the idea that mentoring relationships are always positive experiences for protégés. A recent study by Ragins, Cotton, and Miller (2000) proposes that mentoring relationships exist on a continuum with highly satisfying relationships at one extreme and dysfunctional or harmful ones at the other extreme. Other researchers note that mentoring relationships may be marked by dysfunctional behavior (Feldman, 1999; Scandura, 1998) and a recent study found that protégés report a wide range of negative experiences with mentors (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000). Moreover, protégés with a history of negative experiences with mentors report higher stress and turnover intentions, as well as lower job satisfaction (Eby & Allen, 2002).

Although the aforementioned research highlights the need to examine both the positive and negative aspects of mentoring, little research exists on negative mentoring experiences. This omission is important because the positive aspects of mentoring such as sponsorship, coaching, protection, and acceptance are conceptually distinct from the negative aspects of mentoring such as mentor-protégé mismatch, manipulative mentor behavior, and lack of mentor expertise (compare Kram, 1985, to Eby et al., 2000). Moreover, it is possible that a protégé may experience both positive and negative experiences with the same mentor. For example, a mentor may be able to provide the protégé with exposure and visibility to important organizational members yet also engage in manipulative behavior toward the protégé by inappropriately delegating work, taking credit for the protégé's accomplishments, or acting tyrannically.

Numerous ideas for future research on the negative aspects of mentoring have been suggested (e.g., Feldman, 1999; Ragins et al., 2000; Scandura, 1998). However, before research on this topic can progress, the construct of negative mentoring experiences needs to be operationalized, reliably measured, and the nomological network of variables associated with negative mentoring experiences must be firmly established. This study accomplishes these objectives.

### *Negative Mentoring Experiences*

Early mentoring theory discussed dysfunctional relational patterns and negative experiences that can occur between mentor and protégé. For example, Levinson et al.'s (1978) study of mentoring found that some protégés described mentors who were overly critical, excessively demanding and authoritarian, and even cases where mentors sabotaged

protégés' careers. Kram (1985) also found that some mentoring relationships started out as positive experiences but over time became frustrating and destructive. Later theoretical work by Scandura (1998) and Feldman (1999) described dysfunctional mentoring as situations where the relationship does not meet the needs of one or both partners, and the costs of the relationship outweigh the benefits. A more specific definition was put forth by Eby et al. (2000), who described protégés' negative mentoring experiences in terms of specific incidents and mentor behaviors that reduce mentors' ability to provide guidance. Interestingly, the types of experiences that emerged from Eby et al.'s qualitative study reflected more than simply the absence of mentor support. As outlined below, these negative experiences capture a wide range of experiences that vary in severity and reflect both behaviors targeted toward a particular protégé (e.g., sabotage) and more diffuse behavioral patterns that may represent stable interpersonal tendencies on the part of the mentor (e.g., neglect; Simon & Eby, 2003).

In operationalizing negative mentoring experiences, we used Eby et al.'s (2000) multilevel taxonomy of negative mentoring experiences as a guiding framework. This taxonomy is based on narrative accounts of 84 protégés' most negative mentoring experiences and included 168 unique negative experiences from protégés employed in a wide range of industries and jobs in both the private and public sector. Further, the taxonomy has been recently cross-validated in a military setting (Eby, Allen, & Gewin, 2003).

The most frequently reported metatheme reported in the Eby et al. (2000) study was Mismatch Within the Dyad. This reflects perceived mismatches between the mentor and protégé in terms of values, work styles, and personality. The second metatheme is Distancing Behavior and refers to mentors who neglect or intentionally exclude their protégés from important meetings or events, as well as mentors who are perceived as self-absorbed and do not have time for their protégés. Manipulative Behavior is the third metatheme and includes two themes. The first theme is *position power* and includes situations where the mentor wields his or her power in a tyrannical manner as well as situations where the mentor inappropriately under- or overdelegates work to the protégé. The second theme is *politicking*. Politicking refers to the mentor engaging in self-interested political behavior at the expense of the protégé and includes mentor sabotage, taking credit for a protégé's hard work, and mentor deceit. The fourth metatheme is Lack of Mentor Expertise and has two themes: lack of interpersonal expertise and lack of technical expertise on the part of the mentor. The final metatheme identified by Eby and colleagues is General Dysfunctionality and is where the mentor displays a negative attitude toward their work or the organization, or has

personal problems that interfere with his or her ability to mentor (e.g., drinking problem, family problem).

*Understanding Negative Mentoring Through the Lens of Social Exchange Theory*

One of the most widely researched and generally supported theories of close relationships is social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). This model proposes that individuals develop beliefs and emotional reactions to a relationship based on their perception of the costs associated with the relationship relative to the benefits that the relationship offers them. Generally speaking, relational benefits serve to strengthen relationships whereas costs tend to weaken them. Social exchange theory is unique in that it considers the fact that relationships are not always positive experiences; costs are also incurred by participating in relationships. This perspective is consistent with the observation that "even in generally harmonious (relationships), conflict, hostility, and attempts at coercion sometimes occur" (Huston & Burgess, 1979, p. 7). Of particular relevance to this study is the application of social exchange theory to the understanding of relationship problems (Levinger, 1979; Sprecher, 1992). This represents an important departure from most of the social-psychological research on relationships, which tends to obscure and pathologize relational problems rather than viewing them as a natural part of all relationships (Wood & Duck, 1995). Relational costs can lead one to believe that the relationship is no longer meeting his or her needs and be a catalyst for both relationship termination and psychological distress (Duck, 1981; Levinger, 1979; Sprecher, 1992).

Relational problems, or costs using social exchange terms, can take a variety of forms. Attempts to isolate single causes of relationship problems are likely to be futile given the wide range of problems that can occur (Duck, 1981). This includes problems relating to one's partner interpersonally, one partner's failure to provide rewards to the other, unsatisfactory performance in one's relational role, changes in the relationship that happen over time (e.g., one or both individuals' needs change), and specific relational events (e.g., real or perceived betrayal; Duck, 1981; Levinger, 1979; Scandura, 1998). These types of relational problems map on to various types of negative mentoring experiences. For example, Lack of Mentor Expertise, Distancing Behavior, and General Dysfunctionality may reflect unsatisfactory role performance by the mentor or the mentor's failure or inability to provide rewards to the protégé. Mismatches Within the Dyad and Manipulative Behavior refer to difficulty relating interpersonally with the mentor. Manipulative Behavior may also be associated with specific events in the mentorship such as sabotage or credit taking.

Social exchange theory has several implications for the present study. First, as noted by Duck (1994), negative relational experiences should not be conceptualized simply as a "deviation from the positive, but (rather) a phenomenon that also composes the totality of relational experience" (p. 5). Conceptualizations of relationships as normatively positive and dichotomizing relationships as either good or bad narrows our understanding of relationships and leads to an unrealistic belief that relationships should always be positive experiences (Wood & Duck, 1995). Negative mentoring experiences are conceptually distinct from positive experiences and do not simply reflect the absence of positive mentoring (recall that positive mentoring consists of career-related support and psychosocial support). To illustrate the first point, it is useful to consider that the absence of career-related support is not helping the protégé attain desirable positions (lack of sponsorship), not providing feedback (lack of coaching), failing to protect the protégé from potentially damaging situations (lack of protection), not challenging the protégé (lack of challenge), and not taking initiative to help the protégé become visible to important organizational players (lack of exposure). Likewise, the absence of psychosocial support reflects not having pleasurable social interactions (lack of friendship and social functions), not serving as a role model (lack of role modeling), not being a sounding board for personal concerns (lack of counseling), and not conveying positive regard toward the protégé (lack of acceptance).

The negative experience of Mismatch Within the Dyad refers to mismatches with one's mentor in terms of personality, work styles, and values. This is not captured by the absence of career-related mentoring or the absence of psychosocial mentoring. The negative experience of Manipulative Behavior, which includes tyranny, inappropriate delegation, sabotage, credit taking, and deceit, is uniquely negative and does not correspond to the absence of career-related or psychosocial support. Further, neither Lack of Mentor Expertise nor General Dysfunctionality is synonymous with the absence of career-related or psychosocial mentoring. Of all the negative experiences, Distancing Behavior is the most conceptually similar to the lack of career-related mentoring because it involves being excluded and neglected by one's mentor. However, there are meaningful distinctions that warrant treating it as a separate construct. First, one aspect of Distancing Behavior is the unique problem of having a mentor who is perceived as being preoccupied with his or her own advancement. The opposite of self-absorption (i.e., the mentor putting the protégé's concerns above his or her own) is not captured in either career or psychosocial support. Second, mentor distancing emerged when asking protégés to report on "developmental relationships in which a more advanced or experienced person (the mentor) is

*committed to providing career and/or personal support* to another individual (the protégé)" (Eby et al., 2000, p. 9, emphasis added). This argues against the idea that distancing simply reflects the lack of mentoring because some protégés who believed that they were in a developmental mentoring relationship reported feeling neglected or excluded by their mentors on occasion.

The second implication of social exchange theory is that it suggests some relationships may be marked by *both* positive and negative experiences, whereas others may be primarily positive, mainly negative, or fail to meet one's needs but not be damaging (neutral). Several examples illustrate the various ways that this might occur in mentoring relationships. It seems quite possible that a mentor and protégé do not "click" interpersonally (a mismatch) but the mentor may still be able to provide positive mentoring in the form of career-related support (e.g., coaching, challenging assignments, sponsorship) and psychosocial support (e.g., acceptance, counseling). One can also easily envision a situation where a mentor may not be particularly adept technically (lack of mentor expertise), but, due to political connections within the organization, he or she may be able to provide sponsorship, exposure, and protection to a protégé (positive mentoring functions). Moreover, career-related mentoring such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and challenging assignments can occur even if the mentor lacks technical expertise, and mentors who are not adept interpersonally (lack of mentor expertise) may still be able to serve as a confidant and counselor to protégés. As a final example, mentors who are bitter or have personal problems (general dysfunctionality) may still be able to open doors for protégés, provide them with challenging assignments, and provide job-related coaching. Further, although such mentors may not be the most desirable role models, this does not preclude them from being able to provide some counseling and acceptance to protégés.

In addition to relationships where both positive and negative experiences happen, it is also possible that some relationships are primarily positive. This would be a mentorship where the protégé reports high amounts of career-related and psychosocial support and few relational problems. Other relationships may be characterized by recurring problems and few positive experiences. Theory predicts that these types of mentorships (i.e., consistent problems with few benefits) would be most likely to terminate (Sprecher, 1992). A final possibility is that the mentorship is not providing many benefits but is also not necessarily harmful to the protégé. These would be more neutral relationships because the relationship is not characterized by problems, yet, does not necessarily help the protégé. Ragins et al. (2000) discuss these as "marginal" mentoring relationships (p. 1178).

### *Nomological Network Associated with Negative Mentoring*

Having differentiated positive and negative mentoring, it is important to outline the nomological network of related variables. The primary objective is to understand a construct in terms of its meaning, relationship to other theoretically relevant and established constructs, and distinction from other constructs (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). It also provides the basis for a tentative theory about a construct and helps understand the construct in terms of related theory and research. A variety of approaches were used in our validation effort including confirmatory factor analysis, the examination of group differences as predicted by theory, criterion-related validity evidence, and both convergent and discriminant validity evidence (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Floyd & Widaman, 1995). Each of these approaches is discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

#### *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

One way to exhibit construct validity is to demonstrate that the items written to measure a particular construct do, in fact, represent that construct. We used confirmatory factor analysis to accomplish this objective because it links observed variables to underlying constructs as predicted by theory (Floyd & Widaman, 1995). This allowed us to test the viability of a theoretical model that specified that the latent construct of negative mentoring is comprised of five factors representing Mismatch Within the Dyad, Distancing Behavior, Manipulative Behavior, Lack of Mentor Expertise, and General Dysfunctionality.

#### *Group Differences as Predicted by Theory*

Mentoring theory proposes that mentorships change over time and have four distinct phases (Chao, 1997; Kram, 1983, 1985). In the first stage of initiation, mentor and protégé are beginning the relationship. Each individual makes initial assessments of one another and tries to connect emotionally with the other person. Protégés often fantasize about the mentorship and may idealize their mentors' competence and wisdom. Mentors size up protégés and reach initial conclusions about how "coachable" their protégés are (Kram, 1985, p. 51). During this phase there can be considerably uncertainty about the relationship and these initial assessments determine whether or not the relationship will continue (Kram, 1985). As such, factors that foster liking and trust, such as similarity, should be particularly salient to both individuals, particularly in the early stages of relationship development (Levinger, 1979).

Consistent with this idea, filter theory suggests that, in the early stage of a relationship, individuals focus on differences with their partner and use this information to gauge relationship viability (Duck, 1977). Over time, similarity become less important as the relationship deepens and develops. In line with filter theory predictions, Turban, Dougherty, and Lee (2002) found that mentor-protégédissimilarity was detrimental to the receipt of mentoring in the early stages of the relationship but actually became beneficial over time. In addition, Allen and Eby (2003) found that the relationship between mentors' reports of relationship effectiveness and perceived similarity with protégés was stronger in short-term rather than longer-term relationships. These characteristics of the initiation phase led us to predict:

*Hypothesis 1:* The negative experience of Mismatch Within the Dyad will be more frequently reported in the initiation phase compared to other mentoring phases.

The second phase is cultivation. In this phase, initial fantasies are tested against the reality of the relationship. If the relationship is an effective one, then the cultivation phase should provide the protégéwith the maximum amount of career-related and psychosocial mentoring (Kram, 1985). In one of the few studies of mentoring phases, Chao (1997) found greater career and psychosocial mentoring in the cultivation phase compared to the initiation phase. The cultivation phase is also a time where the emphasis starts to shift toward mutual exchange of resources and learning (Kram, 1985). It is also the phase that is least fraught with uncertainty, conflict, and disappointment. This phase ends when one or both individuals' needs change (e.g., the protégédesires more autonomy, the mentor believes that he or she can no longer provide guidance) or organizational circumstances disrupt the relationship (e.g., one or both partners leave the organization); this marks the separation phase.

There are significant changes in the functions provided by the mentor (e.g., less support is offered) and the depth of the relationship (e.g., the emotional attachment lessens) during the separation phase (Kram, 1985). Although separation sometimes occurs relatively easily, other times it is associated with significant psychological upheaval. This may occur if the protégéis not ready for a structural separation from the mentor, yet, the mentor feels it is time for the protégéto move on. Protégés may also experience a sense of loss during separation because they no longer have the security of their mentor to fall back on. It is also possible that structural separation does not happen soon enough. In these situations the protégémay feel as if they are no longer learning from the relationship or believe that the mentor is no longer responsive to their developmental needs (Kram, 1985). Thus, either mentor or protégémay

initiate the separation phase. The final stage of redefinition occurs several years after separation. During this phase, the stress of separation lessens and the previous mentorship may take on new meaning to the protégé. Kram (1985) found friendship to be the most common relational pattern during the redefinition phase, although it is possible that mentor and protégé lose contact with one another or harbor unresolved feelings about the relationship. This leads us to predict that:

*Hypothesis 2:* The negative experience of mentor Distancing Behavior will be more frequently reported in the separation phase compared to other mentoring phases.

*Hypothesis 3:* The negative experience of Lack of Mentor Expertise will be more frequently reported in the separation phase compared to other mentoring phases.

Mentoring theory also suggests that there may be differences in the reporting of some negative mentoring experiences based on how the relationship was initiated. Mentoring relationships can either be formally arranged by the organization (formal) or develop spontaneously (informal; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). The reason protégés in informal relationships reap greater benefits than those in formal ones is because informal mentorships occur spontaneously, based on mutual attraction and identification (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). In contrast, in formal mentorships, mentors and protégés are matched by a third party, often on the basis of job function or some other job-related characteristic rather than interpersonal compatibility (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Further, although some formal mentors are selected based on competency, this judgment is made by program coordinators not protégés (Murray, 1991). Therefore, a protégé's unique needs may not be aligned with a mentor's strengths. Thus:

*Hypothesis 4:* Mismatch Within the Dyad will be more likely to occur in formally initiated relationships compared to informal ones.

Another potential problem with formal mentoring is that mentors may be less motivated toward, and committed to, the relationship. This can occur because formal mentors may take on this role for a variety of reasons such as organizational pressure, to display citizenship behaviors, or because it is required (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Therefore, some formal mentors may not have the necessary technical or interpersonal skills to be effective mentors. Alternatively, they may possess these skills yet not be motivated to display them to protégés. Further, Kram (1985) notes that formal mentors may have less effective coaching and communication skills and protégés tend to select informal mentors based on these characteristics (Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1988). As such, we predict:

*Hypothesis 5:* The negative experience of Distancing Behavior will be more likely to occur in formally initiated relationships compared to informal relationships.

*Hypothesis 6:* The negative experience of Lack of Mentor Expertise will be more likely to occur in formally initiated relationships compared to informal relationships.

### *Criterion-Related Validity Evidence*

We also examined the relationship between negative mentoring experiences and several theoretically relevant protégé perceptions and outcomes. As discussed previously, social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) finds that the costs associated with a relationship leads one to have reduced commitment to the relationship and can precipitate relationship termination (Levinger, 1979; Sprecher, 1992). Factors that can engender perceptions of costs include incompatibility (e.g., mismatches), mistreatment (e.g., manipulation), disinterest or reduced commitment by one's partner (e.g., distancing), and the partner's inability to provide rewards (e.g., lack of expertise, general dysfunctionality; Duck, 1982; Graziano & Musser, 1982; Sprecher, 1992). This led us to predict:

*Hypothesis 7:* Negative mentoring experiences will be negatively related to social exchange perceptions (i.e., relationship benefits exceed costs).

*Hypothesis 8:* Negative mentoring experiences will be positively related to intentions to leave the relationship.

Theorizing on dysfunctional mentoring further suggests that negative experiences will be related to protégé distress and withdrawal (Feldman, 1999; Scandura, 1998). Specifically, mentoring relationships that are maintained even though they are marked by difficulty relating interpersonally (e.g., mismatches), dysfunctional behavioral patterns (e.g., manipulation, general dysfunctionality), or failure to meet protégés' expectations (e.g., distancing, lack of expertise) may leave protégés feeling dejected, distressed, and anxious. Negative experiences may also be related to withdrawal from work as a means to cope (Scandura, 1998). Thus, we predict:

*Hypothesis 9:* Negative mentoring experiences will be positively related to depressed mood.

*Hypothesis 10:* Negative mentoring experiences will be positively related to psychological job withdrawal.

### *Convergent and Discriminant Validity Evidence*

*Convergent validity evidence.* As previously noted, mentors can provide career-related and psychosocial support to protégés. With its focus

on providing developmental experiences, career-related support should be facilitated when the mentor and protégé are able to spend quality time together, when the mentor has specific skills and expertise to pass on to protégés, and when the mentor is motivated to help protégés develop professionally. Likewise, for psychosocial support to develop, the mentor and protégé need quality interaction time, a foundation of trust and liking, and the mentor must be willing and able to provide assistance in the form of counseling, friendship, and acceptance and confirmation. Given the nature of career-related and psychosocial support, both should be negatively related to all five types of negative experiences. However, it is expected that there will be a particularly strong negative relationship between Distancing Behavior and both career mentoring (Hypothesis 11a) and the relational outcome of protégé learning (Hypothesis 13a). The reasoning is that mentors who engage in more distancing behavior invest less time and energy into the relationship and as such there are fewer opportunities for both career-related guidance and learning. We further expect that mentor Manipulative Behavior will have a stronger relationship with psychosocial mentoring than other types of negative mentoring have with psychosocial mentoring (Hypothesis 12a). Our thinking here is that the relational closeness and trust that is a prerequisite for psychosocial mentoring will be less likely to exist if the mentor engages in tyrannical behavior, is perceived as distrustful, or takes advantage of the protégé.

*Hypothesis 11:* Negative mentoring experiences will be negatively related to career-related support.

*Hypothesis 11a:* The negative experience of Distancing Behavior will be more strongly related to career-related support than will other negative experiences.

*Hypothesis 12:* Negative mentoring experiences will be negatively related to psychosocial support.

*Hypothesis 12a:* The negative experience of Manipulative Behavior will be more strongly related to psychosocial support than will other negative experiences.

Mentoring is also aimed at helping the protégé learn and develop (Kram, 1985). Career-related support fosters learning through challenging job assignments, coaching, and exposure within the organization whereas psychosocial support facilitates learning by helping protégés develop a sense of professional competence and work role identity (Kram, 1985). An environment conducive to learning is marked by trust, interpersonal comfort, and commitment to providing developmental experiences (Noe, 2002). Thus, we expect that negative mentoring will inhibit protégé learning. However, this relationship should be particularly

strong for Distancing Behavior because learning from the relationship requires sustained contact and meaningful interactions with the mentor.

*Hypothesis 13:* Negative mentoring experiences will be negatively related to learning.

*Hypothesis 13a:* The negative experience of Distancing Behavior will be more strongly related to learning than will other negative experiences.

Mentoring theory also discusses the importance of relational complementarity between mentor and protégé. A complementary relationship responds to concerns of both mentor and protégé and provides an opportunity for the relationship to complete one or both parties (Kram, 1985). Similarly, social exchange theory discusses the importance of mutuality and interdependency in the development of close relationships (e.g., Huston & Burgess, 1979). Moreover, Scandura (1998) defines dysfunctional mentoring as relationships where one or both individuals' needs are not met. Because complementarity is a marker of close relationships and all of the types of negative mentoring experiences are expected to inhibit relationship development, we expected the following:

*Hypothesis 14:* Negative mentoring experiences will be negatively related to relational complementarity.

*Discriminant validity.* Demonstrating the distinctiveness of a construct can also provide evidence of construct validity (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). One approach is to illustrate that negative mentoring does not simply reflect a workplace marked by high stress or unsatisfying social relationships; in other words, that there is not multicollinearity between negative mentoring and these constructs. This will help demonstrate that negative mentoring is a unique construct tapping the dyadic relationship between a mentor and protégé. Another approach is to demonstrate that negative mentoring is distinct from positive mentoring and has unique explanatory power for understanding protégé outcomes. This is important in order to document that negative mentoring is not just the absence of positive mentoring. This led to a final set of hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 15:* Negative mentoring will be distinct from general workplace stress.

*Hypothesis 16:* Negative mentoring will be distinct from dissatisfying social relationships at work.

*Hypothesis 17:* Negative mentoring will be distinct from positive mentoring.

*Hypothesis 18:* Negative mentoring will be a unique predictor of protégé outcomes.

*Study 1 Method**Instrument Development*

Eby et al.'s (2000) empirical taxonomy, along with theoretical work on dysfunctional mentoring (e.g., Scandura, 1998), was used to generate an initial set of items. In using a deductive approach, it was necessary to develop a theoretical definition of the construct of interest and use this to guide item writing (Hinkin, 1998). Eby et al.'s (2000) definition of negative mentoring experiences was used to guide item writing, "specific incidents that occur between mentors and protégés, mentors' characteristic manner of interacting with protégés, or mentors' characteristics that limit their ability to effectively provide guidance to protégés" (p. 9).

*Procedure for item generation.* We obtained access to the original transcriptions from Eby et al.'s study and used these narrative accounts to generate items. Thus, the items were based on actual experiences as reported by a diverse sample of 84 protégés (cf. Eby et al., 2000). Items were independently generated by two subject matter experts (a professor and advanced doctoral student with experience in the area of mentoring). The items were compared and redundant items were deleted, leaving a final pool of 52 items.

Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) analysis of variance approach was used to establish content validity. Participants rated how well each item fit into each of the five metathemes of negative experiences (Mismatch Within the Dyad, Distancing Behavior, Manipulative Behavior, Lack of Mentor Expertise, General Dysfunctionality) using a five-point scale (1 = *none*, or hardly at all to 5 = *completely*). Following this rating process, fifty-two separate analyses of variance were conducted, one for each item. For items that were statistically significant, Duncan's Multiple Range Test was utilized to ensure that the item had a significantly higher mean rating in the category for which it was developed than in the other four categories. Items that were not appropriately differentiated were removed. Because this task involved judgments of item content in relation to the a priori categories of negative experiences, the only requirement is that subjects have the intellectual ability to provide ratings (Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, & Lankau, 1993) and not that they have first-hand experience as a protégé with negative mentoring. As such, college students are appropriate for this task (Schriesheim et al., 1993). Participants were 133 undergraduate students from an introductory psychology course who were trained on the task instructions and provided with detailed definitions for each of the five categories of negative experiences prior to making ratings.

### *Study 1 Results*

#### *Content-Related Validity*

All nine items written for the Mismatch Within the Dyad category were correctly and significantly differentiated; as such, none of these items were removed. For the items designed to tap Distancing Behavior, two of the nine items were not statistically significant and were subsequently deleted. Likewise, 8 of the 16 items designed to measure Manipulative Behavior were removed and three of the nine items written to measure Lack of Mentor Expertise were discarded. One of the nine items from the category General Dysfunctionality was deleted. In all, 14 items were removed, resulting in a 38-item measure of negative mentoring experiences.

The items retained were then compared to Eby et al.'s (2000) taxonomy to ensure that each type of negative experience was represented by at least two items in the revised measure. Two of the metathemes (Manipulative Behavior and Lack of Mentor Expertise) did not have all of their respective themes or subthemes represented. Therefore, the items originally designed to capture these themes or subthemes were revised. This resulted in three revised items for the category of Manipulative Behavior and one item for the category of Lack of Mentor Expertise. These revised items were added to those retained by the ANOVA procedure, resulting in a total of 42-item measure. This measure appears in Appendix A.

### *Study 2 Method*

#### *Participants and Procedure*

A survey was sent to 2,250 alumni of a large southeastern university who graduated in 1995. Surveys were sent to participants' home addresses along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return completed surveys. Following Dillman's (2000) suggestion, both a prenotification postcard and a follow-up postcard were sent to each participant. Four hundred and sixty-six completed surveys were returned and an additional 201 surveys were returned as undeliverable. We were not able to target employed graduates yet our survey was only applicable to these individuals. Thus, our response rate of 23% is a conservative estimate.

To identify those with experience as a protégé, the following question was asked, "One type of work relationship is a mentoring relationship. A mentor is generally defined as a higher-ranking, influential individual in your work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and is committed to providing upward mobility and support in your career. A mentor may or may not be in your organization, and s/he may or

may not be your immediate supervisor. Have you ever had a mentor?" (adapted from Ragins et al., 2000). Two hundred and thirty-nine respondents had experience as a protégé and only these respondents were used in the subsequent data analyses.

The average age of protégés was 31.0 years ( $SD = 5.0$ ), 44% were male, and 97% were Caucasian. Sixty-seven percent reported having a bachelor's degree, 26% reported a masters degree, and 7% reported a doctorate or equivalent. Respondents had worked in their job an average of 3.4 years ( $SD = 2.4$ ) and for their organization an average of 4.9 years ( $SD = 5.2$ ). There was substantial variability in reported salaries with the average being \$67,272 ( $SD = \$74,651$ ). Respondents represented a wide range of job types (e.g., sales, executive/managerial, clerical/administrative) and were employed in a variety of industries (e.g., manufacturing, retail trade, service). Regarding characteristics of the mentoring relationships, 63% ( $n = 148$ ) were currently ongoing whereas 37% ( $n = 87$ ) reported on a previous mentoring relationship (data were missing for 4 subjects). The majority of protégés, 71% ( $n = 164$ ), reported being in an informal mentoring relationship and the remaining 66 (29%) were in formal mentorships (missing data  $n = 9$ ). Of those currently in a mentorship, 77% indicated they were informal. Among those reporting on a previous relationship, 61% were informal. In addition, most protégés indicated that their mentor worked within the same organization (88%) and reported that their mentorship had lasted an average of 25.3 months ( $SD = 21.7$ ). The mentor's average age was 43.7 years and slightly over half were men (60%). Protégés' also reported that, on average, 1.4 levels separated themselves from their mentor.

*Assessment of nonresponse bias.* Characteristics of the total sample sent surveys were compared to those who returned completed surveys. Study participants were highly similar to the total sample in terms of gender (respondents 56% female; total sample 52% female), age (respondents 35% 27–29 years old and 58% 30–39 years old; total sample 37% 27–29 years old and 59% 30–39 years old), and race (respondents 97% Caucasian; total sample 93% Caucasian). We also compared how much career and psychosocial support subjects reported to existing research to see if our subjects were more likely to be in less effective relationships. The average amount of career and psychosocial support reported by respondents was consistent with previous research using similar measures (e.g., Fagenson, 1992; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Respondents with and without mentors were also compared and found to be highly similar in terms of gender (56% female without mentors), race (94% Caucasian without mentors), and age (without mentors, 36% 27–29 years old and 59% 30–39 years old). These comparisons suggest that nonresponse bias is not likely to be a concern.

### Measures

*Negative mentoring experiences* were measured using the 42-item measure developed in Study 1. Participants were asked to think about their current or most recent mentor and respond to each question using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. *Phase of the mentoring relationship* was determined by asking participants to read brief descriptions of each of the four phases of a mentoring relationship [initiation (4%,  $n = 9$ ), cultivation (25%,  $n = 55$ ), separation (11%,  $n = 24$ ), redefinition (60%,  $n = 135$ ; data were missing for  $n = 16$  cases) and indicate which phase described their relationship (adapted from Chao, 1997, see Appendix B). For relationship initiation, participants were asked to indicate if their relationship was formally or informally initiated using the measure developed by Ragins and Cotton (1999). *Social exchange perceptions* were measured with a 4-item measure (e.g., "The benefits of the mentoring relationship outweigh the costs,"  $\alpha = .71$ ). *Intentions to leave the relationship* were measured by three items (e.g., "I intend to exit this mentoring relationship in the near future,"  $\alpha = .87$ ) based on existing measures of turnover intentions and answered only by the 148 protégés currently in a mentoring relationship. A modified 5-item version of Quinn and Shepard's (1974) measure of *depressed mood* was used to assess stress and anxiety reactions (e.g., "I often feel downhearted or blue,"  $\alpha = .73$ ). *Psychological job withdrawal* was assessed using seven items from Lehman and Simpson's (1992) measure (e.g., "I think of being absent from work,"  $\alpha = .74$ ).

Career-related support and psychosocial support were assessed using Ragins and McFarlin's (1990) measure of mentor functions, which includes the following career-related mentoring scales: sponsor, coaching, protection, challenge, and exposure. These 15 items were averaged to represent *overall career-related support* ( $\alpha = .74$ ). Likewise, the 15 psychosocial items representing friendship, acceptance and confirmation, social, role modeling, and counseling were averaged to represent *overall psychosocial support* ( $\alpha = .92$ ). An exploratory factor analysis of this measure supported a two-dimensional conceptualization of career-related and psychosocial mentoring. Allen and Eby's (2003) 5-item scale was used to assess protégé learning (e.g., "I am learning a lot from my mentor,"  $\alpha = .84$ ). *Relational complementarity* was measured with 5-items developed for the present study, based on the work of Kram (1985; e.g., "This mentoring relationship responds to both my needs and my mentor's needs,"  $\alpha = .84$ ). Two items were developed to assess *general workplace stress* (e.g., "I experience a lot of stress at work,"  $\alpha = .91$ ). *Satisfaction with social relationships at work* was

measured by Quinn and Staines (1979) 3-item measure (e.g., "The people I work with are friendly,"  $\alpha = .79$ ).

### *Study 2 Results*

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the dimensionality of the new measure. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Mallard & Lance, 1998; Mathieu & Farr, 1991), we used a partial disaggregation approach where item composites (parcels) were created for each of the five a priori dimensions of negative mentoring (Mismatch Within the Dyad, Distancing Behavior, Lack of Mentor Expertise, Manipulative Behavior, General Dysfunctionality) by summing to create a single indicators (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994). Parcels consisting of three items were created for each scale and it was specified that parcels loaded on their appropriate latent factor. Randomly assigned parcels were used because they yield comparable fit to more complex methods (Landis, Beal & Tesluk, 2000). The covariance matrix was used as input and the parameters were obtained using maximum likelihood estimation as suggested by Chou and Bentler (1995).

Because there is no single agreed upon indicator of fit, multiple indicators were examined. The a priori measurement model fit the data well. Although the chi-square was significant ( $\chi^2(80) = 205.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ) the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were higher than the recommended .95 by Hu and Bentler (1999; NNFI = .98, CFI = .98). The root mean square error of approximation also indicated good fit (RMSEA = .08), being just slightly higher than the recommended value of .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Another indicator of fit is parameter estimates that are within acceptable range (Lance & Vandenberg, 2002). All parameter estimates met this criterion (i.e., no negative variances were obtained, no standardized factor loadings or factor correlations exceeded |1.0|) and the  $t$ -values associated with all item composites were significant. Moreover, standardized factor loadings were strong (range = .77 to .96).<sup>1</sup> We also

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<sup>1</sup>A confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted using individual items as manifest indicators. Although this total disaggregation model provides the most detailed level of analysis, it introduces higher levels of random error and due to the greater number of parameters estimated and typically yields poorer fit (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994). We found this to be the case in the present study ( $\chi^2(809) = 2448.54$ ,  $p < .01$ , NNFI = .95, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .09) and, because our item to factor ratio exceeded the recommended 5:1 (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994), item composites were used to provide an overall test of model fit (Landis et al., 2000). However, the total disaggregation model is informative because it provides data on item level functioning. All items had significant  $t$ -values on their a priori latent factor and the standardized factor loadings were large (.55 - .92). This provides additional construct validity support for the measure (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

TABLE 1

*Negative Mentoring Experience by Mentoring Phase and Relationship Initiation*

Negative experience	Mentoring phase <sup>a</sup>				Relationship initiation	
	Initiation	Cultivation	Separation	Redefinition	Formal	Informal
Mismatch Within Dyad	2.85	2.81	3.25	2.84	2.94	2.88
Distancing Behavior	2.07	1.85	2.30	1.93	2.13	1.90
Lack of Mentor Expertise	1.51	1.50	1.98	1.66	1.78	1.59

Notes: Higher means indicate greater negative experiences.

<sup>a</sup>Means are adjusted for the covariate of relationship initiation.

examined whether an alternative 1-factor model fit the data better than the a priori 5-factor model. The alternative model fit the data significantly worse than the a priori model ( $\Delta\chi^2(10) = 986.97, p < .01$ ) providing additional construct validity support for the measure.<sup>2</sup>

Items on each of the five factors were averaged to create scales. A reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha indicated that all reliability estimates were above the recommended cutoff of .70: Mismatch Within the Dyad (.89), Distancing Behavior (.89), Manipulative Behavior (.94), Lack of Mentor Expertise (.87), and General Dysfunctionality (.90).

#### *Group Differences as Predicted by Theory*

Analysis of variance was used to test Hypotheses 1–3 related to mentoring phase. The full sample of protégés was used in these analyses because mentoring phases range from initiation to redefinition. In these analyses we controlled for type of mentor (formal, informal) because formal relationships tend to be of shorter duration than informal ones (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Among those currently in a mentoring relationship, the breakdown by mentor phase was as follows: redefinition ( $n = 7$ ), cultivation ( $n = 44$ ), separation ( $n = 14$ ), redefinition ( $n = 79$ ). Hypothesis 1 was not supported; no significant differences were found across mentoring phase for Mismatch Within the Dyad ( $F(3,217) = 1.99, p = .12$ ). Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Mentor Distancing Behavior varied significantly by mentoring phase ( $F(3,216) = 2.76, p < .05$ ) and, as illustrated in Table 1, this negative experience was significantly higher in the separation phase compared to the cultivation and redefinition phase. No difference was found between those in the initiation and separation phases. Hypothesis 3 was fully supported because Lack of Mentor Ex-

<sup>2</sup>Consistent results were found comparing the a priori 5-factor measurement model and the alternative 1-factor measurement model using a total disaggregation strategy. A full report of these analyses is available from the first author.

expertise varied by mentoring phase ( $F(3,217) = 3.86, p < .05$ ) and this experience was significantly higher in the separation phase compared to all other phases (see Table 1).

Analysis of variance was also used to compare protégés in formally arranged and informally initiated mentoring relationships with respect to Mismatch Within the Dyad (Hypothesis 4), Distancing Behavior (Hypothesis 5), and Lack of Mentor Expertise (Hypothesis 6). Two of three hypotheses were supported. Although no significant differences were found for Mismatch Within the Dyad ( $F(1,228) = .28, p = .60$ ) significant main effects were found for Distancing Behavior ( $F(1,227) = 5.25, p < .05$ ) and Lack of Mentor Expertise ( $F(1,228) = 4.47, p < .05$ ). Planned comparisons indicated that both types of negative experiences were higher in formal as opposed to informal mentoring relationships (see Table 1).

### *Criterion-Related Validity*

Correlations among study variables appear in Table 2. As noted earlier, questions related to intentions to leave the relationship were answered only by protégés currently in a mentoring relationship. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was tested with a subsample of the data. As expected, negative mentoring was negatively related to social exchange perceptions (Hypothesis 7), as well as positively related to intentions to leave the relationship (Hypothesis 8) and psychological withdrawal (Hypothesis 10). Partial support was found for Hypothesis 9 in that all negative experiences except Distancing Behavior were positively related to psychological job withdrawal.

### *Convergent Validity*

Convergent validity evidence is also shown in Table 2. In support of Hypotheses 11 and 12, all five categories of negative mentoring experiences were significantly (negatively) related to career-related and psychosocial support. Consistent with Hypothesis 13, as protégés' negative mentoring experiences increased, their learning decreased. Hypothesis 14 was also supported; relational complementarity was negatively related to all five aspects of negative mentoring.

To test Hypotheses 11a, 12a, and 13a, the significance of the difference between correlations was tested using a one-tailed *t*-test for dependent samples (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Full support was found for Hypotheses 11a. The correlation between Distancing Behavior and career-related support was significantly larger than the correlations between career-related support and Mismatch Within the Dyad ( $t(236) = -2.59$ ,

TABLE 2  
Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Mismatch Within Dyad																
2. Distancing Behavior	<u>.52</u>															
3. Manipulative Behavior	<u>.45</u>	<u>.75</u>														
4. Lack of Mentor Expertise	<u>.42</u>	<u>.66</u>	<u>.76</u>													
5. General Dysfunctionality	<u>.40</u>	<u>.55</u>	<u>.74</u>	<u>.70</u>												
6. Career-related support	<u>-.30</u>	<u>-.45</u>	<u>-.36</u>	<u>-.30</u>	<u>-.31</u>											
7. Psychosocial support	<u>-.50</u>	<u>-.64</u>	<u>-.52</u>	<u>-.49</u>	<u>-.42</u>	<u>.53</u>										
8. Relationship initiation	<u>-.03</u>	<u>-.15</u>	<u>-.10</u>	<u>-.14</u>	<u>-.09</u>	<u>.30</u>	<u>.26</u>									
9. Learning	<u>-.30</u>	<u>-.54</u>	<u>-.43</u>	<u>-.41</u>	<u>-.36</u>	<u>.65</u>	<u>.62</u>	<u>.22</u>								
10. Complementarity	<u>-.41</u>	<u>-.54</u>	<u>-.46</u>	<u>-.41</u>	<u>-.43</u>	<u>.56</u>	<u>.65</u>	<u>.22</u>	<u>.76</u>							
11. General workplace stress	<u>-.17</u>	<u>.09</u>	<u>.17</u>	<u>.13</u>	<u>.14</u>	<u>-.05</u>	<u>-.14</u>	<u>-.15</u>	<u>-.10</u>	<u>-.13</u>						
12. Sat. with social relations	<u>-.44</u>	<u>-.63</u>	<u>-.62</u>	<u>-.58</u>	<u>-.54</u>	<u>.52</u>	<u>.67</u>	<u>-.03</u>	<u>.36</u>	<u>.36</u>	<u>-.15</u>					
13. Social exchange	<u>-.46</u>	<u>.53</u>	<u>.58</u>	<u>.52</u>	<u>.54</u>	<u>-.27</u>	<u>-.47</u>	<u>.00</u>	<u>.67</u>	<u>.68</u>	<u>-.18</u>	<u>.36</u>				
14. Intentions to leave rel.	<u>.21</u>	<u>.20</u>	<u>.30</u>	<u>.22</u>	<u>.29</u>	<u>-.12</u>	<u>-.17</u>	<u>-.08</u>	<u>-.12</u>	<u>-.18</u>	<u>.18</u>	<u>-.31</u>	<u>-.53</u>			
15. Depressed mood	<u>.16</u>	<u>.05</u>	<u>.19</u>	<u>.15</u>	<u>.23</u>	<u>.00</u>	<u>-.06</u>	<u>.08</u>	<u>-.07</u>	<u>-.11</u>	<u>.05</u>	<u>-.15</u>	<u>-.19</u>	<u>.37</u>		
16. Psychological withdrawal	<u>.29</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>3.6</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>3.9</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>.50</u>	<u>2.4</u>
M	<u>.80</u>	<u>.68</u>	<u>.65</u>	<u>.59</u>	<u>.63</u>	<u>.63</u>	<u>.62</u>	<u>.45</u>	<u>.64</u>	<u>.58</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>.62</u>	<u>.53</u>	<u>.67</u>	<u>.70</u>	<u>.60</u>
SD																

Notes: *N* ranges from 228–239 for all variables except intentions to leave relationship, which was answered only by those currently in a mentorship (*n* range 150–153). Relationship initiation coded 1 = formal, 2 = informal. Ranges for negative mentoring scales: mismatch, 1.0–4.8; distancing, 1.0–4.1; manipulative, 1.0–4.3; lack of expertise, 1.0–4.0. Underline indicates significance at the *p* < .05 level.

$p < .01$ ), Manipulative Behavior ( $t(236) = -2.37, p < .01$ ), Lack of Mentor Expertise ( $t(236) = -3.06, p < .01$ ), and General Dysfunctionality ( $t(236) = -2.48, p < .01$ ). Weak support was found for Hypothesis 12a. The correlation between Manipulative Behavior and psychosocial mentoring was significantly higher than the correlation between General Dysfunctionality and psychosocial mentoring ( $t(236) = -2.45, p < .01$ ), but significant differences were not found for Mismatch Within the Dyad ( $t(236) = -.54, p > .05$ ) or Lack of Mentor Expertise ( $t(236) = -.47, p > .05$ ). Further, contrary to prediction, we found that Manipulative Behavior was less highly correlated with psychosocial support than was Distancing Behavior ( $t(236) = 3.33, p < .001$ ). Finally, support was found for the prediction that Distancing Behavior would be most highly related to protégé learning (Hypothesis 13a). The correlation between Distancing Behavior and learning was significantly stronger than the correlation between learning and Mismatch Within the Dyad ( $t(236) = -4.32, p < .001$ ), Manipulative Behavior ( $t(236) = -2.76, p < .01$ ), Lack of Mentor Expertise ( $t(236) = -2.38, p < .01$ ), and General Dysfunctionality ( $t(236) = -3.34, p < .001$ ). Taken with the previously reported findings, this provides additional convergent validity evidence for the new measure.

### *Discriminant Validity*

The correlations in Table 2 also provide evidence of discriminant validity. In support of Hypothesis 15, the magnitude of the correlations between the five negative experiences and overall workplace stress are small (ranging from  $r = .09$  to  $r = .17$ ; Cohen, 1988) and shared variance ranges from 1% to 3%. Support was also found for Hypothesis 16 because the correlations between the five negative experiences and satisfaction with social relationships at work are small (i.e.,  $r = -.17$  for Mismatch Within the Dyad) to moderate (e.g.,  $r = -.36$  for Lack of Mentor Expertise; Cohen, 1988). Moreover, shared variance between the five negative experiences and satisfaction with social relationships ranges from only 3% to 13%. This indicates that negative mentoring experiences are tapping something unique from dissatisfying social relationships at work or a generally stressful work environment.

Hypothesis 17 proposed that negative mentoring would be distinct from positive mentoring. To test this prediction, a second-order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Positive mentoring and negative mentoring were represented as two higher-order latent constructs and first-order factors were the specific dimensions of positive (i.e., career-related support, psychosocial support) and negative (i.e., Mismatch Within the Dyad, Distancing Behavior, Manipulative Behavior,

Lack of Mentor Expertise, General Dysfunctionality) mentoring. These first-order factors were indicated by manifest indicators of the respective first-order factors. Consistent with the measurement model discussed earlier, the manifest indicators of negative mentoring were created using a partial disaggregation strategy (Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994; Lance & Vandenberg, 2002) whereby three item parcels were created for each dimension of negative mentoring. For positive mentoring, individual items were used to represent the 10 first-order factors of positive mentoring because each dimension (exposure, sponsor, coach, challenge, protection, friendship, acceptance, role modeling, counseling, social) is measured by three items. The use of partial disaggregation for negative mentoring and total disaggregation for positive mentoring does not violate any statistical assumptions or pose problems for model estimation (C. Lance, personal communication, July 24, 2003).

The model provided a good fit to the data. Although the chi-square was significant ( $\chi^2(929) = 2038.43, p < .01$ ), the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were higher than the recommended .95 by Hu and Bentler (1999; NNFI = .96, CFI = .96). In addition, the root mean square error of approximation indicated good fit (RMSEA = .08), as it was just slightly higher than the recommended value of .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Also suggesting good model fit, no negative variances were obtained and no standardized factor loadings or factor correlations were over |1.0| (Lance & Vandenberg, 2002). Table 3 shows the estimated factor loadings for the first-order factors on the second-order factors of positive and negative mentoring, respectively. The mean loading in Table 3 is .80 for negative mentoring and .67 for positive mentoring, which indicates that 64% and 45% of the variance in the first-order factors are attributable to the second-order factors. As additional support for discriminant validity, we compared the fit of the proposed second-order model to an alternative model with one general mentoring factor as the higher-order latent construct and indicated by the dimensions of positive and negative mentoring noted above. This model fit the data significantly worse than the proposed model with both positive and negative higher order factors ( $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 217.01, p < .001$ ).<sup>3</sup> Taken together, this provides strong support for Hypothesis 17.

Another indication of discriminant validity involves demonstrating that negative mentoring adds unique variance to the prediction of protégé perceptions and outcomes over and above positive mentoring (Hypothesis 18). To test this prediction, hierarchical regression was used where positive mentoring was entered as a set in Step 1 and then negative

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<sup>3</sup>Similar results were found comparing the second-order, 2-factor model (positive and negative mentoring) with the alternative second-order, 1-factor (overall mentoring) using a total disaggregation strategy.

TABLE 3  
*Standardized Estimates of Relations of First-Order  
 Latent Variables on Second-Order Latent Variables*

First-order factors	Second-order latent variables	
	Negative mentoring	Positive mentoring
Mismatch Within the Dyad	.52	
Distancing Behavior	.85	
Manipulative Behavior	.96	
Lack of Expertise	.85	
General Dysfunctionality	.82	
Sponsorship		.70
Coaching		.79
Protection		.59
Challenging assignments		.42
Exposure and visibility		.64
Friendship		.84
Social		.42
Role model		.84
Counseling		.91
Acceptance and confirmation		.58

TABLE 4  
*Discriminant Validity Evidence for Social Exchange and Intentions  
 to Leave Relationship*

Social exchange perceptions			Intentions to leave relationship		
Variable	B	$\beta$	Variable	B	$\beta$
Step 1			Step 1		
Career mentoring	.19	.23**	Career mentoring	-.07	-.06
Psychosocial mentoring	.47	.55**	Psychosocial mentoring	-.47	-.45**
$F(2,235) = 108.71***$			$F(2,151) = 22.3**$		
$R^2 = .48$			$R^2 = .23$		
Step 2			Step 2		
Mismatch	-.01	-.02	Mismatch	-.14	.17**
Distancing	-.06	-.08	Distancing	.09	.09
Manipulation	-.10	-.12	Manipulation	.18	.16
Lack of Expertise	-.12	-.14*	Lack of Expertise	.07	.06
General Dysfunctionality	-.09	-.11	General Dysfunctionality	.29	.25**
$\Delta F(7,233) = 11.93**$			$\Delta F(7,51) = 11.23**$		
$\Delta R^2 = .11$			$\Delta R^2 = .22$		
Total $R^2 = .59$			Total $R^2 = .45$		

Note: Beta weights are from each step of the hierarchical sequence.

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (one-tailed).

mentoring experiences were entered as a set in Step 2. In support of Hypothesis 18, the increment in  $R^2$  for Step 2 is significant for all dependent variables (see Tables 4–5). Specifically, negative mentoring accounted for an additional 11%, 22%, 8%, and 8% of the variance in so-

TABLE 5  
*Discriminant Validity Evidence for Depressed Mood  
 and Psychological Job Withdrawal*

Depressed mood			Psychological job withdrawal		
Variable	B	$\beta$	Variable	B	$\beta$
Step 1			Step 1		
Career mentoring	-.04	-.04	Career mentoring	.04	.04
Psychosocial mentoring	-.18	-.16**	Psychosocial mentoring	-.08	-.08
$F(2,235) = 3.71^*$			$F(2,151) = .51$		
$R^2 = .03$			$R^2 = .00$		
Step 2			Step 2		
Mismatch	.09	.10	Mismatch	.10	.13
Distancing	-.08	-.08	Distancing	-.19	-.21*
Manipulation	.26	.24*	Manipulation	.17	.18
Lack of Expertise	-.10	-.08	Lack of Expertise	-.03	-.03
General Dysfunctionality	.19	-.17*	General Dysfunctionality	.19	.20*
$\Delta F(7,233) = 4.04^{**}$			$\Delta F(2,232) = 3.84^{**}$		
$\Delta R^2 = .08$			$\Delta R^2 = .08$		
Total $R^2 = .11$			Total $R^2 = .08$		

Note: Beta weights are from each step of the hierarchical sequence.

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  (one-tailed).

cial exchange predictions, intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and psychological job withdrawal, respectively. Further, the significant beta weights associated with negative mentoring were in the expected direction. Two exceptions are General Dysfunctionality predicting social exchange perceptions (Table 4) and Distancing Behavior predicting job withdrawal (Table 5). In both cases, the sign either changes direction compared to the zero-order correlation (for both dysfunctionality and distancing) or the beta weight is greater than the zero-order correlation (distancing). This is evidence of suppression and the results should be interpreted cautiously (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to further develop the construct of negative mentoring by creating a reliable and valid measure. Of particular interest was placing the construct of negative mentoring in the broader theoretical context of mentoring by developing and empirically establishing a nomological network of related variables. Results of this study strongly support the content, construct, and criterion-related validity of this construct. Taken together, these findings help us understand the ways in which negative experiences manifest in mentoring relationships, the conditions under which such experiences may be more likely

to occur, the distinctiveness of positive and negative mentoring experiences, and how negative experiences may influence protégé perceptions and outcomes.

### *Types of Negative Mentoring Experiences*

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis strongly supported Eby et al.'s (2000) taxonomy of five broad categories of negative mentoring experiences. Also consistent with previous research, we found that the most commonly reported negative experiences were Mismatch Within the Dyad followed by Distancing Behavior (see scale means in Table 2). Examining the pattern of correlations among these five types of experiences indicates that the strongest relationships were between Manipulative Behavior and Distancing Behavior ( $r = .75$ ), Lack of Expertise and Manipulative Behavior ( $r = .76$ ), and General Dysfunctionality and Manipulative Behavior ( $r = .74$ ). Interpreted in conjunction with the scale means in Table 2, it seems as if protégés not reporting problems with mentor manipulation also tend not to regard their mentors as lacking interest in them, not lacking in expertise, and not having attitudinal or personal problems. Interestingly, this positive mentor profile is consistent with the traits and characteristics previously suggested as important for mentors (Allen & Poteet, 1999). The results of the hierarchical regression analyses indicate that, taken as a set, negative experiences predict a significant and meaningful amount of variance in protégé perceptions and outcomes. Further, the beta weights associated with the negative experiences indicate that each makes a unique contribution to the prediction of one or more dependent variables. This provides researchers with insight into which negative experiences are likely to provide unique information to the prediction of important protégé outcomes.

### *Nomological Validation*

Consistent with Kram's (1985) discussion of mentoring as a process that changes over time, we found that Distancing Behavior and Lack of Expertise were more commonly reported in the separation phase. This phase is characterized by significant changes in the role relationship and emotional tie between mentor and protégé (Kram, 1985). It is also the phase where one or both members can feel as though the protégé has outgrown the relationship (Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Further, the protégé may feel as if the learning potential of the relationship has diminished and desire more autonomy (Kram, 1985). We also found some support for the prediction that Distancing Behavior and Lack of Mentor Expertise were more common in formally arranged rather than

informally initiated dyads. Mentoring theory notes that one of the obstacles to successful mentoring is that some individuals do not have the interpersonal skills and attitudes necessary to develop or sustain developmental relationships (Kram, 1985). Further, Kram (1985) cautions that, although formal mentoring programs can be a means to facilitate developmental relationships, they have some disadvantages. For example, the presence of a formal mentoring program may lead individuals to feel coerced into participating, which can lead to confusion about role expectations (Kram, 1985) or decreased motivation to perform the role (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Formal programs also assume that individuals can learn the skills necessary to be effective mentors, which may not be the case.

Interestingly, although the trend is in the expected direction, mentor-protégé mismatches were not related to either mentor phase or relationship initiation. This suggests that mismatches may be similarly salient across relationship phases. It may also reflect a lack of statistical power because only 4% of the relationships were in the initiation phase. Finally, the null finding for relationship initiation may reflect substantial variation in how matching is accomplished in formal programs. A measure of the formal-informal distinction that captures specific characteristics of the matching process (e.g., protégé input, meeting before matching) may be useful in future research.

The findings related to criterion-related and convergent validity provide additional insight into negative mentoring. For instance, negative experiences are related to diminished relational quality (i.e., significant negative correlations with social exchange perceptions and intentions to leave the relationship). This is consistent with theorizing that negative events and experiences can leave one or both members feeling as though the costs of the relationship exceed the benefits and be a precursor to relationship termination (Duck, 1984; Sprecher, 1992). Our findings also illustrate that negative experiences with mentors are associated with psychological reactions such as depressed mood and job withdrawal. Finally, negative experiences (and particularly Distancing Behavior) were associated with less protégé learning and weaker perceptions of relational complementarity. Learning is not possible without sustained interaction with the mentor, and relational closeness is essential to the development of complementarity (Kram, 1985). It may be difficult to develop closeness without the opportunity to interact with a mentor or if the mentor appears disengaged in the relationship. An important area for future research is to identify the "tipping points" that fundamentally change an individual's feeling about his or her mentoring relationship. Duck's (1982, 1984) model of relationship decline may be useful here because it proposes that decline is a process rather than an

event. He uses the analogy of a wave whereby specific negative events can take a relationship closer and closer to dissolution. However, he also notes that the process is not necessarily linear; individuals may put up with a lot of relational problems before reaching their breaking point and calling it quits (Duck, 1992).

Helping to place negative mentoring in the context of existing research, we found that negative mentoring is negatively related to both career-related and psychosocial support and that Distancing Behavior demonstrates the strongest correlation with career-related mentoring and learning. It is also noteworthy that although positive and negative mentoring are related, it is not simply the lack of mentoring that is responsible for protégés' report of mentoring problems. The range of correlations between negative and positive mentoring ( $r = -.30$  to  $-.64$ ) indicates that although these constructs are related, they share only a moderate amount of variance (9%-41%). In addition, both the higher-order confirmatory factor analysis and regression results provide empirical evidence that positive and negative mentoring are unique constructs. Finally, the small to moderate correlations between negative mentoring and both overall workplace stress and satisfaction with social relationships at work supports the idea that such experiences reflect a unique dyadic relationship between two individuals.

### *Implications for Mentoring Theory*

Developing and testing predictions about the pattern of relationship between negative mentoring experiences and theoretically related constructs helps place negative mentoring in the broader theoretical context of organizational mentoring and should help in efforts to develop more comprehensive theoretical models of the mentoring process. Our findings confirm Kram (1985) and others' (e.g., Levinger, 1979; Ragins et al., 2000; Scandura, 1998) theorizing that mentorships can be marked by both positive and negative experiences. Our study also raises some interesting questions about how mentoring is typically defined in the literature, as an intense relationship where the mentor provides career and personal guidance. Similar to Eby et al. (2000), we found that some protégés describing themselves as having a mentor reported experiencing relational problems such as neglect and manipulation. Although it initially seems counterintuitive that someone who provides career and personal assistance would be perceived as neglectful or manipulative, it is important to remember that relationships are not always positive experiences (Duck, 1994). Lovers can feel manipulated by their partner, friends fight, and people in relationships sometimes feel neglected. Mentoring appears to be similar in this regard. Several decades ago,

Kram (1985) warned against oversimplifying mentoring as a unilaterally positive experience for protégés. However, until recently, mentoring scholars have focused almost exclusively on the benefits of mentoring and not examined the potential costs. Thus, we strongly encourage mentoring researchers to consider both the positive and negative experiences that protégés may encounter with mentors in order to more fully understand these complex developmental relationships.

We also encourage future research to examine how negative experiences relate to protégé perceptions and outcomes not examined in this study. It seems particularly important to think about how specific negative experiences relate to specific outcomes given the wide range of negative experiences examined in our study. For example, abusive supervision, petty tyranny, workplace bullying, and other forms of abusive workplace behavior have been linked to lower job satisfaction (Keashly, Trott, & MacLean, 1994), less commitment to the organization (Tepper, 2000), greater voluntary turnover (Keashly et al., 1994; Tepper, 2000), requests for transfers and reassignments (Keashly et al., 1994), greater work-family conflict (Tepper, 2000), and psychological reactions such as anxiety and stress (Ashforth, 1997; Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999; Tepper, 2000). Because these forms of abusive interpersonal behavior share commonalities with Manipulative Behavior (e.g., derogation, lying), we encourage future research to examine these protégé outcomes. In contrast, it seems unlikely that mentor-protégé mismatches, which represent a more benign type of negative experience (Simon & Eby, 2003), would relate to these outcomes. Rather, the social psychology literature on close relationships predicts that the effects of Mismatches Within the Dyad will be constrained to perceptions and beliefs about the relationship such as communication ease, disclosure, and relational depth (Hinde, 1981; Huston & Burgess, 1979). Finally, it may be useful to examine how negative mentoring experiences relate to they types of outcomes examined in relation to positive mentoring. This might include protégé career outcomes (e.g., pay, promotion rate), career-related attitudes (e.g., perceived career success), or intentions to mentor others. In a post hoc analysis we examined the relationship between negative mentoring and both pay and promotion rates. No significant correlations were found for pay ( $r$  range = .01 to .10) or promotions ( $r$  range = -.05 to .10). However, additional research is needed before drawing definitive conclusions.

### *Implications for Practice*

Several practical implications emerge from this study. First, organizations should have realistic expectations about the outcomes associ-

ated with organizational mentoring. Although mentoring may lead to a variety of positive outcomes, it may also lead to negative outcomes for some protégés. Our findings also suggest that mentoring is not for everyone. Protégés perceive a variety of problems with their mentors, ranging from relationships that appear to be quite dysfunctional to those that offer the protégé little guidance or support, to those that are simply not a good fit. Thus, organizations should not force individuals to become mentors. Rather, individuals should be provided with a variety of ways to contribute to the organization, and becoming a mentor should be one option. It also seems important that mentors be trained in terms of their role responsibilities to help ensure that they have, or can learn, appropriate skill sets for being a mentor. It may also be worth discussing the natural progression of mentoring relationships, focusing on the difficulties associated with the separation phase, to help both mentor and protégé develop realistic expectations for the relationship.

#### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research*

Like all research, this study has its limitations. One limitation is that our data reflect protégés' perceptions of their mentors and mentoring relationship. Thus, we do not know the extent to which protégés' reports reflect reality or, perhaps, some attribution for why a relationship is, or was, not working. It should also be noted that around one-third of respondents provided retrospective accounts of their mentoring relationship, which raises concerns about possible recall bias. However, relational perceptions are important in their own right because they predict the future course of a relationship and influence beliefs about future relationships (Hinde, 1981). We also developed several measures for use in this study (e.g., relational complementarity, social exchange perceptions), and although these scales displayed the expected pattern of effects with negative mentoring, additional validity work is needed on these measures. A related limitation is that only certain variables were examined as correlates. This leaves many unanswered questions. For example, Allen, Poteet, and Burroughs (1997) found that mentors tend to engage in mentoring for either self-focused (instrumental) or other-focused (altruistic) reasons. The pattern of experiences depicted in Distancing Behavior and Manipulative Behavior suggest that some mentors may be using their role to lord over protégés, meet needs for dominance and authority, or delegate work to protégés on undesirable tasks. Thus, mentor motives may be important to consider in future research.

Another limitation is that data were collected only from the protégé. Obtaining data from the mentor would also provide insight into the negative experiences they may experience with protégés. As Eby and

McManus (in press) found, mentors report some unique types of negative experiences with protégés such as protégé unwillingness to learn. Thus, additional research at the dyadic level is an important next step. It is also possible that mentor and/or protégé personality characteristics such as neuroticism or negative affectivity relate to the report of negative experiences. Another possible category of correlates are contextual conditions such as the degree of top management support for mentoring.

Also related to the method of data collection is concern about possible common method bias. If such bias were operating, measures that used similarly worded items should show a pattern of stronger correlations. For example, items on the scale measuring Lack of Mentor Expertise asks about the learning potential in the relationship and a self-report measure of learning was used as convergent validity evidence. As shown in Table 2, the correlation between protégé learning and Lack of Mentor Expertise is modest ( $r = -.41$ ), and, more importantly, it is lower than the correlation with Distancing Behavior ( $r = -.54$ ). Similarly, the negative experience of Mismatch Within the Dyad focuses on differences between mentor and protégé in terms of work styles, attitudes, and personalities, which is conceptually similar to the items assessing complementarity (e.g., "my mentor and I complement each other well," "my mentor and I are in sync with each other"). However, the correlation between complementarity and Mismatch Within the Dyad is again moderate in magnitude ( $r = -.41$ ) and lower than with several other types of negative mentoring experiences (see Table 2). Further, common method bias typically manifests in inflated correlations among all variables measured using the same method. Table 2 illustrates a differential pattern of correlations among study variables (e.g., negative mentoring is related to depressed mood and psychological withdrawal whereas career-related support is not). More generally, common method bias would not account for the varied pattern of results for the relationship initiation and mentoring phase.

Notwithstanding these issues, several analyses were conducted to examine common method bias. First, we followed Podsakoff and Organ's (1986) recommendation and conducted a single-factor test. The use of this procedure is based on the logic that if common method bias exists, then either a single factor will emerge or the first unrotated factor extracted from an exploratory factor analysis containing all items from the same source will account for the majority of the variance in the data. The first factor accounted for 28% of the variance and a general factor did not emerge; twenty-four factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Taking into consideration the fact that many of the variables share meaningful variance and are expected to be correlated, this analysis provides evidence that common method bias is not likely to be major

concern. Second, we used the procedures outlined by Widaman (1985) and demonstrated by Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989) to examine method bias. This technique was chosen using the decision tree provided by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) in their recent article on ways to deal with method bias. Although the model including the measurement plus method factor fit the data better than the measurement model ( $\Delta\chi^2(77) = 335.92, p < .01$ ), the proportion of variance attributable to trait (measurement) variance was substantially higher than that associated with method variance (41% vs. 25%, respectively). This further suggests that substantive relationships, rather than simply common method bias, are likely to be responsible for the observed relationships.

Another set of limitations concerns the cross-sectional nature of this study, which does not allow for an appreciation of the sequence of events associated with negative mentoring relationships. It also precludes cause-and-effect inferences about the effect of negative experiences on protégé outcomes. For some of the outcomes studied, reverse causality seems unlikely. For instance, it is unlikely that intentions to leave a mentoring relationship or social exchange perceptions lead to negative mentoring experiences. However, it could be that protégés who are experiencing depressed mood at work or who are psychologically withdrawn display a pattern of behavior that leads them to either report more relational problems or have more difficulty managing interpersonal relationships. Likewise, our examination of mentoring phase only allows us to discuss relational problems that may characterize particular relationship phases, not make causal inferences. Longitudinal research is essential in future efforts to tease apart cause and effect relationships among some of the variables studied. Also related to mentoring phase, we found that the length of the mentoring relationship was not significantly correlated with the phase of the mentoring relationship based on the narrative descriptions of the mentorship (overall  $r = -.05, p > .05$ ; formal  $r = .01, p > .05$ ; informal  $r = -.11, p > .05$ ). Moreover, there were differences in the reported length of the mentorship based on whether the relationship was formal or informal. This is not surprising given that formal relationships tend to be of shorter duration than informal ones (Ragins & Cotton, 1999), yet, it does raise important questions for future research on mentoring phases.

Finally, this study focused on main effects and did not propose interactions between negative mentoring experiences and protégé outcomes or interactions between positive and negative experiences. We conducted post hoc analyses to explore these possibilities. First, we created 10 interaction terms that represented 2-way interactions between all possible combinations of the five negative experiences (e.g., Mis-

match Within the Dyad  $\times$  Distancing, Mismatch Within the Dyad  $\times$  Manipulative). Second, we created 10 interaction terms that represented 2-way interactions between each of the five negative experiences and each of the two positive experiences (e.g., Lack of Expertise  $\times$  Career Support, Lack of Expertise  $\times$  Psychosocial Support). Then we ran 20 separate regression analyses including main effects and interaction terms for each of the following protégé outcomes: social exchange predictions, intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, psychological withdrawal. Given the large number of analyses, we adjusted our significance level to a  $p$ -value  $< .0025$  ( $p < .05/20$  comparisons). None of the interaction terms were significant.

In summary, this study is an important starting point for future research and theory—building on the positive and negative aspects of mentoring relationships. Given the prevalence of mentoring in organizations, and the myriad of problems that can arise, it is hoped that future research continues to explore this important topic so as to derive suggestions for mentors, protégés, and organizations in managing these important interpersonal relationships.

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## Appendix A

### Mismatch Within the Dyad

1. The personal values of my mentor are different from my own.
2. My mentor and I have different life priorities.
3. My mentor and I have different work habits.
4. My work strategies are different from my mentor's.
5. My mentor and I have a different understanding of effective work performance.
6. My mentor and I have different personal dispositions.
7. Comparing myself to my mentor, I would say our temperaments are different.
8. My mentor and I have dissimilar personalities.
9. My mentor and I are different from one another.

### Distancing Behavior

1. My mentor is reluctant to talk about things that are important to me.
2. My mentor seems to have "more important things to do" than to meet with me.
3. When I interact with my mentor he/she does not give me his/her full attention.
4. My mentor is more concerned about his/her own career than helping me develop in mine.
5. My mentor is preoccupied with his/her own advancement.

6. My mentor does not include me in important meetings.
7. My mentor keeps me "out of the loop" on important issues.

**Manipulative Behavior**

1. My mentor "pulls rank" on me.
2. I am intimidated by my mentor.
3. My mentor is unwilling to delegate responsibility to protégés.
4. My mentor asks me to do his/her "busy work."
5. My mentor has intentionally hindered my professional development.
6. My mentor has lied to me.
7. My mentor has undermined my performance on tasks or assignments.
8. My mentor has deliberately misled me.
9. When I am successful, my mentor takes more credit than he/she deserves.
10. My mentor takes credit for my hard work.
11. My mentor has taken credit for work that I have done.

**Lack of Mentor Expertise**

1. My mentor lacks expertise in areas that are important for the type of work he/she does.
2. I have my doubts about my mentor's job-related skills.
3. My mentor can't teach me anything I don't already know.
4. My mentor does not know much about the organization.
5. My mentor is not a high performer on the job.
6. My mentor lacks the interpersonal skills necessary to display sensitivity when appropriate.
7. My mentor does not communicate well.

**General Dysfunctionality**

1. My mentor has a bad attitude.
2. My mentor is bitter toward the organization.
3. My mentor has personal problems (e.g., drinking problem, marital problems).
4. My mentor tends to bring his/her personal problems to work.
5. My mentor approaches tasks with a negative attitude.
6. My mentor complains a lot about the organization.
7. My mentor has a pessimistic attitude.
8. My mentor allows nonbusiness related issues to interfere with his/her work.

## Appendix B

Which of the following best describes where you are in your mentoring relationship? (check only one)

- Initiation: My mentor and I are just starting a relationship. It is not clear if the relationship will evolve into a true mentorship.
- Cultivation: My mentor is directly involved in my career development.
- Separation: I am more focused on establishing my own reputation in the organization rather than being associated with my mentor.
- Redefinition: The relationship is better described as one between two colleagues rather than senior mentor/junior protégé. I've established my own reputation.