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reconceptualization of mentoring and sponsoring Earnest Friday Department of Management and International Business, College of Business

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School of Business and Industry, Florida A University, Tallahassee, Florida,

USA Keywords Mentoring, Careerdevelopment Abstract Mentoring is highly

regarded as a career-enhancing phenomenon necessary for any aspiring

executive. Several debates within the literature have led to a lack of

consistency regarding the definition of mentoring and a mentor, the

functions of a mentor, and the various types of mentoring. It appears that

much of the confusion stems from the relationship and association of

mentoring with the concept of sponsoring.

Within the majority of the literature regarding developmental relationships,

sponsoring has been posited to be a sub-function of mentoring. This paper

presents two arguments for viewing and examining mentoring and

sponsoring as distinctly different, non-mutually exclusive, and possibly concurrent phenomena, as well as offers universal definitions for both terms. This delineation is offered to aid aspiring executives in their decision making process as to whether to select a mentor, a sponsor, or both. Management Decision Vol. 42 No. 5, 2004 pp. 628-644 © Emerald Group Publishing Limited 0025-1747 DOI 10. 108/00251740410538488 Introduction Mentoring is an enduring and dynamic phenomenon, which dates back to ancient Greece when Odysseus entrusted the eponymous character, Mentor, with his son, Telemachus thousands of years ago in Homer's *Odyssey* (Friday and Friday, 2002). The term "mentoring" has surged into the literature in many disciplines (e. g. , sociology, social psychology, education, management, social work, healthcare management, etc.) over the last several decades. Mentoring emerged in the organizational literature in the late 1970s (e. g. Clawson, 1979; Collins and Scott, 1978; Kanter, 1977; Phillips, 1977; Roche, 1979; Shapiro et al. , 1978). Since that time, hundreds of books and articles (popular press, practitioner-oriented, and academic) have been published on mentoring in various organizational settings alone, not to mention other settings in which mentoring has been examined (e. g. , teaching, nursing, social work, etc.) (Kelly, 2001). Published works in the organizational literature on mentoring have been anecdotal, conceptual, and empirical; and several journals have dedicated special editions to mentoring.

By and large, these published works have highlighted the overwhelming perceived benefits (e. g. , increased mobility, promotion opportunity, and total compensation), and minimal perceived drawbacks of mentoring (Campion and Goldstein, 1983; Kelly, 2001; Scandura, 1992, 1998; Whitely

et al. , 1991, 1992). Hence, mentoring has been proclaimed as one of the key career development and advancement tools in the organizational milieu over the last decade (Simonetti et al. , 1999). In the organizational literature, Kram's (1980) work has been viewed as one of the most comprehensive treatments of the mentoring concept (Scandura, 1998).

It is implicit in Kram's (1980, 1983, 1985) works that she explored naturally occurring, informal mentoring relationships. Consequently, the functions and phases of mentoring that she inducted pertain primarily to informal mentoring. Based on her findings, Kram (1980) suggested that mentors provide career support (sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments) and psychosocial support (role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship) to their proteges. She also suggested that mentorships (mentoring relationships) move through four phases: (1) initiation (the mentor and protege admire, respect, and trust one another); (2) cultivation (the protege develops competence and confidence from the career and psychosocial support provided by the mentor); (3) separation (the paternalistic relationship between the mentor and protege changes, which may lead to non-positive affective experiences for both, because the protege has become more independent and empowered); and (4) redefinition (the mentor and protege's relationship is reshaped to meet more collegial needs) (Kram, 1983).

A canvassing of published works examining organizational mentoring suggests that as far back as the early 1980s (e. g. , Champion and Goldbach, 1983; Hunt and Michael, 1983) and as recent as the early 2000s (e. g. ,

Higgins and Kram, 2001; Kelly, 2001) a lack of consensus on the definitions of mentoring and mentor has been articulated in the literature (Chao, 1998; Kelly, 2001; Lawson, 1996; Minter and Thomas, 2000; Noe, 1988a, 1988b). Hence, research on organizational mentoring has been criticized for not being conceptually well grounded (Gibb, 1994). An examination of over 200 practitioner and academic journal articles in the field of management alone revealed that most definitions in the literature of mentoring, stated or implied, include sponsor or sponsoring as inherent in mentoring (e. g. , Campion and Golds, 1983; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988a, 1988b; Turban and Dougherty, 1994; Whitely et al. , 1991), while some do not (e. g. , Covalski et al. , 1998; Hunt and Michael, 1983). Similarly, most definitions of mentor (stated or implied) within the literature include sponsor or sponsoring in the definition (e. g. , Higgins and Kram, 2001; Scandura, 1998; Whitely et al. , 1991), while some do not (e. g. Hunt and Michael, 1983; Scandura and Schriesheim, 1994). Interestingly, some researchers did not directly state a definition of mentoring or mentor in either their survey or interviewing of participants (Phillips-Jones, 1982; Whitely et al. , 1992), thus allowing participants to draw on their own intuitive understanding of the mentor and mentoring concepts (Ragins and Cotton, 1993). However, other researchers did provide a definition of one of the concepts (mentor or mentoring) even though they recognized that the participants are still likely to draw on their own intuitive understanding of the terms (Chao et al. 1992; Ragins and Cotton, 1993). Still, given this lack of consensus on definitions for mentoring and mentor, researchers and practitioners alike have continued to examine and explore various facets of mentoring. Those various facets include mentoring functions (e. g. , Kram, 1980, 1983), mentoring phases (e. g. , <https://assignbuster.com/dissertation-on-retention/>

Kram, 1980, 1983), types of mentoring (e. g. , Burke and McKeen, 1989; Chao et al. , 1992), potential benefits of mentoring (e. g. , Fagenson, 1989; Scandura, 1992; Whitley et al. , 1992), potential drawbacks of mentoring (e. g. , Ragins et al. 2000; Scandura, 1998), diversity in mentoring (e. g. , Ragins, 1997; Ragins and Scandura, 1994; Thomas, 1993), and mentoring alternatives (e. g. , Higgins and Kram; Kram and Isabella, 1985). While many researchers have articulated the idea that the operational definitions of mentoring and mentor have varied considerably within Mentoring and sponsoring 629 MD 42, 5 630 the last several decades, with some encompassing sponsorship or sponsor (Chao, 1998; Higgins and Kram, 2001; Mullen, 1998), two of those major researchers have argued that mentoring needs to be reconceptualized (Higgins and Kram, 2001).

Hence, two arguments for reconceptualizing mentoring are offered: (1) the lack of clarity and consensus on the definitions of a mentor, the process of mentoring, and the role of sponsoring; and (2) informal and formal proteges tend not to always receive career support, specifically sponsoring from their mentors (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998; Chao et al. , 1992; Noe, 1988b). Thus, the aim of this paper is to reconceptualize mentoring and sponsoring, and to offer them as distinctly different concepts, rather than viewing sponsoring as an inherent sub-function of mentoring.

Therefore, it is posited that the reconceptualization of these two terms (mentoring and sponsoring) may bring much needed clarity and consensus to the organizational mentoring literature. It is also posited that this reconceptualization will provide aspiring executives with new knowledge to use in their decision making process as they select individuals to help them

advance their careers. Mentoring and sponsoring – argument one Dalton et al. 's (1977) theory of professional career development distinguished between mentor and sponsor, suggesting that an individual becomes a sponsor after being a mentor. On the other hand, Levinson et al. 1978, p. 97) viewed “ a mentor as. . . a teacher, advisor, or sponsor”. These assertions would lead some to believe that the terms mentor and sponsor are confusing and overlapping (Campion and Gold? nch, 1983). As a result, the following question arises: has mentoring been used as a “ catch-all” term? The answer would appear to be yes, given that the following terms have been used to describe a mentor in the organizational literature: guide, host advisor, sponsor, role model, teacher, protector, invisible godparent, friend, coach, counselor, patron, exemplar, benefactor, and advocate (Kelly, 2001; Pittenger and Heimann, 2000).

Yet, Chao (1998) asserted that distinctions have been made between the terms mentor and sponsor. More recently, Higgins and Kram (2001, p. 269) echoed Chao's (1998) sentiments, and distinguished between a mentor and sponsor by stating that “ true mentors. . . provide high amounts of both career and psychosocial support, and sponsors. . . provide high amounts of career support but low amounts of psychosocial support”. Whether it is the interchangeable use of these two terms or the current de? itions of each that are posited to represent their distinction, it is feasible that both, to some degree, have contributed to much of the confusion in the organizational mentoring literature, thus leading to the mixed results on mentoring (Jacobi, 1991). In spite of the confusion and mixed results, mentoring relationships have been viewed as “ one of the most complex and developmentally

important relationships” in organizational settings (Levinson et al. , 1978, p. 97). Thus, mentorships and sponsorships have been pronounced to be critically important to the upward mobility of individuals in organizations (Kanter, 1977).

The work of Levinson et al. (1978) served as the theoretical foundation for much of Kram’s (1980, 1983) work on mentoring, which appears to be the most comprehensive treatment in the organizational literature (Scandura, 1998). They suggested that a mentor is an individual who is usually older and “ of greater experience and seniority. . . a teacher, adviser or sponsor” (Levinson et al. , 1978, p. 97). Building on the work of Levinson et al. (1978), Kram (1980) suggested that a mentor is a more senior ? ? individual who provides career and psychosocial support for the protege.

Kram (1980, 1983) postulated career functions to include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. The psychosocial functions were postulated to included role modeling, acceptance-and-con? rmation, counseling, and friendship (Kram, 1980, 1983). Many of the de? nitions of a mentor used throughout the literature referenced Kram’s (1980, 1983, 1985) de? nition of mentor. Table I delineates how the terms “ sponsor” or “ sponsorship” are explicit in the de? nitions of mentor or mentoring that stem from Levinson et al. ’ (1978) and Kram’s (1980) de? nitions.

Table I also depicts the de? nitions or lack of de? nitions of mentoring, mentor, and sponsor used in some published works that are generally considered premier management journals (Cabell, 2001). Due to the myriad management-related articles on mentoring, this method was chosen to

determine which sampling of articles would be included in the table. As outlined in Table I, not all articles on mentoring explicitly defined mentoring, mentor, and/or sponsor, while a few did. As previously stated, in most cases, sponsoring is considered as sub-function of mentoring. Although there are various definitions of mentor used throughout the literature, there appears to be more consistency in the definitions of sponsor used within the literature (see Table I). Sponsoring has been viewed in the literature as a developmental relationship in which the sponsor provides instrumental career support by nominating the protege for promotion and other types of organizational activities that may be supportive of promotion (Campion and Golds, 1983; Thomas, 1993). This is relatively consistent with Kanter's (1977) work, which posits that sponsors facilitate proteges in obtaining inside information and bypassing the hierarchy, as well as fight for their proteges' promotions. While Shapiro et al.'s (1978) continuum of advisory/support relationships acknowledges a difference between the organizational power that mentors and sponsors have in promoting the upward mobility of their proteges, they consider sponsors to have less organizational power than mentors thereby causing mentors to be seen as more prominent than sponsors. It is highly probable that as a result of the works of Shapiro et al. (1978) and Kram (1980; 1983), which considers sponsoring a sub-function provided by mentors, that sponsoring has been viewed as a less powerful organizational developmental relationship than mentoring (Chao, 1998). This subjugation, thus causes sponsoring to remain in the shadows of organizational mentoring research. It is worthy to note that Kram's (1980, 1983) early works were based on findings from a sample in which a majority (11) of the 18 developmental relationships were direct or

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indirect reporting relationships in some phase of the developmental relationship.

Consequently, the mentors had direct or indirect responsibility for promoting their protégé. In which case, sponsoring (the nominating for promotion) was inherent in the developmental relationships Kram (1980, 1983) observed. Thus, Kram (1980, 1983) was actually observing concurrent phenomena within her sample. Therefore, much of the organizational mentoring theory developed by Kram (1980, 1983) is based on what in recent research has been termed “supervisory mentoring”. Following suit, the supervisor-subordinate relationship has been the focus of much of the mentoring research (Gibb and Megginson, 1993).

In this type of relationship, there is a high Mentoring and sponsoring 631 MD 42, 5 632 Author (year) Campion and Gold? nch A relationship in which an individual takes a 1) Any individual who has a signi? cant positive 1) A sponsor discovers and fosters (1983) personal interest in another’s career and guides in? uence on another’s career, whether the role be individuals for higher placement in or sponsors that person one of sponsor, coach, or counselor other parts of the organization 2) A sponsor functions to generate ? power in proteges by ? ghting for and promoting them, by allowing them to bypass the hierarchy and obtain inside information, and by re? ected power or power by association Hunt and Michael (1983) Involves a unique, often emotionally 1) A person who suggests and advises new “ fast interpersonal type of support and advising role track” recruits on career success matters that can be used to train and develop talented 2) A trusted counselor or guide ? ? ? proteges in many careers and organizations 3) A

guide supporting a protege's young adult dreams and helping in the attainment of them ? ? 4) A nonparental career role model for a protege Kram and Isabella Has a great potential to enhance the (1985) development of individuals in both early and middle career stages Noe (1988a) 1) An experienced, productive manager who relates well to a less-experienced employee and facilitates his/her personal development for the benefit of the individual as well as that of the organization 2) Usually eight to 15 years older than the ? protege who frequently is a young professional with high career aspirations Noe (1988b) 1) A senior, experienced employee who serves as a role model, provides support, direction, and feedback to the younger employee regarding career plans and interpersonal development, and ? ? increases the visibility of the protege to decision makers in the organization who may influence career opportunities (continued) Table I. Definitions of mentoring, mentor, and sponsor given in articles in premier journals Mentor definition(s) given in article Sponsor definition Mentoring/mentorship definition(s) given in article Author (year) Mentors actively intervene, contriving ? ? to get their proteges exposure and visibility through assignments that involve working with other managers ? ? and endorsing their proteges for promotions and special projects Mentoring/mentorship definition(s) given in article Mentor definition(s) given in article Sponsor definition Whitely et al. (1991) Whitely et al. (1992) 1) A particular interpersonal relationship that can influence career progress 2) Classical, or primary, mentoring is an intense developmental relationship of relatively long ? duration in which proteges receive a range of career and psychosocial help exclusively from one senior manager 3) Secondary mentoring is a shorter, less intense, less inclusive developmental process

involving multiple relationships, each offering specialized developmental functions, which tends to focus on external, career progress-oriented functions, such as sponsorship and visibility and exposure, rather than on inner-oriented psychosocial development functions

4) A set of roles and role activities including coaching, support, and sponsorship

5) Psychosocial mentoring referring to activities like providing counselling and friendship

6) Career mentoring referring to providing sponsorship, exposure, and the like

1) “ Classical” mentoring is where the developmental relationship is of relatively long duration, is intense, mostly exclusive, and in which a protege receives a range of career-oriented and psychosocial help from one senior manager

2) Career mentoring includes short duration, less intense, multiple, and less exclusive relationships that are more specialized in the kind of progress-oriented functions provided to proteges, they are more likely to focus on external, career-oriented mentoring functions, such as sponsorship or visibility/exposure, than on “ inner-oriented” psychosocial developmental functions (continued) Mentoring and sponsoring 633 Table I. MD 42, 5 634 Author (year)

1) Someone who provides high amounts of both career and psychosocial support

2) “ The mentor is ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority. . . a teacher, adviser or sponsor” (Levinson et al. , 1978) Higgins and Kram (2001) Chao et al. (1992) Ragins and Scandura (1994) Scandura and Schriesheim (1994) Turban and Dougherty

1) A set of role activities, including coaching, support, and sponsorship, that upper-level managers provide to proteges

Tepper (1995) Table I. Mentor definition(s) given in article Sponsor definition

1) A sponsor is included in one of the definitions of a mentor

2) Someone who

provides high amounts of career support but low amounts of psychosocial support

1) Individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing support to and increasing the upward mobility of junior organization members, their proteges

2) An individual in the work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to careers

1) A trusted counsellor who accepts a guiding role in the development of a younger or less-experienced member of the organization

1) An influential individual at work who has advanced knowledge and who is committed to providing upward mobility and support to a person's career (continued)

Mentoring/mentorship definition(s) given in article

1) The developmental assistance provided by a more senior individual within a protege's organization

2) A relationship in which a senior person working in the protege's organization assists with the protege's personal and professional development

Mentorship is defined as an intense work relationship between senior (mentor) and junior (protege) organizational members. The mentor has experience and power in the organization and personally advises, counsels, coaches, and promotes the career development of the protege. Promotion of the protege's career may occur directly through actual promotions or indirectly through the mentor's influence and power over other organizational members

Author (year) Mentoring/mentorship definition(s) given in article

Mentor definition(s) given in article

Sponsor definition

Dreher and Cox (1996)) Mentoring in organizations has been defined as a developmental relationship between an individual (protege) and a more senior and influential manager or professional (mentor)

2) Focuses particularly on the career-support aspects of mentoring

Ragins (1997) 1) One

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who serves as a role model, friend, and ? ? counsellor, who accepts and helps the protege develop a positive and secure self-image 2) An individual who holds a position senior to yours who takes an active interest in developing your career. While it is possible for your immediate supervisor to serve as a mentor, relationships of this type represent a special opportunity to interact with a senior manager.

The standard subordinate/supervisor relationship is not a mentoring relationship (it is possible to have multiple mentors) 1) Individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing ? ? upward mobility and support to their proteges' careers Covalleski et al. (1998) 1) Sometimes also called coaching or counselling 2) It involves relations between senior managers and junior employees, in which the latter can “ become interwoven into an organization'scultureby efforts of the former, who, embodying the “ core values that best promote desired organization culture,” help frame the inculcation process” as well as “ help cultivate desired norms and values” 3) A technique by which junior members imbibe and interiorize the more subtle, tacit, and noncodi? ble aspects of an organization'sgoals, which are embodied in superiors and with which they develop their new identi? es as ? rm members 1) A more senior person who takes an interest in sponsorship of the career of a more junior person (Kram, 1985) (continued) Scandura (1998) Mentoring and sponsoring 635 Table I. MD 42, 5 636 Author (year) 1) The mentor is traditionally de? ned as a source ? ? of information for the protege and the positive outcomes, such as greater income and promotion opportunities Mullen and Noe (1999) Ragins et al. (2000) Higgins and Kram (2001) Table I. Mentor de? nition(s) given in

article Sponsor definition 1) Generally defined as individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and career support to their proteges (Kram, 1985) 2) A higher-ranking, influential individual in your work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to your career Mentoring/mentorship definition(s) given in article A mentoring relationship is a one-to-one relationship between a more experienced member (mentor) and a less experienced member (protege) of the organization or profession. The relationship is developed to promote the professional and personal growth of the protege through coaching, support, and guidance. Through individualized attention, the mentor transfers needed information, feedback, and encouragement to the protege as well as providing emotional support and “putting in a good word” when possible Formal mentoring was as follows: “In order to assist individuals in their development and advancement, some organizations have established formal mentoring programs, where proteges and mentors are linked in some way. This may be accomplished by assigning mentors or by just providing formal opportunities aimed at developing the relationship. To recap: formal mentoring relationships are developed with organizational assistance. Informal mentoring relationships are developed spontaneously, without organizational assistance” A “traditional” mentoring relationship is one in which a senior person working in the protege’s organization assists the protege’s personal and professional development probability that the mentor will provide both psychosocial and career support for the protege.

This would explain why sponsoring has surfaced as being inherent to mentoring in both qualitative research (e. g. , Kram, 1980, 1983) and quantitative research (e. g. , Noe, 1988a; Scandura, 1992), thus being viewed as a sub-function of mentoring. However, if a mentor is conceptualized in its most simplest of terms – those used by Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary – a wise and trusted counselor or teacher; and likewise with a sponsor – a person who vouches for, is responsible for, or supports a person or makes a pledge or promise on behalf of another – then from the onset, the nature of the reporting relationships in Kram’s study (1980, 1983) moved the examined phenomenon beyond the realm of just a mentoring relationship. Moving beyond this definition of mentor, there are at least two additional rationales for why a sponsor should not be viewed as inherent in mentoring, in addition to not being used interchangeably with the term mentor. First, the derivations of the terms are disparate – mentor from the Latin word *mentor*, meaning to teach; and sponsor from the Latin word *spondere*, meaning to pledge. Second, based on Webster’s New World Thesaurus, mentor and sponsor are not synonyms. So, while Kram (1980, 1983) did observe the presence of the sponsoring phenomenon in her study, it is argued that it should have been considered a distinct concept rather than being considered inherent in mentoring.

Since the foundation upon which the original conceptualization of organizational mentoring was developed in a somewhat dubious context, it begs the question as to the interchangeable usage of the terms mentor and sponsor. Similarly, given the emergence of the concept coaching in the literature as a distinctly different developmental concept than mentoring, it

is posited that sponsoring should re-emerge as a distinctly different developmental relationship worthy of as much examination in the organizational literature as has coaching. So, based on this first argument, it is posited that sponsoring may be just as important as mentoring in the upward mobility of individuals in organizational settings (Kanter, 1977).

Therefore, a paradigm shift and new lens through which to investigate and utilize mentoring and sponsoring in organizational settings are being presented. Mentoring and sponsoring 637 Universal definitions Given the review of the various definitions of mentor, mentoring, sponsor, and sponsoring that have been presented in the literature, to date, “ explaining mentoring through a single, universal and prescriptive definition. . . [has proven to be] inadequate” (Gibb, 1994, p. 47). However, explaining mentoring through a single universal and descriptive definition is more than adequate. Such a definition is necessary to provide solid conceptual grounding, and a lens through which to further examine and utilize mentoring and sponsoring. Hence, this is an opportune juncture to advance universal definitions of mentoring and sponsoring to be used and operationalized in any research or organizational context henceforth. The following universal definitions regarding the concepts of mentor, mentoring, and mentorships are offered: . a mentor is a wise and trusted counselor or teacher; . mentoring is the guidance process that takes place between a mentor and a protégé; and . a mentorship is a mentoring relationship between a mentor and a protégé. MD 42, 5 638 Similarly, regarding the concepts of sponsor, sponsoring, and sponsorships, the following universal definitions are offered: . a sponsor is a person who nominates or supports

another person's (protege) promotion; . . . sponsoring is the process of a sponsor nominating or supporting a protege's promotion; and . . . a sponsorship is a sponsoring relationship between a sponsor and a protege. It should be noted that these suggested universal definitions of mentor and sponsor . . . connote that neither one has to be older than the protege, which is a deviation from the sometimes explicit and other times implicit definitions for both terms in the organizational mentoring literature. It should also be noted that a mentor does not . . . always have to be an organizational success to provide the protege with valuable guidance. Additionally, these universal definitions are specific, yet general enough to be applicable regardless of the profession in which they may be studied or the research question examined, which has been perceived to be a matter of contention (Chao, 1998). Therefore, these definitions of mentor and mentoring allow for many of the forms of mentoring examined in the literature to be viewed as types of mentoring. This is consistent with Higgins and Kram's (2001, p. 264) assertion that they are exploring different types of mentoring in their recent article, which views "mentoring as a multiple developmental relationship phenomenon".

Formal and informal mentorships – argument two

The second argument for reconceptualizing mentoring and sponsoring requires an examination of the literature on formal and informal mentorships.

As previously stated, original theorizing of organizational mentoring, in large part, resulted from the examination of informal, intraorganizational mentorships (i. e. , Kram, 1980, 1983). These types of mentorships have been purported to be a key developmental tool in the upward mobility of individuals in organizations (Hunt and Michael, 1983; Kanter, 1977; Pittenger

and Heimann, 2000; Ragins et al. , 2000). Many researchers believe that all those who succeed have mentors, usually informal mentors (Campion and Gold? nch, 1983; Collins and Scott, 1978; Kanter, 1977). It should also be noted that sponsors have been said to be important to those who succeed (Kanter, 1977; Dalton et al. 1977) although they have not been the focus of as much attention in the literature as have mentors. Unlike sponsorships, there are copious amounts of articles suggesting that both informal and formal mentorships exist within most organizations, with informal mentorships being the most prevalent (e. g. , Noe, 1998b, Phillips-Jones, 1982). Informal ? ? mentorships are mentoring relationships where the mentor and protege, on their own ? ? accord, agree that the protege will trust the mentor to counsel or teach him/her (Noe, 1988a, 1988b). Formal mentorships refer to mentoring relationships where a third party ? ? (usually the organization) sanctions an agreement between mentor and protege, ? whereby the protege should trust the mentor to counsel or teach him/her (Noe, 1988a, 1988b). Both informal and formal mentorships can be either intraorganizational or interorganizational relationships (Ragins, 1997). Intraorganizational mentorships refer ? ? to those mentoring relationships in which both the mentor and the protege are employed by the same organization. Interorganizational mentorships pertain to ? ? mentoring relationships where the mentor and protege are employed by different organizations. Similar to mentoring, based on the universal de? nitions of sponsor and sponsoring offered in this paper, sponsoring can be formal or informal, and can occur intraorganizationally or interorganizationally.

Informal mentorships tend to germinate as a result of work or non-work issues that lead the mentor and protege to realize they have shared interests, admiration, and commitment, which makes informal mentorships more in-depth and personal (Chao et al. , 1992; Lawson, 1996; Noe, 1988b). Thus, informal mentorships are likely to move beyond the discussion of career-related issues to more personal issues (Chao et al. , 1992; Noe, 1988b). The following examples given in an excerpt taken from Kalb (2000, p. 58) symbolize and embody some of the characteristics of informal mentorships: At a corporate cocktail party the proud mentor shows off her protege to her colleagues. As she introduces her rising star, her protege follows her lead in smiling and moving through the crowd. The protege mirrors her mentor's moves as she smoothly joins conversations then skillfully continues on to other interactions. At the golf course a mentor brings his protege along as a "fourth" to make up for a missing member of a traditional Saturday morning golf quartet. The mentor tells his pals that his protege is "like a son to him" and that he will not right in to their game. Mentoring and sponsoring 639 These examples illustrate how interactions in informal mentorships tend to move outside the typical confines of the office.

As a result of work and non-work interactions, the mentor helps to influence and socialize the protege (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998; Noe, 1988a). In addition, the mentor provides the protege with support, guidance, and feedback as a result of his/her knowledge about how to get things done, "what's what," and "who's who" (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998; Noe, 1988b; Veale and Wachtel, 1996). Therefore, "proteges learn from their

mentors. . . not only how to do their jobs better, but also how to manage their organizational careers better, and how to balance and manage their lives better” (Lawson, 1996, p. 6). As a consequence of the perceived benefits of informal mentoring, formal mentoring programs began to surface in the early 1980s to provide mentoring to “ more than just a lucky few” (Forret et al. , 1996, p. 6) in an effort to replicate and capitalize on the perceived benefits of informal mentoring (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998; Noe, 1988b; Ragins et al. , 2000). While many organizations have implemented formal mentoring programs, there has been a lack of agreement on the intent and extent to which they are formalized in organizations (Noe, 1988b). Therefore, it has been suggested that ? ? organizations should not expect proteges in formal mentorships to gain the same ? ? benefits as proteges in informal mentorships (Noe, 1988b).

Regardless, many organizations have instituted some form of formalized mentoring in an effort to gain a competitive advantage in today’s global and dynamic marketplace (Pittenger and Heimann, 2000; Veale and Wachtel, 1996). Some characteristics of formal mentoring programs are: top management support; corporate mentoring strategy; prudent mentor ? ? ? ? and protege selection and matching processes; comprehensive mentor and protege ? ? orientation; clearly stated expectations and responsibilities of mentor and protege; and ? ? established duration and contact frequency between the mentor and protege (Friday and Friday, 2002; Noe, 1988b; Scandura, 1998). Although formal mentoring programs are designed to replicate and capitalize on the benefits of informal mentoring (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998; Noe, 1988b; Ragins et al. , MD 42, 5 640 2000), de? nite

differences exist between them. Chao et al. (1992) suggest that the most notable differences between formal and informal mentorships begin with the initiation phase. The differences begin with the alteration of the voluntary nature from which informal mentorships evolve (Ragins, 1997). In formal mentoring programs, mentors and proteges are assigned (Chao et al., 1992; Noe, 1988b; Scandura, 1998). The literature suggests that proteges may not perceive formal mentors as beneficial as informal mentors. Numerous factors (e.g., required participation, personality conflicts, perceptual conflicts, limited interaction, perceived pressure, lack of commitment and motivation, differences in expectations, lack of intimacy and perceived value, and unsanctioned monitoring) contribute to formal proteges considering their mentors not to be as beneficial as informal proteges consider their mentors (Chao et al., 1992; Kram, 1985; Lee et al., 2000; Noe, 1988b, Ragins et al., 2000; Tepper, 1995). This perceived decrease in benefit is likely the case because while formal mentors have been found to provide the same amount of psychosocial support as informal mentors, they have not been found to provide the same amount of career support, which is usually an expected outcome of mentoring (Chao et al., 1992; Noe, 1988a).

As purported by Kram (1980, 1983), in naturally occurring, informal mentorships, mentors tend to provide both career and psychosocial support to their proteges. However, research suggests that in some informal mentorships and many formal mentorships, mentors tend to have difficulty providing both types of support to their proteges, with the majority of the difficulty being in providing career support (Bahniuk and Kogler Hill, 1998;

Chao et al. , 1992; Noe, 1988b). Given the observance of different cultural formal and informal mentors tend to experience in providing career support, particularly sponsorship, to their proteges, it lends support to the argument that mentoring and sponsoring are distinct phenomena.

Consistent with Kram's (1985) original conceptualization of "relationship constellations" (in which multiple developmental relationships are not all provided by one individual) facilitating an individual in his/her upward mobility within the organization, mentoring and sponsoring are posited as distinct, but related, non-mutually exclusive developmental relationships. Thus, mentoring and sponsoring may be provided by the same individual, but it is not necessary or expected that they will both be provided by the same individual. Therefore, a mentor and a sponsor for a protege may be one in the same or they may be two different individuals. Kram's (1985) work made the distinction ". . . between the classic mentoring relationship and other less involving, exclusive, and intricate types of relationships such as the sponsor relationship. . . ." (Murrell and James, 2001). This distinction is likely to have contributed to the lack of importance given to the sponsor relationship and its potential influence on career advancement as compared to the attention given to the mentor relationship. Although the classic mentoring relationship, which is more psychosocial, has been found to enhance the competence and personal effectiveness of individuals trying to advance, it is the sponsor relationship that has shown to relate more closely to individuals actually advancing in organizations (Murrell and James, 2001).

Thus, for aspiring executives developing career strategies it is suggested that mentors be selected when they need to enhance their competence and

effectiveness on the job, and that sponsors be selected to assist them in advancing within the organization. Therefore, aspiring executives may use these two types of developmental relationships independently or concurrently at various stages of their careers based on their needs at that given point in time. Mentoring and sponsoring Conclusion Over the last three decades, much of the organizational mentoring research has conceptualized mentoring as the career and psychosocial developmental support provided by a more senior individual to a more junior individual (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Kram, 1983).

As outlined by Kram (1980, 1983), it has been suggested that only a subset of possible functions is provided by most mentors. Usually, providing upward mobility for the protege is not in the subset provided (Chao et al. , 1992; Kram, 1986; Noe, 1988b). This raises a question. If the mentor is providing all the other sub-functions, but not providing upward mobility for the protege, is this a mentoring relationship? According to the existing literature the answer would be: “ Yes, but the mentor is just not sponsoring the protege; therefore, he/she is not a true mentor” according to Higgins and Kram (2001). They claim that a “ true mentor” provides high amounts of both psychosocial and career support to his/her protege.

On the other hand, according to the arguments posited in this paper, the answer would be “ yes,” and while the mentor is not a sponsor, he/she is a “ true mentor” nonetheless. Some researchers have suggested that there is no one word that communicates what has been perceived in the literature to date as mentoring (Burke and McKeen, 1989; Levinson et al. , 1978). That may be the case because, to date, researchers have likely been examining

at least two phenomena simultaneously, mentoring and sponsoring. The various definitions of mentor and mentoring, and the movement of mentoring into a formally structured arena have helped to highlight the distinction between mentoring and sponsoring as being distinct, non-mutually exclusive, and possibly non-concurrent phenomena.

While scholars may have distinguished between mentors and sponsors (Kanter, 1977; it is being argued that as long as the concept of mentoring is viewed as encompassing the sponsoring of a protege's nomination for promotion, the concept and its operationalization will lack clarity, and thus remain less scientifically supported than would be desired. Therefore, mentoring and sponsoring should be viewed as two distinctly different developmental relationships that are not necessarily mutually exclusive in terms of being performed by the same individual. Consequently, the terms mentor and sponsor, and mentoring and sponsoring should not be used interchangeably.

With the assertion that there is no explicit agreement on which types of developmental experiences should be classified as mentoring (Whitely et al. , 1992), the changing demographics in the workforce, and the global business milieu of this millennium, mentoring and sponsoring need to be reconceptualized (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Ragins, 1997). This paper has done just that; it has reconceptualized mentoring and sponsoring to account for the infusion of new dynamics that have arisen, and that are likely to arise, since the initial conceptualizing and theorizing of the terms in the organizational literature dating back at least three decades ago (e. g. Collins and Scott, 1978; Kanter, 1977; Lawson, 1996; Roche, 1979). If mentoring

and sponsoring are to be considered enduring scientific phenomena, their definitions and operationalizations should not change every time environmental or organizational dynamics change or by different users of the terms (e. g. , researchers, practitioners, etc). 641 MD 42, 5 642 The universal definitions offered in this paper are considered enduring. Regardless of the research or organizational environment and its dynamics, these universal definitions will not need to be changed, thereby allowing for consistency in the definitions and operationalizations of mentoring and sponsoring in future research and practice.

Given the two lucid arguments presented, strong evidence exists to warrant the future use of these new lens through which to view and examine mentoring and sponsoring in organizational settings. In conclusion, aspiring executives have new information, which can help them develop a more effective career enhancement strategy that includes both mentors and sponsors.

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