

A LONGITUDINAL EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF MENTORING ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND TURNOVER

STEPHANIE C. PAYNE
ANN H. HUFFMAN
Texas A&M University

Over 1,000 U.S. Army officers responded to two surveys over a two-year period. Results indicated that mentoring was positively related to affective commitment and continuance commitment and negatively related to “turnover behavior.” The relationship with affective commitment was moderated by the conditions of mentorship (supervisory versus nonsupervisory) but not by the type of mentoring support provided (career-related versus psychosocial). Affective commitment partially mediated the negative relationship between mentoring and actual turnover behavior ten years later.

In an effort to retain employees with high levels of performance, organizations socialize newcomers as they enter (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998) and foster positive organizational attitudes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (OC; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). One specific way management can facilitate organizational socialization is to promote mentoring relationships. Previous research has demonstrated that mentoring is inversely related to intentions to quit, or turnover intentions (Viator & Scandura, 1991) and actual quitting, or turnover behavior (Lankau & Scandura, 2002). It is unclear, however, under what conditions mentoring is most likely to foster commitment. This study responds to three calls for mentoring research to include: (1) “more fine-grained distinctions regarding the conditions under which

protégés benefit most from mentorships” (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004: 21), (2) examination of short-term outcomes like OC as a mediator of longer-term outcomes like turnover (Raabe & Beehr, 2003), and (3) longitudinal research to document long-term effects of mentoring and to address the reverse-causation threat (e.g., Russell & Adams, 1997).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Mentorship has been defined as “an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior experienced colleague (mentor) and a less experienced junior colleague (protégé) in which the mentor provides support, direction, and feedback regarding career plans and personal development” (Russell & Adams, 1997: 2). Research has shown that mentoring has a number of benefits for protégés, mentors, and organizations (Russell & Adams).

Mentoring can be instrumental to the initiation and maintenance of an employee’s socialization into an organization. Organizational socialization is the process whereby individuals acquire the attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge needed to participate as organization members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This process spans an employee’s full career, beginning when a new employee joins an organization and ending when he or she leaves.

One of the key components of socialization is the understanding and adoption of organizational goals and values. Individuals who share organizational goals and values tend to have high levels of affective commitment, which is inversely related to turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). To the extent that

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mentoring fosters the adoption of organizational goals and values, affective commitment may help to explain why mentoring reduces turnover.

Mentoring and Organizational Commitment

OC is defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982: 27). It has been further conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of three components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This study focuses on affective and continuance commitment. Affective commitment “refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization,” whereas continuance commitment “refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1991: 67).

Empirical studies of mentoring relationships have supported a positive relationship between mentoring and a protégé’s level of OC (e.g., Aryee & Chay, 1994). This association has typically been demonstrated by comparing the commitment levels of mentored and nonmentored employees. In a meta-analysis of the career benefits associated with mentoring for protégés, Allen and coauthors noted the most consistent benefits might be “the impact on affective reactions to the workplace and positive psychological feelings regarding one’s career” (2004: 20).

There are at least three potential explanations for the relationship between mentoring and affective commitment. First, mentoring promotes the adoption of an organization’s values (Viator & Scandura, 1991), which facilitates identification with the organization. Second, protégés are better able to cope with the stress of career management and therefore can hold more positive attitudes, like commitment, toward their work environment (Scandura, 1997). Third, mentors serve as role models, which generates a certain level of respect between protégés and mentors that may translate into positive work attitudes (Scandura, 1997).

While most researchers have only examined the relationship between mentoring and affective commitment, we speculate that mentoring also affects the primary antecedents of continuance commitment (that is, a high number of sacrifices associated with leaving the organization and a low number of attractive employment alternatives [Meyer & Allen, 1997]) in two ways. First, protégés who are being mentored by someone within their organization may have to end their mentorship when leaving the organization. The disruption of personal relation-

ships has been previously identified as a perceived cost of leaving an organization (Meyer, Bobocel, & Allen, 1991). Specifically, a mentoring relationship is an investment for a protégé (Allen et al., 2004). If the protégé leaves the organization, he or she will have to establish a relationship with a new mentor, thus in effect have to start over. Since a nonmentored employee does not have this investment with the organization, he or she would have lower continuance commitment. Second, protégés may be less likely to search for employment alternatives because of the benefits gained with their current employers (Scandura & Viator, 1994). They may be either less aware of employment alternatives (Baugh, Landau, & Scandura, 1996; Higgins & Kram, 2001) or very knowledgeable about a lack of employment alternatives because of the information conveyed to them by their mentors. We sought to confirm the positive relationship between mentoring and affective commitment and to test the relationship between mentoring and continuance commitment.

Hypothesis 1a. Protégés have higher levels of affective commitment than nonmentored employees.

Hypothesis 1b. Protégés have higher levels of continuance commitment than nonmentored employees.

Conditions of Mentorship

The traditional definition of mentoring describes a relationship between a senior member and a junior member of an organization that is created to help the junior member develop in the organization (Kram, 1985). However, multiple types of mentorships have been described and examined; they include formal and informal, supervisory and nonsupervisory, and alternative forms of mentoring. Allen and colleagues (2004) identified type of mentoring as a potentially important moderating variable. The makeup of the mentor-protégé relationship, particularly as it relates to organizational roles, may influence the success of the mentorship. For example, researchers have suggested that “insiders,” or incumbent employees, can be valuable to the development of new employees’ OC (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). Specifically, supervisors have been identified as key individuals during an employee’s socialization within an organization (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983). When an employee’s organizational supervisor serves as a mentor, the protégé may have positive feelings for the organization as a result of that relationship. In

fact, Fisher (1985) found supervisory support to be positively related to employee affective commitment.

We were unable to locate any studies comparing the OC of protégés with supervisory mentors to the OC of protégés with nonsupervisory mentors. Studies comparing other forms of mentoring, however, provide some insight into this comparison. For example, Green (1991) found that a supportive advisor relationship was positively related to doctoral students' commitment to their doctoral training and Ph.D. programs. Similarly, protégés in *formal* mentorships (those arranged by their organizations) tend to report higher levels of OC than protégés in informal mentorships (Heimann & Pittenger, 1996). Protégés in formal mentorships may perceive that their organization is concerned with their well-being and career development, enhancing perceptions of organizational support, which may lead to higher OC (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001).

There are at least three reasons why a supervisory mentorship would produce stronger levels of OC than a nonsupervisory mentorship. First, the amount of mentoring provided is likely to differ. Protégés with supervisor mentors may receive more mentoring simply because of the close proximity between mentor and protégé (Burke, McKenna, & McKeen, 1991; Raabe & Beehr, 2003). Additionally, protégés report receiving more mentor functions (types of support) when their mentors have direct supervisory responsibilities over them (Burke & McKeen, 1997; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997). The perception that their organization is allowing ample time for a supervisor mentor and a protégé to interact may facilitate the protégé's affective commitment and continuance commitment. Second, supervisor mentors have a unique perspective that may allow their mentorship to indirectly contribute to protégés' affective commitment. Supervisor mentors are more likely to understand the needs and concerns of their subordinates (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990); facilitate identification with their organizations (an aspect of affective commitment); have a direct hand in developing protégés' career plans; and be able to influence the protégés' progression within the organizations. Third, supervisor mentors are likely to engage in different mentoring activities than nonsupervisory mentors. Supervisor mentors are likely to model successful managerial behaviors *specific to* the departments and/or organizations in which they and their protégés work. In addition, protégés are often given the opportunity to show their talents, build networks, and build alliances with normally off-limit higher-level personnel within their organization (Dreher & Ash, 1990) which may facilitate feelings of contin-

uance commitment. The employee would be sacrificing these benefits if he or she decided to leave the organization. Accordingly, we propose that the conditions of mentorship moderate the relationship between mentoring and OC.

Hypothesis 2a. Protégés in supervisory mentoring relationships have higher levels of affective commitment than protégés in nonsupervisory mentoring relationships.

Hypothesis 2b. Protégés in supervisory mentoring relationships have higher levels of continuance commitment than protégés in nonsupervisory mentoring relationships.

Type of Mentoring Support

Kram (1983) determined that mentors provide two primary sources of support (also referred to as mentoring functions) to their protégés: career and psychosocial support. Career-related support involves coaching, supplying protection, providing challenging assignments, increasing employee exposure and visibility, and direct forms of sponsorship. Psychosocial support includes serving as a role model, friend, and counselor by providing positive regard and acceptance (Dreher & Ash, 1990). The extent to which mentoring facilitates OC may depend also on the type of support a protégé receives. If career-related advice is specific to the employing organization (e.g., pursuing one's career ladder within the current organization), such mentoring is likely to foster commitment to that organization.

Although career-related mentoring support has been shown to be more related to objective organizational outcomes (e.g., promotion, compensation) than psychosocial mentoring support (Allen et al., 2004), very little research has explored the relationship between these two mentoring functions and OC. One exception is Scandura's (1997) study, in which she found that career development mentoring correlated more strongly with OC, job satisfaction, and career expectations than did psychosocial support or role modeling. On the other hand, Raabe and Beehr (2003) found that OC was not significantly related to any of the same three mentoring functions.

There are two possible explanations for why career-related support facilitates OC more than psychosocial support. First, as Scandura (1997) suggested, career-related mentoring fosters career growth (e.g., job opportunities), which may lead a protégé to be more affectively committed to her or his organization. Second, according to social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), people measure the

worth of relationships by how much they receive from their partners. As the benefits of the relationships increase, they are more likely to protect their investments. In a mentorship, a protégé may perceive more material benefits from career mentoring than from psychosocial support; thus, leaving a career-based mentorship is more of a sacrifice than leaving a psychosocial-support-based mentorship. In other words, an employee in a career-based mentorship obtains career-related benefits. The employee sees these benefits as an investment in the organization and does not want to sacrifice these benefits. This process therefore leads to higher continuance commitment. Consequently, we hypothesize that type of mentoring support moderates the mentoring-OC relationship.

Hypothesis 3a. Protégés who receive career-related support have higher levels of affective commitment than protégés who receive psychosocial support.

Hypothesis 3b. Protégés who receive career-related support have higher levels of continuance commitment than protégés who receive psychosocial support.

Given our expectations regarding the conditions of mentorship and type of mentoring support, we would naturally expect protégés with supervisor mentors who provide career-related support to have the strongest levels of OC relative to all other protégés examined. Similarly, we would expect protégés with nonsupervisor mentors who provide psychosocial support to have the weakest levels of OC relative to other protégés. We further suggest that the relationship between conditions of mentoring (supervisor vs. nonsupervisor) and OC depends on the type of mentoring support received: conditions of mentorship are even more likely to enhance commitment when they are matched with certain types of mentoring support. In a supervisor-career-related mentorship, affective commitment is enhanced by increased identification with one's organization and career growth opportunities. Because of their unique perspective and potential insight into their protégés' needs, supervisor mentors providing career-related mentoring facilitate the attachment protégés have with their organizations. A protégé's continuance commitment is also enhanced in a supervisor-career-related mentorship by the additional opportunities made available through the relationship that would have to be given up should the protégé leave the organization. These benefits include the unique mentoring activities and opportunities offered by supervisors and the career-related benefits associated with career-

related mentoring. In other words, we expect a significant interaction between the condition of a mentorship and the type of mentoring support.

Hypothesis 4a. The conditions of mentorship interact with the type of support received when predicting affective commitment, in such a way that protégés with supervisor mentors who provide career-related support have the highest level of affective commitment.

Hypothesis 4b. The conditions of mentorship interact with the type of support received when predicting continuance commitment, in such a way that protégés with supervisor mentors who provide career-related support have the highest level of continuance commitment.

Mentoring and Turnover

According to Saks and Ashforth's (1997) model of the organizational socialization process, socialization factors (e.g., mentoring programs) lead to distal outcomes, like more stable membership in organizations (retention) and higher OC. Very few researchers have examined the relationship between mentoring and actual turnover behavior. One exception is a recent study by Lankau and Scandura (2002) in which they found that mentoring was negatively related to turnover four years later. More researchers have examined and found support for a negative relationship between mentoring and turnover *intentions* (Viator & Scandura, 1991). Specifically, most research has suggested that mentoring *functions* are negatively related to intentions to quit (e.g., Burke & McKeen, 1997).

Whereas studies have tested and found support for the mentoring-turnover link (e.g., Lankau & Scandura, 2002), few studies have then investigated *why* this relationship exists. Lankau and Scandura (2002) suggested that mentoring affects work attitudes of protégés that can lead to turnover. We suggest a similar process, whereby mentoring influences turnover through OC. Specifically, mentoring helps to establish a relationship between an employee and an organization (Aryee & Chay, 1994). Meyer and Allen wrote that OC "characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization" (1991: 67) thus suggesting that OC helps explain the relationship between mentoring and turnover behavior. Both affective commitment and continuance commitment have been shown to relate to both turnover intentions and actual turnover behavior (Meyer, Stanley, Hercovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2001).

Many mentoring studies are retrospective, cross-

sectional, and correlational. Since both mentoring and OC are inversely related to turnover intentions, the causal pattern of relationships between these three variables is unclear. Causal inference depends on three factors: (1) the cause precedes the effect in time, (2) the cause and effect are related, and (3) other explanations (e.g., reverse causation) of the cause-effect relationship have been eliminated (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The third criterion is the most difficult one to fulfill but is specifically addressed by longitudinal designs. Since there are so few longitudinal studies of mentoring, little research has been able to show convincingly that mentoring causes either short-term or long-term effects. Proposing commitment as an explanatory mechanism for the mentoring-turnover relationship, we tested this relationship with variables measured at separate and corresponding points in time.

Hypothesis 5a. Affective commitment mediates the relationship between mentoring and turnover.

Hypothesis 5b. Continuance commitment mediates the relationship between mentoring and turnover.

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

The sample in this study consisted of the 1,334 U.S. Army officers who responded to two administrations of a mail survey entitled "Longitudinal Research on Officer Careers." The majority of respondents were male (70%) and Caucasian (83%). At time 1, most of the officers were 30 years of age or younger (80%), held the rank of captain (68%), were married (66%), and had completed at least seven years of service in the Army (75%).

The mail surveys were distributed by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Their primary purpose was to identify factors that influence officers' career decisions and to assess the implications of such factors on personnel policy (Harris, Wochinger, Schwartz, & Parham, 1993). The overall response rates for the surveys were 63 percent (time 1; 1988) and 51 percent (time 2; 1989).

Measures

Mentoring. We assessed the *existence* of a mentorship by dichotomizing responses to the item, "How many mentors (someone who actively assists and helps guide your professional development in

some significant and ongoing way) have you had?" The *conditions* of mentorship were measured with the following item: "Which mentor has had the greatest impact on you? (rater, senior rater, peer, officer not in command, key noncommissioned officer, or other)." Responses of "rater" and "senior rater" were coded as supervisory mentorships, because officers so designated tended to occupy the first- and second-level leadership/command positions directly above the respondents, while the other response options were coded as nonsupervisory mentorships. The *type of support* a mentor provided was derived from the question, "What was the most important help given to you by your mentor? (job-related guidance, career planning guidance, personal and social guidance, or moral ethical guidance)." Job-related guidance and career-planning guidance were coded as career-related support, while the others were coded as psychosocial support. All mentoring-related variables were collected at time 1.

Organizational commitment. Affective commitment and continuance commitment were measured using analogs of Meyer and Allen's (1991) scales at time 2. In an effort to validate these scales, Tremble, Payne, Finch, and Bullis (2003) demonstrated the analog scales had psychometric properties comparable to those of Meyer and Allen's scales; these include internal consistency, factor structure, and convergent and predictive validity. In addition, Allen (2003) evaluated the analog scales as having considerable promise as measures of affective commitment and continuance commitment, because they perform in accordance with theory. The affective commitment scale contains six items that are responded to on a five-point agreement scale. A sample item reads, "I am quite proud to tell people I am in the Army." The continuance commitment scale contains seven items that, like Meyer and Allen's scale, make up two dimensions: alternatives and sacrifices. Responses for the three sacrifice items were on a five-point agreement scale. An example item is, "It would be difficult for me to leave the Army in the next year or so, given my current personal or family situation." Participants responded to the remaining four alternative items by comparing various characteristics, such as "overall standard of living," on a five-point scale ranging from "much better in the Army" to "much better in civilian life."

Turnover. Turnover information was collected from the Officer Longitudinal Research Database, a research database of personnel data (Hunter, Rachford, Kelly, & Duncan, 1987). We coded turnover dichotomously, on the basis of whether or not the officer had left the Army ten years after the first

survey administration (time 3; 1998). Just under half (47.1%) of the officers had left the Army by time 3. Of the 628 officers who left, 52 of them left involuntarily and 6 were unknown. We limited our analyses for this variable to employees who left voluntarily ($n = 570$).

RESULTS

Within the sample of 1,334 officers, 1,080 (81%) reported having at least one mentor. Of these officers, 736 (68%) identified supervisors as their mentors, and 923 (85%) reported receiving job- or career-related guidance from their mentors. Additionally, of the 736 officers receiving mentoring from supervisors, 650 reported career-related support, while 86 reported psychosocial support ($\chi^2[1] = 15.131, p = .000$). Of the 344 officers mentored by someone other than a supervisor, 273 officers received career-related support, while 71 officers received psychosocial support. Table 1 depicts descriptive statistics, correlations, and coefficient alpha values for all the variables examined. As in previous research, mentoring was significantly, positively related to OC, even one year later, and it was significantly, negatively related to turnover behavior. Given our large sample size, we tested the significance of our findings using a p -value of .01. We also controlled for protégé gender, race, age, rank, and organizational tenure in all analyses, confirming that the

homogeneity of slopes assumption was not violated for any of the covariates.

It was anticipated that protégés would report higher affective commitment and continuance commitment than nonmentored employees. We tested this proposition with two one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) and found that protégés had higher levels of both affective commitment ($\bar{x} = 3.94$ vs. 3.74; $F_{1, 1,255} = 23.40, p = .00$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$) and continuance commitment ($\bar{x} = 2.66$ vs. 2.55; $F_{1, 1,256} = 6.35, p = .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .005$), supporting Hypotheses 1a and 1b.

We also anticipated that the conditions of mentorship and the type of support received in a mentorship would moderate the relationship between mentoring and affective commitment as well as continuance commitment. Further, we proposed that the conditions of mentorship and the type of support provided would interact with one another in such a way that protégés with supervisor mentors providing career-related support would have the strongest affective commitment and continuance commitment relative to all other protégés. We tested this prediction with two 2 by 2 ANCOVAs and found support for a “main effect” for the conditions of mentorship on affective commitment ($\bar{x} = 3.99$ vs. 3.83; $F_{1, 1,011} = 6.43, p = .01$; partial $\eta^2 = .01$) but not on continuance commitment ($\bar{x} = 2.69$ vs. 2.59; $F_{1, 1,012} = 0.01, n.s.$). Protégés with supervisor mentors had higher levels of affective

TABLE 1
Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities^a

Variable ^b	<i>n</i>	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Protégé gender	1,279	0.27	0.45										
2. Protégé race	1,331	0.17	0.37	.07*									
3. Protégé age, time 1	1,324	28.18	3.09	-.06	.04								
4. Protégé tenure, time 1	1,333	5.49	2.82	-.06	.05	.86*							
5. Protégé rank, time 1	1,333	2.59	0.68	-.05	.07	.68*	.72*						
6. Mentoring, time 1 ^c	1,333	0.81	0.39	-.01	-.05	.02	.02	-.01					
7. Mentoring relationship, time 1 ^d	1,080	0.68	0.47	-.07	-.06	.17*	.21*	.26*					
8. Mentoring support, time 1 ^d	1,080	0.85	0.35	-.01	.00	.07	.06	.07		.12*			
9. Affective commitment, time 2	1,332	3.89	0.57	-.03	-.03	.11*	.14*	.14*	.14*	.14*	.02	(.74)	
10. Continuance commitment, time 2	1,333	2.64	0.65	.01	.11*	.20*	.21*	.14*	.06	.08*	.00	.29*	(.69)
11. Voluntary turnover, time 3 ^e	1,276	0.45	0.50	.07	.07	-.03	-.04	-.06	-.10*	-.09*	-.03	-.21*	-.06

^a Reliability coefficients (alphas) are reported on the diagonal in parentheses. Protégé gender, protégé race, mentoring, mentoring relationship, and mentoring support are dichotomous variables. Correlations between these variables and the continuous variables are point-biserial correlations, and correlations among the dichotomous variables are phi-coefficients. All other correlations are product-moment correlations.

^b For gender, 0 = male, 1 = female. For race, 0 = nonminority, 1 = minority. For rank, 1 = 2nd lieutenant, 2 = 1st lieutenant, 3 = captain, 4 = major and above.

^c 0 = not mentored, 1 = mentored.

^d For mentoring relationship, 0 = nonsupervisor, 1 = supervisor. For mentoring support, 0 = psychosocial, 1 = career-related. Mentoring relationship and mentoring support are conditional on the presence of mentoring; therefore, correlations between mentoring and these variables cannot be computed.

^e 0 = separated, 1 = not separated.

* $p < .01$

commitment than protégés with nonsupervisor mentors, providing support for Hypothesis 2a. Type of support did not have a significant main effect for either affective commitment ($\bar{x} = 3.94$ vs. 3.93; $F_{1, 1,011} = 0.14$, n.s.) or continuance commitment ($\bar{x} = 2.66$ vs. 2.67; $F_{1, 1,012} = 1.23$, n.s.), failing to support Hypotheses 3a and 3b. The interaction between conditions of mentorship and type of support was not significant for either affective commitment ($F_{1, 1,011} = 0.30$, n.s.) or continuance commitment ($F_{1, 1,012} = 3.03$, n.s.), failing to support Hypotheses 4a and 4b.

Finally, we proposed that affective commitment and continuance commitment would mediate the relationship between mentoring and turnover be-

havior. We tested these hypotheses using Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach and logistic regression analysis when predicting turnover. Table 2 presents the logistic regression results. First, we established a significant relationship between mentoring and affective commitment ($\beta = 0.13$, $p = .00$). Second, we established a significant relationship between affective commitment and turnover ($\text{exp } b = .45$, $p = .00$). Third, we established a significant relationship between mentoring and turnover ($\text{exp } b = .62$, $p = .00$). In other words, engaging in a mentorship decreases the odds of turnover by 38 percent. In keeping with our expectations, when affective commitment was added to the final equation, the coefficient for mentoring

TABLE 2
Results of Logistic Regression Analysis for Turnover^a

Variable	<i>b</i>	s.e.	Wald Statistic	Exp <i>b</i>
Protégé gender	-0.29	0.14	4.69	0.75
Protégé age	0.04	0.04	0.95	1.04
Protégé race	-0.37	0.16	5.19	0.69
Protégé rank = 1st lieutenant	1.80	0.88	4.18	6.04
Protégé rank = captain	2.11*	0.85	6.16	8.27
Protégé rank = major	1.34	0.82	2.69	3.82
Protégé tenure	0.05	0.05	1.18	1.05
Affective commitment, time 2	-0.81*	0.12	49.71	0.45
-2 log-likelihood	1,575.82			
χ^2	88.38*			
Protégé gender	-0.29	0.13	4.84	0.75
Protégé age	0.05	0.04	1.46	1.05
Protégé race	-0.39*	0.16	6.02	0.68
Protégé rank = 1st lieutenant	1.18	0.87	1.85	3.25
Protégé rank = captain	1.44*	0.84	2.94	4.20
Protégé rank = major	0.56	0.80	0.49	1.76
Protégé tenure	0.03	0.04	0.41	1.03
Mentoring; time 1	-0.48*	0.15	10.53	0.62
-2 log-likelihood	1,620.75			
χ^2	44.98*			
Protégé gender	-0.29	0.14	4.55	0.75
Protégé age	0.04	0.04	1.08	1.04
Protégé race	-0.36	0.16	4.80	0.70
Protégé rank = 1st lieutenant	1.20	0.88	5.12	7.37
Protégé rank = captain	2.30*	0.86	7.22	9.94
Protégé rank = major	1.51	0.82	3.39	4.53
Protégé tenure	0.05	0.05	1.15	1.05
Mentoring, time 1	-0.37	0.15	5.63	0.69
Affective commitment, time 2	-0.77*	0.12	44.84	0.46
-2 log-likelihood	1,569.39			
χ^2	93.56*			

^a This analysis tested Hypothesis 5a. Coefficients are from the final step of the equation.

* $p < .01$

dropped ($\exp b = .69, p = .02.$); however, it remained significant. When affective commitment was held constant, engaging in a mentorship decreased the odds of turnover to 31 percent, suggesting a 7 percent change by the mediator. We further tested the significance of this change using Goodman's (1960) I version of Sobel's (1982) test and found it to be significant ($z = -3.89, p < .01$). This result suggests that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between mentoring and turnover, supporting Hypothesis 5a. Contrary to expectation, continuance commitment did not mediate the relationship between mentoring and turnover, as it did not significantly predict turnover in the presence of mentoring. Hypothesis 5b was thus not supported.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationships between mentoring, OC, and actual turnover behavior. While previous studies have examined relationships between these variables, few studies have explored the components of OC (affective and continuance commitment) or the influence of mentoring on turnover relative to OC. This study responds to calls for research on the conditions under which protégés benefit from mentorship and the mechanism underlying one benefit over time.

We found that protégés had higher levels of both affective commitment and continuance commitment than nonmentored employees one year later. Thus, mentoring may actually contribute to higher levels of affective and continuance commitment to an organization. An examination of the subdimensions of continuance commitment revealed that the construct's alternatives dimension was influenced more strongly by mentoring than its sacrifices dimension, suggesting that the protégés in this sample perceived fewer employment alternatives than the nonmentored employees.

We examined characteristics of mentorships in an effort to determine the circumstances in which mentoring is most likely to foster commitment. It should be noted that a large percentage of protégés (68%) reported having supervisors as their mentors. As expected, protégés with supervisor mentors reported higher affective commitment than protégés with nonsupervisor mentors. Supervisory mentorships differ from nonsupervisory mentorships on three dimensions: amount and type of mentoring support as well as perspective on and understanding of protégés. Future research is needed to determine if these differences explain why protégés with supervisory mentors have higher levels of affective commitment.

We hypothesized that protégés who received career-related mentoring support would have higher commitment than protégés who received psychosocial support, but we did not find support for this prediction. Our measurement of the mentoring support construct may have influenced our findings. The question used to measure type of support forced protégés to report only one type of support. Mentoring often consists of more than one function and has been measured accordingly in other studies (e.g., Scandura & Viator, 1994). In addition, Scandura (1992) identified role modeling as another form of support. Role modeling may be particularly relevant when studying supervisory mentoring. Future research should allow protégés to report more than one mentoring function.

Additionally, the majority of protégés (85%) reported receiving career-related support as opposed to psychosocial support from their mentors. This finding limited the variability on this measure, making it difficult to find a main effect for type of support or a significant interaction between the conditions of mentorship and type of support received. It may be that multiple forms of mentoring support may actually be ideal (Kram, 1988).

Previous studies of mentoring and turnover have rarely examined commitment or attempted to explain this relationship. Our research suggests that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between mentoring and turnover, suggesting that the reason why mentoring relates to turnover is in part facilitation of higher affective commitment in mentored employees. In other words, mentoring reduces turnover by enhancing affective commitment. Future research should seek to replicate this finding with other samples.

Managerial Implications

As has previous research on the organizational benefits of supervisory mentoring programs, this study indicates that protégés with supervisor mentors had higher levels of affective commitment than protégés with nonsupervisor mentors. This result suggests that organizations may want to explore the possibility of developing formal mentoring programs in which supervisors are identified as mentors. This idea also raises a question: To what extent should mentoring be required of supervisors and considered a part of their job-related roles and responsibilities? Perceptions regarding mentoring responsibilities are likely to vary from one supervisor to the next, as well as from one organization to the next. Organizations may need to incorporate this task into the formal roles and responsibilities of managers. At the same time, formal mentoring

programs are most likely to fail when mentors and protégés are assigned to each other and participation is not voluntary (Kram, 1988). In fact, Taibbi (1983) claimed that a mentorship could fail to develop if it is imposed on the individuals involved. The limited success of mandated mentoring might be the result of a lack of knowledge and training on the part of the mentors, not a result of resistance. There is also some recent research suggesting that the quality of a relationship and a protégé's satisfaction with a mentorship are more important than the mere existence of a mentorship (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). To avoid unsuccessful formal mentoring arrangements, organizations can offer training and guidance to ensure supervisors have the skills necessary to serve as effective mentors and follow up with protégés to ensure they are satisfied with the arrangements.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this study offers further information on the relationship between OC, mentoring, and turnover, some caution must be exercised when interpreting the results. The present study was limited to protégé self-reports from a sample of U.S. Army officers. Military members usually begin their careers with a contractual agreement for approximately four years of service, a fact that is likely to affect their continuance commitment. While the differences between a military and civilian sample are evident, it should be noted that some characteristics of our sample allow for inferences to be drawn and generalizations to be made to the civilian population. For example, the sample consisted of college-educated junior managers who had been in their current jobs approximately seven years; therefore, they were likely to have already completed their initial obligation. Mentoring programs are usually targeted at such young managers (Noe, 1988). Accordingly, our findings may also apply to similar samples in the civilian sector.

A second limitation to our study is our use of archival data to test hypotheses. As a result, our secondary analyses were limited to the data available, which made it necessary for us to use analog measures of affective commitment and continuance commitment and less than optimal measures of the mentoring variables (e.g., single items). Future research should employ validated scales to determine if our findings are anomalies. For a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between mentoring and commitment, researchers should also measure normative commitment, as researchers have recently suggested that it, too, might be enhanced by mentorship (Higgins & Kram,

2001). Future research should allow for more variability in the mentoring variables and measure some important control variables, such as the length of a mentoring relationship, the hierarchical or power distance characterizing the relationship, the degree of similarity between mentor and protégé, and the protégé's career stage and early career success. Future research should also include a measure of satisfaction with a mentorship, as this has recently been identified as an important moderator of the relationships between mentoring and OC and mentoring and turnover intentions (Ragins et al., 2000).

Finally, this study took place in a field setting that allowed for naturally occurring relationships to evolve, and mentoring was measured *before* the various outcomes. These are clearly strengths of our study, but it is possible that these protégés had unique characteristics, such as higher levels of motivation and competence, that made them more attractive employees to mentor in the first place (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997). For example, Kram (1983) suggested that mentors are attracted to employees with potential for advancement who are eager to learn and enjoyable to be around. These characteristics are also likely to relate to OC and turnover intentions. It should be noted, however, that the relationship between affective commitment and turnover did not change much when mentorship was added to the regression equation for predicting turnover, but the relationship between mentoring and turnover did drop when affective commitment was added to the equation. This pattern of results suggests that mentorship did precede commitment and that commitment is the mediator (see Table 2). It is also difficult to tease apart supervisor mentor and supervisor support in this study, making it less clear if supervisor mentoring or supervisor support drove the relationships we found.

In sum, the present study helps to explain the mentoring-turnover relationship. Protégés are less likely to quit because they have higher affective commitment. The relationship between mentoring and commitment is enhanced when supervisors serve as mentors. Future research is needed to delineate the mechanisms between mentoring and the various components of commitment.

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Stephanie C. Payne (scp@psyc.tamu.edu) is an assistant professor at Texas A&M University. She earned her Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology at George Mason University. Her research interests include individual differences, criterion development, and the antecedents of turnover.

Ann H. Huffman (annhuffman@tamu.edu) earned her Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology at Texas A&M University. Her research interests are work-life interface, military psychology, workplace turnover, and gender issues.



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