

Intentions to Initiate Mentoring Relationships: Understanding the Impact of Race, Proactivity, Feelings of Deprivation, and Relationship Roles

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ABSTRACT. The authors used a within-subjects experiment to examine the following influences on intentions to initiate informal mentorship: race similarity (RS), proactivity, feelings of race-related fraternal relative deprivation (RD), and roles in the potential mentoring dyads (roles). The authors instructed 126 White participants to assume the roles of upperclassmen or freshmen, provided them with the profiles of 12 potential protégés or mentors, and asked them to indicate their intentions to initiate mentorship. The authors found significant main effects of RS and proactivity, and a significant interaction effect between RS and proactivity. RD moderated the significant main effects. Roles also moderated the significant main effects and the interaction between RS and RD. The findings add to the literature of diversified mentoring and RD.

Keywords: mentorship initiation, proactivity, race similarity, relative deprivation, roles in mentoring dyads

MENTORING IS AN INTERPERSONAL EXCHANGE between an experienced senior colleague (mentor) and a less experienced junior colleague (protégé) in which the mentor provides the protégé with career functions related to career advancement and psychosocial functions related to personal development (Kram, 1988). For protégés, mentoring is a factor in attaining higher professional and personal rewards, including compensation, promotion, pay satisfaction, personal learning, commitment, and stress management (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, &

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Lima, 2004; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003). For mentors, mentoring may be a foreseeable element in their career and personal development (Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003).

Although much has been written about the importance of diversified mentoring relationships in organizations, there is little empirical work on such relationships, particularly in the area of cross-race mentoring relationships (O'Neill, 2002; Ragins, 1997a; Wanberg et al., 2003). Many researchers suggest that various barriers at the individual, group, and organizational levels prevent diversified mentoring relationships from flourishing (Ragins). Among the many barriers to diversified mentoring, obstacles related to mentorship initiation are especially important, as every mentoring relationship evolves through the phases of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Kram, 1988). The initiation phase establishes the foundation for the later phases, as the interaction between the potential mentors and protégés may play a key role in determining the duration, quality, and benefits of the mentorship. Researchers' failure to consider the role that mentorship initiation plays in the development of mentoring relationships may neglect important determinants of the development of nurturing mentoring relationships. Therefore, empirical inquiry into the factors present in the initiation phase will lead to a better understanding of mentorship development.

To date, we have found only two empirical studies that examine mentorship initiation (Scandura & Williams, 2001; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). However, these studies examine the effect of mentorship initiation after the relationships have been established. Therefore, these studies do not take into account the potential mentoring dyads that failed to build the mentoring relationships. Furthermore, these studies may assume that the dynamics of mentoring dyads whose mentorship development was successful are similar to those mentoring dyads whose mentoring relationships failed to develop, an assumption that may not be true. Consequently, these previous studies' findings are less applicable to potential mentoring dyads that fail to build mentoring relationships. Researchers have failed to explore factors that promote or hinder successful mentorship initiation, specifically the role that a person's characteristics play in mentorship initiation. Addressing this gap in the literature, we direct our research efforts toward factors that promote voluntary mentorship initiation and, specifically, the factors that operate before the relationship has been established.

Mentoring relationships can be categorized according to their formality. For formal mentoring relationships, organizations pair mentors and protégés with each other or provide specified regulations or activities that are associated with formal mentoring programs (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Informal mentoring relationships typically develop without formal pairing procedures or organizational incentives. Motivation to initiate an informal mentoring relationship is particularly important in an organization that lacks a formal mentoring program. Factors that influence mutual interpersonal attraction and include demographic similarities

and individual characteristics may affect mentorship initiation (Byrne, 1971; Ragins, 1997a). Barriers to mentorship initiations may be particularly critical for minorities in informal mentorship. Among the fewer than 20 empirical studies on race and mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003), we found only one study that examined the race effect relative to mentorship initiation (Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). However, the study focused on the effects that types of mentorship initiation have on mentoring functions and was based on ongoing mentoring relationships. Consequently, the study did not examine how race similarity (RS) affects intentions to initiate mentoring relationships.

In addition to RS, the degree to which one person in an informal mentorship relationship perceives the other member as being proactive may affect the development of the informal mentorship. Research on mentor or protégé selection suggests that both professional abilities and personality characteristics associated with proactivity in interpersonal interactions are the most influential factors in selection decisions and the amount of mentoring that protégés receive (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Therefore, being proactive may promote the other party's intentions to initiate mentorship. However, being proactive may contradict the stereotypes associated with individuals from certain social groups such as minority groups. Therefore, proactive behaviors that facilitate rewarding mentoring relationships in the context of nondiversified mentoring relationships may not operate in diversified mentoring relationships (Noe, 1988).

In sum, by addressing calls in the mentoring literature (Noe et al., 2002; O'Neill, 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003), we aimed to expand the knowledge related to potential barriers to diversified informal mentoring relationships in two ways. First, we investigated how individual difference variables affect intentions to initiate informal mentoring relationships. Second, we examined antecedents to mentorship development from the perspectives of mentors and protégés.

Individual Characteristics and Mentorship Initiation

RS. The similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) suggests that demographic similarity in race, sex, or age generates a positive impression and a mutual attraction, which leads to positive interactions. In contrast, demographic dissimilarity can generate negative impressions and discomfort, sometimes resulting in the physical or psychological withdrawal of individuals (Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999; Riordan, 2000). Under the rationale of the similarity-attraction paradigm, cross-race mentorships can be difficult to develop and may provide fewer mentoring functions than same-race mentorships (Cohen & Steele, 2002; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Thomas, 1993). In fact, Turban et al. (2002) found that individuals prefer to be in same-race mentorships. In addition, in formal mentorships, RS has a positive effect on mentoring outcomes (Ensher & Murphy). On the basis of the similarity-attraction paradigm and the aforementioned empirical

findings, it is reasonable to expect that RS in potential mentoring dyads may promote mentorship initiation by increasing the frequency of contact and the quality of communication. In contrast, individuals in cross-race mentoring dyads may avoid contact with one another unless the interaction is necessary, or they may feel comfortable only when the interaction is structured or mandated by organizations. Consequently, in the context of informal mentoring where organizational incentives are absent, individuals tend to voluntarily initiate same-race informal mentoring relationships because RS results in a greater increase in identification and attraction between potential mentors and protégés.

Hypothesis 1 (H_1): Individuals exhibit a greater intention to initiate same-race mentoring than they do to initiate cross-race mentoring.

Proactivity. Proactivity has been conceptualized as the degree to which an individual demonstrates certain behaviors not in a passive disposition to adapt to present conditions but in an intentional effort to change the status quo (Bateman & Crant, 1993, 1999; Crant, 1995, 2000). Studies on newcomer socialization indicate that proactive behaviors of newcomers can have a positive effect on relationship building during organizational entry (Ashford & Black, 1996; Settoon & Adkins, 1997). Research has also shown that proactivity relates to some aspects of mentorship initiation, such as consultation with senior colleagues (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Because mentorship initiation may reflect a type of relationship-building behavior in organizations, the proactivity of potential protégés may have a positive impact on the potential mentors' intentions to initiate an informal mentorship. Although we found no research that directly examined the role of proactivity in mentorship initiation, several characteristics that are sought by both mentors and protégés imply the importance of proactivity in mentorship initiation. It appears that proactivity may be an individual attribute sought by mentors and protégés, insofar as proactivity can be an indication of ability and potential (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999), and interpersonal skills and approachability (Ragins, 1997a). Findings on protégé selection suggest that mentors look for protégés who are competent, motivated, and exhibit high potential and learning orientation (Allen, 2004; Allen et al., 2000; Olivan, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993). Several important protégé attributes that mentors seek and that include displays of initiative and willingness to learn (Allen et al., 2000) may reflect a form of proactivity. Mentors may associate protégés' information-seeking behaviors with a willingness to learn and may perceive protégés who request challenging assignments as having enhanced abilities. As a result, mentors may consider protégés who demonstrate these proactive behaviors as having greater potential for success (Allen, 2004; Allen et al., 2000; Olivan et al., 1993; Ragins, 1997a). Thus, mentors may have higher intentions to initiate mentoring relationships with these potential protégés.

Proactive mentors may also attract potential protégés. Protégés tend to value mentor abilities, interpersonal skills, organizational power, and certain personality traits, including open-mindedness (Gaskill, 1991; Olivan, Carroll, Giannantonio, &

Feren, 1988). Crant and Bateman (2000) found that proactivity is related to the aforementioned characteristics. Potential protégés may also associate the proactivity of mentors with a reduction in mentoring-relationship barriers. Of the five identified barriers that protégés perceive in the mentoring relationship (Ragins & Cotton, 1991), three—access to mentor, fear of relationship initiation, and mentor willingness—can be negatively related to potential mentors' proactivity insofar as protégés may perceive proactive individuals to be more approachable, friendly, and willing to mentor others. Consequently, protégés may be more willing to voluntarily initiate mentoring relationships with highly proactive potential mentors.

H₂: The proactivity of potential mentors and potential protégés has a positive impact on intentions to initiate informal mentoring relationships.

Interaction Between RS and Proactivity

The mentoring literature reports mixed support for the premise that race affects access to mentoring and mentoring outcomes (Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003). These inconsistent findings imply the existence of moderators. In the present study, we believe that under the influence of social stereotyping, the effect of proactivity can be contingent on whether the mentoring relationship is diversified (Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1997a; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Thomas, 1993). Social stereotypes refer to widely held beliefs that concern behaviors attributable to a particular social group and that rest on, for example, sex or race. Social stereotypes categorize individuals into in-groups and out-groups so that individuals can develop perceptions of out-group members and respond to out-group members according to these stereotypes (Tajfel & Forgas, 2000). Stereotypes can distort the perceptions that people have regarding the competence or the performance of stigmatized social groups' members (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). For example, in-group members may perceive highly proactive individuals as ambitious, whereas out-group members may perceive them as hostile. When other social groups negatively interpret the proactivity of the potential mentors or protégés, the chances for a self-initiated mentoring relationship consisting of cross-race, rather than same-race, mentoring dyads lessen.

Moreover, the positive effect of proactivity may depend on the degree to which being proactive is consistent with the typicality of the expected social stereotypes. For example, one stereotype is that an Asian person should be receptive, rather than aggressive, in terms of interpersonal interactions. Proactive Asian protégés may not benefit from their proactivity if a potential non-Asian mentor perceives being proactive as atypical behavior of Asians. As a result, the potential mentor may be reluctant to initiate the mentoring relationship because the mentor is uncertain about how to respond to the proactive Asian protégé. Similar rationales can be applied to potential protégés when they negatively interpret proactive mentors of other racial groups.

H_3 : RS and proactivity jointly affect intention to initiate mentoring relationships.

Interaction Between RS and Feelings of Fraternal Relative Deprivation (RD)

RD theory helps illuminate mixed findings on the relations between diversified mentoring relationships and mentoring outcomes (e.g., Feldman, Folks, & Turnley, 1999; McGuire, 1999). It suggests that individuals' reactions to members of other social groups can be explained by the individuals' perceptions of how fairly their social group has been treated by society (Crosby, 1984). Feelings of RD occur when individuals want and feel entitled to an outcome, do not experience the outcome, and observe someone else who experiences the outcome (Crosby, 1984). Because power and intergroup relations are critical to relationship building between mentors and protégés from different social groups (Ragins, 1997a, 1997b), feelings of RD may moderate the relations between RS and mentorship initiation. Runciman (1966) noted that RD can be personal or fraternal. Personal RD results from individuals' comparisons of their own situations with others' personal situations. However, the focus of such a comparison is not associated with the status of one's social identity. Fraternal RD refers to the discontent associated with the status of one's social group relative to the status of other social groups. The distinction between personal and fraternal has important implications, as researchers have shown that (a) personal RD is connected to self-directed behaviors that reduce feelings of discontent and (b) fraternal RD predicts collective actions that promote the status of one's social group.

In diversified mentoring relationships where the social-group identities of the mentoring dyads are salient, fraternal RD associated with race may interact with the effect that RS has on mentorship initiation. On the one hand, fraternal RD may discourage cross-race mentorship initiation and promote same-race mentorship initiation from a resource-conservation perspective and lack of intergroup trust. For example, to save themselves for future potential same-race protégés, mentors high in fraternal RD may feel reluctant to initiate cross-race mentoring relationships. Protégés who exhibit strong fraternal RD may be hesitant to initiate informal mentoring relationships with potential mentors of other social groups because of the protégés' distrust of these potential mentors. On the other hand, fraternal RD may promote cross-race mentorship initiation and discourage same-race mentorship initiation. Individuals may be more likely to initiate a cross-race mentoring relationship when they perceive (a) potential mentors from other social groups to have more power or resources and (b) potential protégés from other social groups to have higher potential or abilities geared toward success. Because the interaction effect that fraternal RD and RS have on intentions to initiate mentoring relationships may be positive or negative, we did not propose any directional hypothesis.

H_{4a} : Feelings of RD moderate the effect of RS on intentions to initiate mentoring relationships.

H_{4b} : Feelings of RD moderate the joint effect of proactivity and RS.

Roles in Mentoring Dyads and Mentorship Initiation

Potential mentors and protégés differ from each other in terms of their resources, positions of power, tenure, social networks, and expectations for mentoring relationships. From a power perspective, individuals have their own agenda regarding whether they should get involved in a mentoring relationship (Ragins, 1997b). Therefore, roles in the potential mentoring dyad influence mentors' and protégés' intentions to initiate mentoring relationships. We found only one study that reported the percentages of informal mentoring relationships in which the relationships were initiated by the mentor (21%), the protégé (25%), or were mutually initiated (53%; Scandura & Williams, 2001). However, the results were on the basis of protégés' self-reports conducted after the mentoring relationship had been initiated. Therefore, additional studies are required before researchers can conclude whether mentors and protégés differ from each other in their attempts to voluntarily initiate informal mentoring relationships.

Because there is a lack of research on whether roles in mentoring relationships influence the initiation of mentoring relationships, we did not propose any directional hypotheses. Rather, we explored whether the individual's role in the potential dyads had the following effects on mentoring initiation:

H_5 : Roles in potential mentoring dyads affect intentions to initiate mentoring relationships.

H_{6a} : Roles in potential mentoring dyads moderate the effect of RS.

H_{6b} : Roles in potential mentoring dyads moderate the effect of proactivity.

H_7 : Roles in potential mentoring dyads moderate the interaction effect of proactivity and RS.

H_8 : Roles in potential mentoring dyads moderate the interaction effect of RS and feelings of RD.

Method

Participants

In all, 126 White undergraduate students (67 female students) at a southeastern university participated in this study for partial course credit in the spring of 2003. We used only White students in this study because understanding how the members of the majority react to nondiversified and diversified mentoring relationships is a first step to the examination of barriers to diversified mentoring. The average age of the participants was 19.45 years ($SD = 2.25$ years). The class standings of the participants were 48% freshmen, 31% sophomores, 12% juniors,

and 9% seniors. The participants' majors were management (23%), biology or premed (20%), social science (19%), journalism (8%), science (4%), education (9%), literature (3%), and undecided (14%).

Procedure

After the participants signed the consent form for the experiment, the experimenter explained the purpose of the study and informed participants that they would read a text about a fictitious department. According to the text, the department was implementing a new initiative to promote informal mentoring relationships between new students and upperclassmen to improve the learning experiences of new majors. We randomly assigned participants to either the role of an upperclassman (mentor condition) or the role of a new student (protégé condition). In the two conditions, the experimenter told the participants that they would be students of the fictitious department. The experimenter also told participants in the mentor condition that they would assume the role of upperclassmen. After they reviewed each of the 12 profiles of the potential protégés, the experimenter asked them to indicate the degree to which they intended to initiate the mentoring relationship with each potential protégé. The experimenter told participants in the protégé condition that they would assume the role of a newcomer. After reviewing each of the 12 profiles of the potential mentors, the experimenter asked them to indicate the degree to which they intended to initiate the mentoring relationship with each potential mentor. After evaluating the profiles, participants completed a follow-up survey that asked for their demographic information and feelings of fraternal RD. On completion of the experiment, the experimenter fully debriefed the participants and gave them contact information to use should they require additional information.

Ragins et al. (2000) indicated that mentoring relationships, like other work relationships, fall along a continuum of formality. Given the following three characteristics that distinguish informal from formal mentoring relationships (Ragins et al., 2000), we believe that the scenario in our study constitutes informal, rather than formal, mentoring. First, we did not assign the mentoring relationships. Second, we did not specify the structure of the mentoring relationships. Third, the purpose of the department's promoting of the mentoring relationships was to help newcomers achieve long-term goals, such as better adjustment in school life and better preparation for future careers, as opposed to short-term goals.

Scenario Factors

The first and second authors developed the profiles used in the experiment. The 12 profiles that described upperclassmen differed from one another in terms of the upperclassmen's race (Black or White), sex (male or female), and proactivity level (low, average, or high). Similarly, the 12 profiles that described

newcomers differed from one another in terms of the newcomers' race (Black or White), sex (male or female), and proactivity level (low, average, or high). These profiles also included a behavioral description of the proactivity level of each newcomer or upperclassman. Each profile differed from the others in one of the three descriptions (race, sex, and proactivity level).

The two within-subjects factors were RS (same-race and cross-race) and proactivity (high, average, and low). The two between-subjects factors were the role in the potential mentoring dyads (mentor, $n = 64$; protégé, $n = 62$) and feelings of RD related to race (low, $n = 60$; high, $n = 66$). The number of participants in the four between-subjects conditions were as follows: low RD mentors ($n = 34$), high RD mentors ($n = 30$), low RD protégés ($n = 32$), and high RD protégés ($n = 30$). Each cell had at least 30 observations and met the minimal requirement for analysis of variance (ANOVA; Keppel, 1991)

Control Variables

Sex. A person's sex is salient demographic information because sex is related to gender and, in particular, interpersonal interaction. For this reason, we controlled the gender effect in such a way that each combination of proactivity and race had one female and one male profile. This pattern resulted in a total of 12 profiles, of which 6 were female profiles and 6 were male profiles.

Ability. Research indicates that the ability of potential mentors and protégés is an important factor that could influence mentor (Olian et al., 1988) and protégé selection (Allen et al., 2000). By describing all individuals as having an average level of ability, we controlled for possible confounding effects because of the perceived ability of the potential mentors and protégés in the profile.

Measures

Intentions to initiate mentorship. In this study, the first and second authors developed the six items used to measure participants' intentions to initiate the mentoring relationship. Each item was measured by six items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The following is a sample item: "I would initiate the mentoring relationship with the upperclassman (or the new student) described." The internal consistency coefficient of the measure was .84. An examination of the normality of intentions to initiate the mentoring relationship in the 12 profiles revealed that all tests for Kolmogorov-Smirnov were significant (values ranged from .09 to .16), suggesting the normality assumption was violated. The values of variable skewness ranged from -1.46 to -0.49, whereas the values of kurtosis ranged from -.10 to 4.52. However, because we had equal cell n s for all within-subjects factors and the differences between cell n s for between-subjects factors ranged from 2

to 6, the violation of normality did not pose a severe threat to the results of our analyses (Boneau, 1960).

Feelings of fraternal RD. The first and second authors developed both items used to measure feelings of race-related fraternal RD, and the development rested on the definition of fraternal RD (Crosby, 1982; Runciman, 1966). The two items were (a) "compared to other racial groups, overall, people like me are at a disadvantage in this society" and (b) "compared to other racial groups, overall, people like me are treated unfairly by this society." Items were measured on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The internal consistency coefficient was .87. We used a medium-split procedure (medium = 3) to divide the participants into two groups: high relative RD and low RD.

Follow-up questionnaire. The follow-up questionnaire contained items regarding the background information of participants, including their sex, race, age, major, and class standing.

Results

RS and Proactivity

We used a four-factor mixed-design ANOVA to analyze the data. We used Bonferroni's adjustment for post hoc comparisons to identify the significant differences found in the ANOVA. Table 1 presents the results of the ANOVA. Consistent with H_1 , RS had a significant effect, $F(1, 122) = 7.65, p < .01$, such that participants were more likely to initiate same-race mentoring ($M = 3.48, SD = 0.05$) than cross-race mentoring ($M = 3.54, SD = 0.04$). Consistent with H_2 , our findings indicated a significant effect of proactivity, $F(2, 244) = 155.43, p < .01$. Participants were more likely to initiate mentoring relationships with highly proactive individuals ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.05$), followed by moderately proactive individuals ($M = 3.60, SD = 0.04$), and last, low proactive individuals ($M = 3.13, SD = 0.05$). The data supported H_3 , as the interaction between RS and proactivity was significant, $F(2, 244) = 8.35, p < .01$. Results of three post hoc comparisons at three different levels of proactivity suggested that participants' preference for an initiation of same-race mentoring over an initiation of cross-race mentoring was only significant at the high proactive level, $t(125) = 4.50, p < .017$, not at the moderate, $t(125) = 1.17, p = .25$, or low proactive levels, $t(125) = .39, p = .70$.

RD as a Moderator

Consistent with H_{4a} , feelings of fraternal RD concerning race moderated the effect of RS, $F(1, 122) = 4.18, p < .05$. Specifically, we found participants' preference for an initiation of same-race mentoring over an initiation of cross-race

TABLE 1. Analysis of Variance for Intentions to Initiate Mentorship

Source of variable	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>MSE</i>	<i>p</i>
Between subjects				
Form (F)	1	13.08**		.00
Error	122		1.38	
Within subjects				
Race Similarity (RS)	1	7.65**		.00
R × Race Relative Deprivation (RD)	1	4.18*		.04
R × Form (F)	1	4.79*		.03
R × RD × F	1	4.13*		.04
R within-subjects error	122		0.07	
Proactivity (P)	2	155.43**		.00
P × RD	2	3.28*		
P × RD × F	2	23.07*		
P within-subjects error	244		0.19	
P × R	2	8.35**		.00
P × R × F	2	1.99		.14
P × R × RD	2	1.12		.33
P × R within-subjects error	244		0.02	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

mentoring only among the participants with strong feelings of RD, $t(1, 65) = 3.10$, $p < .01$, not among participants with weak feelings of fraternal RD, $t(1, 65) = .55$, $p = .60$. H_{4a} was not supported, as the feelings of fraternal RD concerning race did not moderate the interaction effect between proactivity and racial similarity, $F(2, 244) = 1.12$, $p = .33$.

Roles in Potential Mentoring Dyads

Our data supported H_5 , $F(1, 122) = 13.08$, $p < .01$, as potential mentors were more willing to initiate mentoring ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.06$) than were potential protégés ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.06$). The data supported H_{6a} , as roles in potential mentoring dyads moderated the effect of RS, $F(1, 122) = 4.79$, $p < .05$. However, post hoc comparisons suggested that the preference for same-race mentoring over cross-race mentoring was found only in participants as protégés, $t(61) = 3.03$, $p < .01$, not in participants as mentors, $t(63) = .45$, $p < .66$. Consistent with H_{6b} , roles in potential mentoring dyads moderated the effect of proactivity, $F(2, 244) = 23.07$, $p < .01$, in such a way that participants as mentors were significantly more willing to initiate mentoring relationships than were participants as protégés: These findings correspond to the low proactive level, $t(125) = 34.90$, $p < .01$, and moderate proactive level, $t(125) = 6.09$, $p < .05$, but not to the high

proactive level. Our data failed to support H_7 , as roles in potential mentoring dyads did not moderate the interaction effect between proactivity and RS, $F(2, 244) = 1.99$, $p = .14$. However, post hoc comparisons revealed that participants as mentors preferred only same-race mentoring at the high proactive level, $t(63) = 2.13$, $p < .01$, not at the low, $t(63) = -1.54$, $p = .13$, or moderate, $t(63) = .59$, $p = .56$, proactive levels. Unlike participants as mentors, participants as protégés preferred same-race mentoring at the low, $t(61) = 2.09$, $p < .05$, and high, $t(61) = 4.25$, $p < .01$, proactive levels, not at the moderate proactive level, $t(61) = 1.00$, $p = .32$. Consistent with H_8 , the interaction effect between RS and race-related feelings of RD was moderated by roles in potential mentoring dyads, $F(1, 122) = 4.13$, $p < .05$. We found a significant interaction effect between RS and feelings of race-related RD only in the protégé condition, $F(1, 60) = 7.19$, $p < .01$, not in the mentor condition, $F(1, 62) = 0.00$, $p = .96$. In other words, we found that regardless of the level of mentors' race-related RD feelings, the mentors had no preference about whether to initiate same-race over cross-race mentoring relationships. Similarly, protégés with low race-related RD feelings did not exhibit this preference in mentorship initiation. However, protégés with high race-related RD feelings were more likely to initiate same-race than cross-race mentoring relationships.

Discussion

In the present study, we examined the effects that individual characteristics and roles in potential mentorship had on intention to initiate mentoring relationships. Our findings confirm the assertion that proactivity and RS have positive effects on intentions to initiate informal mentoring. The study also provides preliminary evidence that mentors and protégés may differ from each other in their intentions to initiate mentoring relationships and their reactions to factors that influence mentorship initiation. Our findings also emphasize the complexity of diversified mentoring.

This study advances the literature on informal mentorship initiations in four ways. First, our study confirms the assertion that RS has a positive effect on mentorship-initiation intentions. By studying intentions to initiate mentoring relationships before the mentoring relationship has been developed, our findings illuminated one potential explanation for the mixed findings of the effect that RS has on mentoring. Because most previous mentoring studies were conducted after mentoring relationships had been developed (Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003), those studies failed to identify a significant effect of RS on mentoring that may be a result of a range of restrictions. That is, for cross-race mentoring relationships that have undergone successful development, not only the dynamics between mentor and protégé but also the mentoring functions that mentors provide may be similar to those of same-race mentoring relationships. In contrast, for cross-race mentoring relationships that have failed to take root or develop,

the dynamics between the potential mentor and potential protégé may be quite different from those of same-race mentoring relationships. However, because of the cross-sectional nature of our study, longitudinal studies are needed to validate the above explanations. Furthermore, our study suggests that protégés seem to be more sensitive to the effect of RS than are mentors. This finding has two implications for diversified mentoring. On the one hand, protégés may perceive more access barriers to diversified mentorship initiation than do mentors, whereas the mentors do not prefer nondiversified mentoring. Under this circumstance, organizations may provide protégés with initiatives that help protégés eliminate their fear of actively interacting with potential mentors of other races. On the other hand, the finding may also indicate a barrier to minority mentors' access to cross-race mentoring, as our participants were all White. That is, White protégés preferred White proactive mentors as opposed to Black proactive mentors, whereas such a preference did not surface for White mentors. In short, the finding that individuals generally prefer to initiate same-race rather than cross-race mentoring echoes the often-mentioned access barrier in diversified mentoring (Ragins, 1997a, 1997b).

Second, our study extends researchers' knowledge of the positive effect that proactive behaviors have on relationship building from the context of organizational socialization (Ashford & Black, 1996) to that of mentoring. Although the benefits of proactive behaviors in career advancement are well documented by empirical studies (Bateman & Crant, 1993, 1999; Crant, 2000), our study is the first to incorporate the construct of proactivity into the context of mentoring. Our findings indicate that potential mentors and protégés generally perceive being proactive as more attractive than not being proactive. However, both mentors and protégés preferred to initiate mentoring relationships with same-race counterparts, as opposed to cross-race counterparts, when the counterparts had high levels of proactivity. This finding highlights a complex nature of barriers to diversified mentoring (Ragins, 1997a, 1997b).

Third, the present study broadens researchers' understanding of the role that fraternal RD plays in intergroup interactions in the context of mentoring, as previous studies on RD have not examined the effect that RD has on mentorship initiation (Crosby, 1982). Individuals with strong feelings of race-related fraternal RD generally prefer same-race mentoring. When individuals have strong feelings of race-related fraternal RD, they are less likely to mentor cross-race protégés. Thus, when White mentors feel that White individuals are reverse-discriminated against, they will intentionally avoid mentoring minority protégés, especially when they assume a color-blind diversity perspective or believe that minority status somewhat helped individuals from other racial groups achieve their current status in the organizations. These complex findings illustrate the significance of stereotyping, White racial-identity development, and modern racism (McConahay, 1983) in impeding beneficial diverse mentoring relationships in a subtle manner of which most individuals (majority and minority) may not be aware.

Unfortunately, individuals and organizations can easily rationalize these barriers, suggesting the difficulty that organizations face in developing effective mentoring programs that promote diverse mentoring relationships when these mechanisms behind the subtle but powerful barriers are not acknowledged.

Last, the findings that race-related fraternal RD and individuals' roles in mentoring dyads moderated how individuals reacted to factors that influenced intentions to initiate mentoring relationships highlight the complex nature of mentorship initiation. That is, the same-race mentoring preference was particularly strong for protégés with high levels of fraternal RD. The asymmetric effect of feelings of race-related fraternal RD can also be a result of the differences in power and resources that individuals assume and the fact that trust is an integral component in mentorship (Ragins, 1997b). Because a strong feeling of fraternal RD may be related to high intergroup mistrust, protégés high in fraternal RD may try to seek a mentor who treats them fairly, as opposed to a mentor who has high organizational resources. Moreover, individuals with strong feelings of race-related fraternal RD may also tend to have strong feelings of mistrust toward cross-race mentors. As many researchers have acknowledged that mistrust is an important component that can impact the quality of cross-race relationships (e.g., Cohen & Steele, 2002), protégés only become more involved in same-race mentoring relationships. However, mentors may be more sensitive to behaviors that are associated with discrimination and careful about the allocation of the power and resources associated with their positions, expertise, or seniority over their preferred protégés. As a result, mentors may not explicitly express their preference for same-race mentoring to prevent explicit discrimination. These findings also echo mentoring literature's assertion that because mentors and protégés may have different perspectives and agendas concerning the development of mentorship, more empirical studies on mentoring relationships should take into account mentors' perspectives. When investigating factors that may influence diversified mentoring relationships, researchers may find the factors that are associated with intergroup interaction or social-group stereotypes illuminate the nature of diversified mentoring relationships (Ragins, 1997a).

Limitations and Future Research

This study's design gives rise to some limitations. For example, the laboratory context and the White-student sample are important limitations to consider. The laboratory context limits the interaction between the individuals in potential mentoring dyads. When individuals have many opportunities to observe and interact with potential mentors and protégés, their responses may be different from the findings that emerged in the present research context. In addition, students usually have limited experiences regarding power issues in the workplace. As power issues are embedded in diversified mentoring (Ragins, 1997a, 1997b), future studies on mentorship initiation should use industry samples to examine the com-

plex dynamics of power-induced mentoring. Furthermore, all of our participants were White, which calls into question whether our findings can be extended to minority individuals. We recommend that researchers engage in further research to include participants of different ethnic groups.

In our research, we took a limited perspective on diversity by focusing on RS, which we examined only in regard to reactions to Blacks and Whites. Future research should examine how other social-group variables such as gender, age, sexual orientation, and the interactions of these variables affect mentorship initiation. Responses to questions combining race and gender in terms of diversified mentoring would be of particular interest because different race and gender combinations may be associated with different types of taboos (Thomas, 1993). Consequently, each combination may be different in terms of its effects on mentorship initiation. Moreover, because different races have stereotypes unique to them (Cohen & Steele, 2002), examining other racial groups may yield findings different from those revealed in the present study. This consideration is particularly important when researchers examine the joint effects that racial stereotypes and possibly related individual characteristics have on mentorship initiations. Another diversity variable would be age insofar as the effect that age difference has on interpersonal interaction is asymmetric (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). We expect that the dynamic of an older mentor–younger protégé dyad to be different from the dynamic of a younger mentor–older protégé dyad.

Future research on stereotyping, stereotype threats, modern racism, and racial-identity development can help researchers untangle the complicated nature of diversified mentorship initiation relative to the interaction effects between individual difference variables. One important research question is whether it is only when a person acts according to the stereotype of his or her social group and the relational demography (similarity or dissimilarity) in the mentoring dyad is consistent with relational norms (Tsui, Porter, & Egan, 2002) that the person is willing to engage in diversified mentoring. Findings on the aforementioned issues can help organizations identify types of diversified mentoring relationships that affect the emerging paradigm of diversity. Consequently, organizations can benefit from their diverse workforce (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Future research on these issues is particularly important in terms of its application to the designs that underlie programs or initiatives promoting diversified mentorship.

There is also a need for mentoring research that encompasses both mentors' and protégés' perspectives. This study provides preliminary evidence that roles in mentoring dyads may have different effects on mentorship initiation. As most mentoring research has focused on protégés, future research should include the perspectives of mentors (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997) and extend researchers' understanding of mentoring.

In conclusion, the present research contributes to the research on mentorship initiation and diversified mentorships. This study is the first to integrate RD theory, relational demography, mentors' perspectives, and protégés' perspectives

into a rigorous treatment of diversified mentoring relationships. The findings highlight the importance of considering the complex interplay of multiple factors in the dynamic and complex mentor relationship.

AUTHOR NOTES

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