

Presenter Symposium – AOM #11032**PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF POSITIVE WORK RELATIONSHIPS****Organizers:**

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Presenters (*) and Coauthors:**The Importance of Leader Mindsets in Leader-Follower Relationships**

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Self-Disclosure in Leader-Follower Relationships: An Examination of Gender Differences

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Appreciation at Work: An Exploratory Study

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Uncertainty Reduction in Mentoring Relationships

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Potential Sponsor Divisions: Organizational Behavior, Managerial and Organizational Cognition, Careers

The symposium organizers, Jeffrey Yip and Sevelyn VanRonk, have received the statements from all intended participants agreeing to participate in the entire symposium and stating that they are not in violation of the Rule of Three + Three.

ABSTRACT

Positive work relationships are an important condition for individual well-being and engagement in organizations. They are a central conduit for the improvement of lives, in and out of organizations. This symposium examines the conditions that enable positive work relationships to develop and thrive in organizations. Each paper in this symposium will examine a specific psychological process and present findings from empirical research. The first paper, by Ryan Gottfredson and colleagues, examines the role of mindsets and attributions in the development of trust and positive leader-follower relationships. The second paper, by Sharon Hong and Jeffrey Yip, assess the role of self-disclosure in leader-follower relationships, as well the impact of the leader's gender on how self-disclosure is received by followers. The third paper by Kathryn Doiron, Christina Putrov, Sharon Hong, and Somi Aggarwal examines the psychological processes of appreciation in work relationships. The final paper, by Jelena Zikic and Kyle Ehrhardt examines the role of uncertainty reduction in building high quality mentoring relationships. The symposium will conclude with remarks from Wendy Murphy who will comment across all four papers and discuss the practical implications of this research for organizations.

Keywords: Work Relationships, Social Exchange, Social Cognition, Leadership, Mentoring

OVERVIEW OF SYMPOSIUM

The improvement of lives, through positive work relationships, is a central concern in organizational scholarship and a focus of this symposium (Colbert, Bono, Purvanova, 2016; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Gersick, Bartunke, & Dutton, 2000; Gittell, 2016; Ragins & Dutton, 2007). Meaningful and supportive relationships are important to the development of personal agency (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and empowered action (Miller & Stiver, 1997). In particular, positive work relationships have been found to predict organizational commitment (Liden & Wayne, 2000), employee energy (Owens, Baker, Sumpter, & Cameron, 2016), learning (Lankau & Scandura, 2002), identity development (Ibarra, 1999), and personal growth towards one's ideal self (Drigotas, 2002; Ragins, 2011). While the benefits of work relationships are clearly established, we know less about its psychological antecedents. In response, this symposium brings together four empirical papers that examine distinct psychological processes in the development of positive work relationships.

Positive work relationships are *appetitive*, characterized by the pursuit of rewarding and desired outcomes, while negative ones are *aversive*, or characterized by undesired and harmful outcomes (Reis & Gable, 2002). Positive relationships not only help encourage employees to perform at their best, but help organizations by maintaining productive employees. While social interactions in the workplace can take several forms (leader-member exchanges, team-member exchanges, mentorship, etc.), research is needed to understand the psychological mechanisms that underlie such relationships. More specifically, psychological mechanisms directed towards individual and social cognition in shaping relationship outcomes.

Psychological research on work relationships has focused primarily on the challenges associated with negative workplace interactions. This reflects the tendency in the organizational

scholarship to focus on problem solving, rather than resource generation (Luthans, 2002). Research in the areas of positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003) and positive organization psychology (Donaldson & Ko, 2010) have attempted to expand the repertoire of available topics and strategies and move beyond the study of negative workplace interactions. Drawing from this perspective, the symposium seeks to expand the understanding of the many psychological processes that serve as a foundation for positive work relationships in organizations.

The first paper, by Ryan Gottfredson and colleagues, examines the role of leader mindsets and attributions in the development of trust and positive leader-follower relationships. More specifically, the authors examine three particular types of attributions – attributions of the leader’s consideration of organizational goals, follower interests, and the leader’s self-interest. The authors examine the consequence of these attributions on follower trust in leaders.

The second paper, by Sharon Hong and Jeffrey Yip, examine the role of self-disclosure in leader-follower relationships, as well as differences in how followers receive self-disclosure from male versus female leaders. Self-disclosure plays a vital role in developing and maintaining relationships in the workplace. The effect of self-disclosure from top-tier leaders on coworkers’ perceptions of warmth and competence has not been closely examined in prior research. Using multi-source data from executives and their direct reports, the authors examine the relationship between leader self-disclosure and the perceptions of leader warmth and competence. In addition, the study examines how the gender of the leader might moderate the relationship between leader self-disclosure and follower perceptions.

The third paper by Kathryn Doiron, Christina Putrov, Sharon Hong, and Somi Aggarwal examines the psychological processes of appreciation in work relationships. Through a

qualitative study and systematic analysis of interviews, the authors examine differences between positive and negative experiences of appreciation. In addition to identifying patterns of appreciation, they examine why people express and receive appreciation at work. Results from the study reveal that the outcomes of expressing and receiving appreciation are context-dependent.

The final paper, by Jelena Zikic and Kyle Ehrhard examines the role of uncertainty reduction in building high quality mentoring relationships. Through a qualitative and matched-sample study of 50 mentor-protégé pairs in a culturally diverse formal mentoring program, the authors uncover key mechanisms for constructing positive relationships in diverse relational contexts. They found that the way in which mentors and protégé negotiated and attempted to resolve uncertainties proved critical, as it laid the groundwork for how their relationship was able to progress in varying degrees of quality. This experience helped to establish a foundation of trust between mentors and protégés, and created a norm of openness that carried through the mentoring relationship.

Following these four presentations, the remaining twenty-five minutes of the symposium will be devoted to an interactive session with attendees, led by our discussant, Dr. Wendy Murphy. Dr. Murphy is an organizational behavior, careers, and mentoring scholar; and co-author of the book *Strategic Relationships at Work* (2014). She will comment on how advances in research will translate into practical applications in the field. Drawing on the four presentations as a foundation, this interactive session will focus on building new lines of inquiry that can be identified and will address the intricacies of high quality relationships in organizations.

RELEVANCE TO DIVISIONS

The focus of this symposium – on the psychological foundations of positive work relationships – speaks directly to the All Academy Theme of “Improving Lives”. Positive work relationships serve as an antecedent *and* an outcome for improved lives in organizations. It is a topic central to a number of divisions in the Academy of Management.

This symposium has particularly strong connections with research in the Organizational Behavior, Managerial and Organizational Cognition, and Careers division. The focus of this symposium includes a diverse panel of established and emerging scholars in organizational behavior and concludes with a discussion led by Wendy Murphy, a leading scholar in the areas of careers and mentoring.

Organizational Behavior

The symposium will address a number of issues that are central to the Organizational Behavior division, including “interpersonal processes” and their influence “on individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational outcomes” (OBDiv). The symposium will present perspectives that will refine current perspectives on interpersonal processes in organizations, particularly in the context of leader-follower and mentoring relationships. Each paper examines specific psychological mechanisms in work relationships, such as: mindsets (Gottfredson et al.), self-disclosure (Hong & Yip), appreciation (Doiron, Putrov, Hong, & Aggarwal), and uncertainty reduction (Zikic & Ehrhardt). In addition, this symposium contributes to community building with the OB Division, with a focus that resonates with Positive Relationships at Work Microcommunity (<http://positiveorgs.bus.umich.edu/micro/>).

Managerial and Organizational Cognition

The symposium is relevant to the Managerial and Organizational Cognition division

through its focus on social cognitive processes in work relationships. All four papers examine perceptual and meaning-making antecedents to positive work relationships. In particular, Gottfredson et al. explore the role of mental models and attributions in shaping leader-follower relationships, while Hong and Yip's paper discuss how perceptions of leader self-disclosure are associated with attributions of leader effectiveness. The third paper of the symposium (Doiron et al) examines both positive and negative perceptions associated with expressing and receiving appreciation. The final paper of the symposium (Zikic and Ehrhardt) examines how uncertainty reduction can be a positive social cognitive mechanism in building trust and developing high quality mentoring relationships. Altogether, the papers within this symposium attend to relationships as a social cognitive phenomenon – an approach that is salient to the MOC division.

Careers

Career scholars have emphasized the need for a relational and social cognitive approach to careers (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Parker, Hall, Kram 2008). The first paper, by Gottfredson and colleagues, examines the psychological dynamics of mindsets and attribution in leader-follower relationships. The understanding of mindsets and social cognition is a growing area in careers research (Heslin, Keating, & Minbashian, in press). Hong and Yip's paper examines how self-disclosure might be a double-edged sword for executive careers. Doiron and colleagues discuss how appreciation can contribute to positive career outcomes for both the giver and receiver of appreciation. The concluding paper of this symposium, by Zikic and Ehrhardt, is particularly salient to careers research – the researchers examine the novel role of uncertainty reduction in mentoring relationships. Our symposium discussant, Wendy Murphy, is a careers and mentoring scholar. Her comments will focus on the relevance of the four papers in advancing a relational approach to careers and organizational behavior.

PROPOSED FORMAT OF SYMPOSIUM

Length: 90 minutes

Minutes 0-5: Welcome and introduction to the symposium.

- Presenter: Jeffrey Yip and Sevelyn VanRonk

Minutes 5-65: Paper presentations (15 minutes each)

- The Importance of Leader Mindsets in Leader-Follower Relationships
Presented by Ryan Gottfredson
- Self-Disclosure in Leader-Follower Relationships: An Examination of Gender Differences
Presented by Sharon Hong
- Appreciation at work:
Presented by Kathryn Doiron
- Uncertainty Reduction in Mentoring Relationships
Presented by Jelena Zikic

Minutes 65-90: Discussant comments and interactive dialogue with session attendees □

- Discussant: Wendy Murphy

PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

The Importance of Leader Mindsets in Leader-Follower Relationships

Ryan K. Gottfredson, Lisa Schurer Lambert, Mark Hiatt, & Anna Zabinski

Organizational research has repeatedly found that high quality relationships between followers and leaders lead to a wide variety of positive outcomes for employees and organizations, including job attitudes and performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Gottfredson & Aguinis, 2017). One of the most useful indicators of the strength of this important relationship is followers' trust in their leaders (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). As such, organizational researchers have been interested in what drives followers' trust in their leaders. One of the primary drivers of such trust is the type and amount of leadership provided to the followers (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In fact, a variety of specific leadership behaviors including showing support, guiding task performance, and fostering innovation have been positively related to followers' trust in their leader and subsequent performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In short, there is strong support for the idea that what leaders do for their followers is an important factor in how leaders develop quality relationships with their followers.

Followers do attend to how leaders behave towards them, but we propose that followers also attend to *why* leaders act the way they do (Eberly & Fong, 2013). For instance, followers may perceive that one leader implements a workplace safety program because it is related to an organizational goal while another leader may implement the safety program because he or she is seriously concerned about workers' physical health and preventing injuries. Thus, both leaders in our example engage in the same behavior but for apparently different reasons. We refer to this idea of 'why leaders do what they do' as a mindset. Specifically, mindsets are mental frames that

orient individuals toward a distinct way of thinking, understanding experiences, and guiding them toward specific actions and responses (Crum, Salovey, & Achor, 2013). The vast majority of the research on the relationship between leadership and leader-follower relationship quality has focused on leadership behaviors, or what leaders do. We are interested in determining the role followers' perceptions of their leaders' mindsets, or 'why leaders do what they do,' influences the relationship between leadership behaviors and leader-follower relationship quality.

In this exploratory study, we propose three types of attributions that followers may make regarding their leaders' mindsets. First, followers may perceive that their leader is primarily focused on organizational goals and objectives, or what is best for the organization (organizational mindset). A second type of mindset may be the extent to which followers believe that their leader is motivated to further his or her followers' best interests and help them succeed (follower mindset). Third, followers may infer that the leader is focused on his or her own self-interest and personal gain (self-interest mindset). We do not envision these three mindsets as mutually exclusive, but suggest that that leaders may be viewed as high on all three, or low, or in any combination of amount.

The specific purposes of our study are to demonstrate that leaders' mindsets (1) directly influences followers' trust in their leaders, and (2) moderates the relationship between leadership behaviors and trust. Specifically, we reason that the effect of follower-focused mindsets positively moderates the relationship between leadership behaviors and trust, while self-focused mindsets negatively moderate the relationship between leadership behaviors and trust.

We tested our exploratory propositions using survey data from 225 employees who provided customer assistance, scheduled appointments, and followed up on orders in a call center environment for a major retailer in the southeast U.S. Trust in the supervisor, and three types of

leadership behavior (relational, task behavior, change leadership) were each assessed with three item scales. Three item scales were developed for each of the three mindsets. Respondents reported “how much does this describe your leader” for organizational (e.g. “Is motivated to help *Company Name* meet its goals.”), follower (e.g. “Cares primarily about helping employees succeed.”) and self-interested (e.g. “Focused on his/her own self-interest.”) mindsets.

Each of the three leadership behaviors was combined with each mindset, in turn, for a total of nine relationships tested. Despite significant chi-square tests, CFA results for each of these nine relationships provided evidence of construct validity with acceptable approximate goodness of fit indices, high loadings and little evidence of cross loadings (see Table 1). Trust was regressed on to a leadership behavior (relational, task, or change) and results confirmed that these behaviors were positively related to trust. Next mindset and a product term (leader behavior x mindset) to test moderation were added to the equation. As we explain next, results shown in Tables 2-4 offer evidence largely consistent with our suppositions. For eight of nine relationships, mindsets explained variance above and beyond leadership behavior consistent with our first research purpose. Mindset moderated the effect of leader behavior on trust for four of the nine relationships. For all nine relationships, the effect of the leader behavior declined when adding the combination of the direct effect of mindset and the product term to the equations and these explained significant increase in variance ranging from $\Delta R^2=.02$ to $\Delta R^2=.16$. We conclude support for our assertion that understanding employees’ assessments of leaders’ mindsets usefully explains trust in supervisors beyond that explained leaders’ behaviors.

For four of our relationships, mindset moderated the effect of leader behavior on trust in supervisor. The moderating effect of follower mindsets on behavior was negative such that when follower mindset was low, increases in the leader behavior (i.e. relational and change leadership)

were more strongly associated with increases in trust than when follower mindset was high (see graphs). These results suggest that when employees perceive that their leaders are not focused on employees' best interests, increases in relational and change leadership behavior are related to increased trust. However, when perceived follower focus is high, increases in leadership behavior have a more modest effect on trust. Similarly, the effect of increases in change leadership on trust is stronger when organizational mindset is low rather than high. These results hint that perhaps positive intentions toward followers and the organization can buffer the effects of low amounts of positive leadership behavior. This pattern is reversed for the self-interested mindset. When employees perceive that their leader is low on self-interest, trust is higher and increases in change leadership behavior are positively associated with trust. However, when self-interested mindset is high, trust is overall lower but increasing change leadership behavior can offset this negative effect and is related to increasing trust.

Our results suggest that it is not only what leaders *do* (leader behavior) but also employees' beliefs about *why* they do what they do (perceptions of mindsets) that is associated with their trust in their leaders. Our exploratory results suggest that employees' perceptions of mindsets may be a useful adjunct to leaders' behaviors when understanding leaders' effectiveness (e.g. trust) in the leader-follower relationship. Furthermore, there is initial evidence to suggest that leaders' mindsets can bolster the effect of leader behaviors when those mindsets are positively oriented to the organization and to followers but may degrade the effects of leader behavior when the mindsets are self-interested. This preliminary evidence regarding employees' perceptions of leader mindsets might be the impetus for developing a theoretically articulated approach that can be rigorously tested in diverse settings.

Table 1. Goodness of Fit Statistics

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA Estimate	RMSEA 90% CI		CFI
				LOW	HIGH	
1 Self Interest / Task Performance	54.35***	24	.08	.05	.10	.99
2 Self Interest / Relational	31.83	24	.04	.00	.07	>.99
3 Self Interest / Change	26.79	24	.02	.00	.06	>.99
4 Organizational / Task Performance	56.64***	24	.08	.05	.11	.99
5 Organizational / Relational	31.83	24	.04	.00	.07	>.99
6 Organizational / Change	53.71***	24	.08	.05	.10	.99
7 Follower / Task Performance	72.09***	24	.10	.07	.12	.98
8 Follower / Relational	72.02***	24	.09	.07	.12	.98
9 Follower / Task Performance	47.99***	24	.07	.04	.09	.99

* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$; N ranged from 221-227

Table 2. Relational Behavior

Variable	Relational Behavior Only Model	Organizational Mindset Moderated Model	Follower Mindset Moderated Model	Self Mindset Moderated Model
Relational behavior	.82***	.62***	.30***	.72***
Mindset	-	.40***	.47***	-.14***
Task behavior X Mindset	-	.02	-.07**	.03
Model R ²	.59***	.63***	.69***	.61***

* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$; N ranged from 222-225

Table 3. Task Behavior

Variable	Task Behavior Only Model	Organizational Mindset Moderated Model	Follower Mindset Moderated Model	Self Mindset Moderated Model
Task behavior	.88***	.56***	.32***	.74***
Mindset	-	.45***	.57***	-.20***
Task behavior X Mindset	-	-.01	-.04	.05
Model R ²	.51***	.56***	.67***	.55***

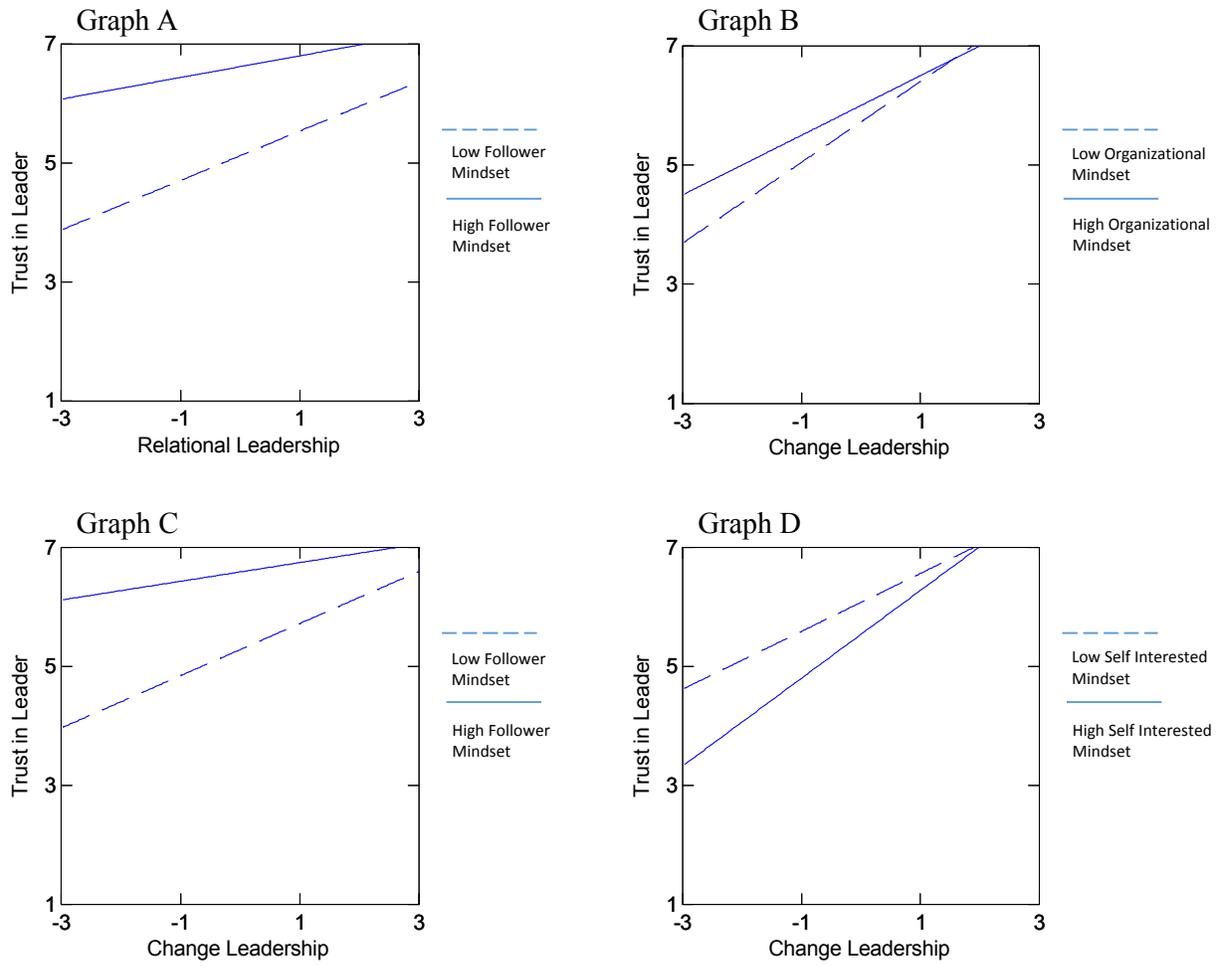
* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$; N ranged from 222-225

Table 4. Change Behavior

Variable	Change Behavior Only Model	Organizational Mindset Moderated Model	Follower Mindset Moderated Model	Self Mindset Moderated Model
Change behavior	.73***	.59***	.30***	.61***
Mindset	-	.12	.41***	-.14***
Change behavior X Mindset	-	-.07*	-.09***	.06**
Model R ²	.61***	.66***	.70***	.65***

* indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, *** indicates $p < .001$; N ranged from 222-225

Figures: Mindset moderating the effect of leader behaviors on trust in supervisor



Self-Disclosure in Leader-Follower Relationships: An Examination of Gender Differences

Sharon Hong and Jeffrey Yip

Self-disclosure is a social behavior that can result in the development of positive work relationships. However, self-disclosure does not always produce desired outcomes, explaining why leaders may not disclose as often as they should despite the encouragement to integrate their personal selves into their professional identities (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). In addition, although women are more likely to reveal personal information than men and be liked as a result (Dindia, 2002), the same outcomes may not be observed in female and male leaders. In the present study, we propose that leader self-disclosure is a method of relationship building that influences followers' perceptions of their leaders' warmth and competence, but whether these perceptions are positive or negative depend largely on the gender of the leader (see Figure 1).

Self-Disclosure in Work Relationships

Self-disclosure in the workplace can have a positive impact on individuals' formation and expression of identity, relationships at work, and career outcomes (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Individuals who partake in reciprocal self-disclosure develop more positive interpersonal relationships, experience greater enjoyment from interactions, and appear warmer and more sensitive to others (Sprecher & Treger, 2015). Voluntary disclosure of personal information signals a level of trust for the listener as it conveys a willingness of the discloser to be vulnerable (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014). Ito and Bligh (2017) argue that when leaders share vulnerability with their followers, leader-follower relationships become more compassionate and caring, and leaders can even be described by their followers as charismatic.

According to Phillips, Rothbard, and Dumas (2009), individuals might choose not to self-disclose to avoid ruining others' perceptions of their own competence or fit in the role. Although members of higher status have more opportunities to express themselves, are taken more seriously, and have more influence over others (Correll & Ridgeway, 2003), research suggests that leaders self-disclose at a lesser rate than followers (Wanberg, Welsh, & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). Leaders of high status are not immune to the fear of ruining others' perceptions of their competence and thus withhold personal information (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006).

Warmth and Competence

The stereotype content model consists of two dimensions of social perception: warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Warmth is associated with qualities such as friendliness, trustworthiness, empathy, and kindness, while competence is related to intelligence, power, efficacy, and skill. Research concerning SCM in the workplace has shown that the perceptions of leader warmth and competence are related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover intentions, although warmth has a stronger relationship than competence to these outcomes (Bufquin, DiPietro, Orłowski, & Partlow, 2017; Falvo, Capozza, Di Bernardo, & Manganelli, 2016). Leaders and professionals of high power and status tend to be categorized as highly competent but low in warmth (Fragale, Overbeck, & Neale, 2011). Self-disclosure might resolve this imbalance. Self-disclosure requires leaders to divulge personal information with which their followers may identify. If leaders gain competence in expressing their feelings, followers may perceive them to be warmer. Thus, we develop our first hypothesis.

H1: Leader self-disclosure has a significant relationship with perceived warmth, such that leaders who self-disclose are perceived to be warmer than those who do not.

Leader self-disclosure may have links to how followers perceive their leader's competence. Successful self-disclosure calls for the ability to gauge appropriate levels and receivers of personal information by noting social and emotional cues. Leaders with perceived emotional competencies are considered to be better equipped to work with people, have greater skills in providing feedback, and better understand followers' needs (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). To an extent, self-disclosure requires social and emotional competencies unique to leaders to evaluate their environment and determine how to appropriately disclose to followers.

H2: Leader self-disclosure has a significant relationship with perceived competence.

Gender's Moderating Effect on Warmth and Competence

Although warmth and competence have not yet been studied in relation to leader self-disclosure, researchers have identified general gender differences in self-disclosure. For example, men disclose less than women (Dindia, 2002; Dindia & Allen, 1992). However, Omarzu (2000) claims that when there are clearly defined goals, men can disclose as much as or more than women. Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by Dindia (2002) stated that liking was stronger in female disclosures than in male disclosures. Women are generally perceived to have more warmth than men (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Women are also often associated with warm qualities like communal and sympathetic while men are typified as competitive and assertive. Not surprisingly, women are expected to engage in relationship-enhancing behaviors like self-disclosure more frequently than their male counterparts (Dindia & Allen, 1992; Dindia, 2002). Therefore, female leaders who self-disclose can be expected to seem warmer to their followers than male leaders and female leaders who do not self-disclose.

H3: The gender of the leader moderates the relationship between self-disclosure and perceived warmth. More specifically, the relationship is stronger for female leaders.

Role congruity theory may explain the potential relationship between leader self-disclosure and perceived competence. Role congruity theory is defined as the perceived incongruity between the gender role and leadership role and explains why female leaders and their behaviors are often perceived less favorably than male leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). According to the theory, women face greater challenges in obtaining leadership positions. Furthermore, when women do rise up to such roles, they are often judged more harshly than male leaders. Self-disclosing female leaders risk confirming negative stereotypes associated with their gender (Phillips, Rothbard, & Dumas, 2009). Thus, our final hypothesis is as follows.

H4: The gender of the leader moderates the relationship between self-disclosure and perceived competence. More specifically, this relationship is positive for male leaders and negative for female leaders.

Methods

Sample

The study uses a secondary data analysis through data collected at the Center for Creative Leadership. Data will include a self-report survey of leader self-disclosure and follower ratings of warmth and competence from the Campbell Leadership Index (CLI; Nilsen & Campbell, 1993). Our sample consists of top executives (n = 470) who participated in a senior leadership development program called “Leadership at the Peak” at the Center for Creative Leadership, a U.S.-based global executive education organization. Data was collected over the period of 16 months. Participants agreed to complete several psychological assessments, which also involved collecting confidential responses on the participant’s leadership behavior from coworkers. These responses were collected from individuals who were familiar with and had observed the leader in the workplace (i.e., direct reports, peers, and superiors).

Measures

Leader self-disclosure was measured using four items originally generated by Blickle et al. (2008). Perceived warmth and competence were measured using scales from the Campbell Leadership Index (Campbell, 1991). Perceived warmth was assessed with three trait indicators related to warmth – friendly, cheerful, and likable. Perceived competence was measured using three items by Hekman, Johnson, Foo, and Yang (2017). The items reflect the traits associated with competence: (1) Effective – gets projects done well and on time, (2) Impressive – one whose achievements stand out, and (3) Productive – gets a lot done.

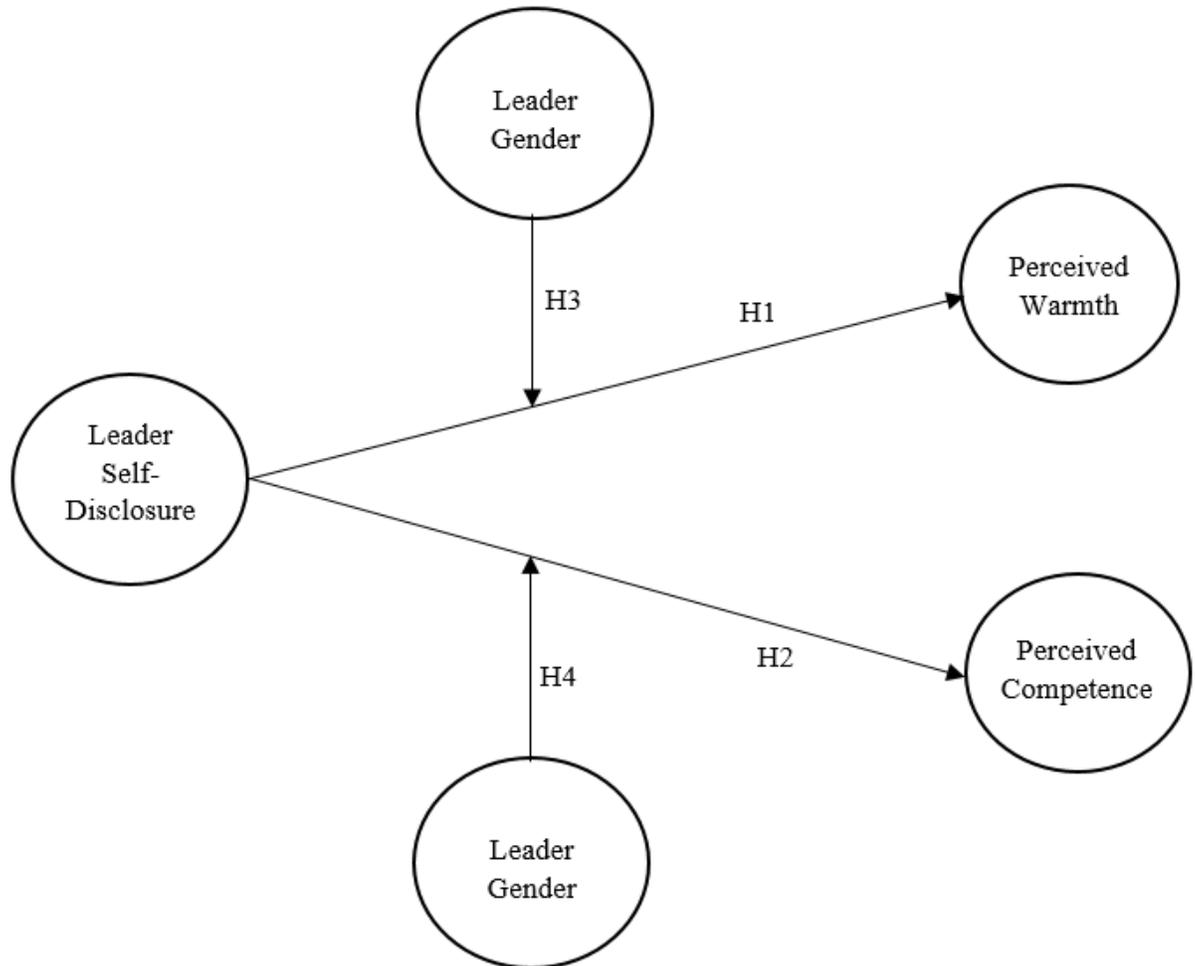
Findings

The authors are currently in the process of data analysis and will be able to report the findings of this study by the Academy of Management Conference.

The study has limitations with recommendations for future research. First, this study uses cross-sectional data. We recommend that future research utilize an experimental design to better understand follower perceptions before and after leader self-disclosure. Second, while the gender of leaders was considered in the present study, we did not take into account the gender of the followers. As previous research suggests, gender of both the disclosure and recipient affects the act and result of self-disclosure (Collins & Miller, 1994).

Nevertheless, this study expands the existing body of literature on self-disclosure at work. Specifically, our research establishes a relationship between leader self-disclosure and follower perceptions of warmth and competence. The study incorporates concepts from the stereotype content model and role congruity theory to explain gender's influence on this relationship. The present study hopes to provide initial evidence of the benefits of self-disclosure and to encourage leaders in the workplace to lead with candor.

Figure 1. Theoretical model illustrating the relationship between leader self-disclosure, and follower perceptions of leader warmth and competence with a moderating effect of leader gender.



Appreciation at Work: An Exploratory Study

Kathryn M. Doiron, Christina E. Putrov, Sharon Hong, Saumya Aggarwal

Appreciation in the workplace affects relational dynamics within the organization, which is important to both researchers and practitioners. Although gratitude has received substantial consideration in research, literature has paid limited attention to the concept of appreciation (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). The majority of literature on appreciation and gratitude has used these terms interchangeably (Beck, 2016; Wood, Maltby, Stewart, & Joseph, 2008). However, a growing body of research suggests that appreciation and gratitude, although related, are distinct constructs, in which appreciation encompasses gratitude (Adler & Fagley, 2005; Chow & Berenbaum, 2016; Stocker, Jacobshagen, Krings, Pfister, & Semmer, 2014). Our research seeks to expand the body of knowledge regarding appreciation in the workplace. This project examines the process and implications of expressing and receiving appreciation at work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Appreciation?

Gratitude is defined as a positive state that stems from an individual attributing a positive outcome to an external source and is linked to many benefits, such as increased positive affect, self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and future prosocial behaviors (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; McCullough et al., 2002; Rash, Matsuba, & Prkachin, 2011; Roberts, 2004). However, there is increasing evidence that feelings of gratitude are not universally beneficial. In non-Western cultures, gratitude is associated with indebtedness, regret that another bothered to help, and guilt for not being able to return the favor (Naito & Sakata, 2010; Naito & Washizu, 2015; Titova, Wagstaff, & Parks, 2017; Washizu & Naito, 2015). Gratitude interventions have also been found to have unexpected negative consequences caused by the intervention itself for

people with depressive symptomology (Sergeant & Mongrain, 2011; Siegel & Thomson, 2017).

Appreciation is defined as “acknowledging the value and meaning of something – an event, a person, a behavior, an object – and feeling a positive emotional connection to it” (Adler & Fagley, 2005: 81), which is broader than gratitude. In fact, Watkins (2017) acknowledged that appreciation, as a cognition, can lead to the feeling of gratitude, but could also lead to other self-transcendent emotions (e.g., awe, admiration). Feelings of appreciation predicts life satisfaction beyond gratitude, the Big Five, optimism, spirituality, and emotional awareness (Adler & Fagley, 2005; Fagley, 2012). Receiving appreciation leads to a mutual appreciation for the expresser (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis, & Keltner, 2012) and allows receivers to feel better and more loved (Algoe, Kurtz, & Hilaire, 2016).

Research on appreciation at work

While there is limited research on expressing gratitude or appreciation at work, there is evidence that these behaviors can lead to outcomes that are important for organizations. For example, gratitude expressers are perceived to be warmer, more responsive to others’ needs, and committed to others, whereas interventions that involve expressing gratitude daily can have a positive impact on well-being (Gordon et al., 2012; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009; Williams & Bartlett, 2015). Although this line of research was not conducted in an organizational setting, these outcomes set the groundwork for positive interpersonal relationships at work.

There is some research on receiving appreciation in professional contexts. Receiving appreciation at work is positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with feelings of resentment (Stocker, Jacobshagen, Semmer, & Anne, 2010). Appreciation, specifically from leaders, predicts serenity in employees (Stocker et al., 2014). However, cultural differences impact the way in which appreciation is received. In a study by Zhang, Ji, Bai, and Li

(2017), non-Western individuals reported more negative feelings than Western participants when they received thanks in close relationships, supporting the idea that there can indeed be negative consequences to appreciation.

Methods

We recruited 198 participants through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Each participant filled out a survey, which included questions on critical incidents of expressing and positively receiving appreciation in the workplace in the past six months. There was also a set of questions regarding appreciation that was received negatively (e.g., they found it awkward, mildly uncomfortable, disturbing, upsetting). Each participant was randomly assigned to answer two of the conditions (i.e., expressing appreciation, positive reception, negative reception). The four authors qualitatively coded the responses, first performing a thematic analysis of the contents to determine general response patterns and identify areas for further investigation. Next, the authors used this first round of coding to generate a codebook that was used to conduct a more thorough content analysis. An interrater reliability analysis was conducted on these results. Intraclass correlations were above 0.80, which is adequate interrater reliability.

Results

From the qualitative data on expressing and receiving appreciation, we were able to identify general themes. First, the type and closeness of the relationship accounted for differences in expressing and receiving appreciation. Specifically, expressing appreciation mainly occurred toward peers, while respondents reported receiving appreciation equally from peers and superiors (see Table 1). When respondents did not know the expresser well, the receivers often experienced negative feelings and confusion as to why the exchange was occurring. However, when relationships were close, appreciation was generally received more

positively. Second, while participants initially identified a helping behavior as the reason for expressing appreciation, their responses to what they specifically appreciated tended to be deeper and more focused on characteristics and qualities of the individual rather than on the behavior itself. Third, there were distinct differences in feelings before (e.g., indebtedness, gratitude, admiration) and after expressing appreciation (e.g., relief, guilt, warmth, embarrassment).

The most surprising results were when respondents had negative reactions to an appreciation expression. First, a strong theme was an apparent disconnect between expression and receipt of appreciation between organizational members. When asked about the challenges of expressing appreciation, almost all participants said there were none (89.3%) and many seemed surprised that we asked that question at all. However, when asked to write about a negative experience receiving appreciation, almost every participant was able to think of a situation where they were uncomfortable or felt like the appreciation was inauthentic. Second, there was a wide variety of reasons why participants received appreciation negatively, such as respondents getting too much attention for their personal preference, coworkers expressing appreciation too often or at a larger scale than the receiver deemed appropriate (e.g., a gift of a TV for a small task), and the participant noting that the appreciation seemed to be disingenuous (see Table 2). Third, there were several negative outcomes of the appreciation expression, such as the receiver feeling uncomfortable or avoiding the expresser in future interactions, downplaying and dismissing the comments, and thanking the expresser inauthentically.

Discussion

Our preliminary results reveal that the outcomes of expressing and receiving appreciation are context-dependent. This study furthers the understanding of the implications appreciation expression may have on the expresser and recipient. Practical implications include providing

insights for organizational members to understand the context of appreciating one another. This can be used to consider the context, extent of, and relational components of appreciation.

A strength of this study is that it considers both positive and negative aspects of appreciation at work. Beyond identifying patterns in forms of appreciation, this study aims to understand *why* people express and receive appreciation a certain way. This lays the groundwork for understanding how appreciation expression and receipt affects individuals differently, which could be the basis for a future intervention. A limitation of this study is that it relies on self-report: responses are only from one person's perspective and do not represent the other individual(s) involved in the appreciation exchange. Future research can investigate exchanges from both perspectives. This furthers research into outcomes of appreciation expression at work.

Contributions

This project makes several contributions to research and theory on appreciation at work. First, while there is a common assumption that feeling and expressing appreciation leads to positive outcomes, factors such as timing, relational dynamics, and manner of expression may have unintended consequences for the recipient. Our research investigates both positive and negative experiences of receiving appreciation. Second, our research contributes to the literature by examining the patterns and processes associated with appreciation, considering potential stages in the appreciative process (i.e., cognition, feeling, expression of appreciation, and receipt of appreciation). Lastly, our research suggests that the impact of receiving appreciation may be dependent on relational circumstances, such as if it is top-down (i.e., from leader to subordinate), bottom-up (i.e., from subordinate to leader), or peer-to-peer. This information provides insights on various aspects that contribute to effective appreciation at work.

TABLE 1
Respondents' Relationship with the Person Wrote About in Each Question

	Expressing Appreciation		Positive Appreciation Reception		Negative Appreciation Reception	
	<i>n</i> ^a	% ^b	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Relationship with person</i>						
Coworker	78	59.5	58	49.2	53	47.3
Supervisor	38	29.0	48	40.7	47	42.0
Subordinate	8	6.1	5	4.2	5	4.5
External to Org.	1	0.8	5	4.2	2	1.8
Did not specify	6	4.6	2	1.7	5	4.5
<i>Length of relationship</i>						
0-1 years	27	20.6	27	22.9	36	32.1
1-2 years	19	14.5	20	17.0	19	17.0
2-4 years	20	15.3	16	13.6	12	10.7
5+ years	33	25.2	22	18.6	14	12.5
Did not specify	32	24.4	33	28.0	31	27.7

^a Number of responses in each critical incident question ($N = 131$ for expressing appreciation; $N = 118$ for positive appreciation reception; $N = 112$ for negative appreciation reception)

^b Percentage of responses in each question

TABLE 2
Challenges of and Reactions to Negative Appreciation Reception

	<i>n</i> ^a	Example Quotation
<i>Challenges to Reception</i>		
Resulting Negative Feelings	29	"It was negative because of the way it made me feel, and the thoughts and worries that came after the appreciation."
Too Much Attention for Preference	18	"Any praise or appreciation is incredibly uncomfortable, obviously, but it's compounded when it occurs in front of others."
Inauthentic Expression	17	"It seemed like it was coming from a different place other than being grateful."
Poor Relationship with Other	15	"I don't really care for this coworker or her performance on the job."
Appreciation Felt Undeserved	10	"It was embarrassing because the amount of praise and appreciation were far too much for the minor issue that I fixed."
Appreciation Felt Excessive	7	"Because once you say thank you once, that's enough appreciation for me. Once you continue on, it just gets awkward."
Implied Future Expectations	7	"It brought a lot of attention and more work"
Backhanded Compliment	7	"He based the appreciation on my sex, making me feel like I was less than him even though I got the account."
<i>Reactions to Reception</i>		
<i>Behavioral</i>		
Ignore Appreciation	24	"I simply walked away and waited for my coffee to finish pouring and then left the room once it was made."
Facial Expression	18	"I gave them an annoyed look and made it obvious that I was not pleased."
<i>Verbal</i>		
"Thank You"	30	"I thanked her profusely and told her I was touched by her gesture."
Inauthentic	6	"I thanked him and acted like it didn't bother me."
Downplayed the Appreciation	9	"I told him that I appreciate it, but I am just doing my job."
"You're Welcome"	8	"I smiled and said you're welcome over and over. I wanted the conversation to move onto other things."
Changed the Subject	8	"I just smiled awkwardly and tried to downplay the whole thing, and then I quickly changed the subject to a team project we were working on (to kind of turn the attention away from me)."
Declined Gift	6	"I thanked him for the first gift and refused the second gift."
"No Problem"	6	"I just kept telling him that it wasn't that big of a deal and not to worry about it."
"Happy to Help"	2	"I told the person I was glad that I was able to help."
<i>Emotional</i>		
Neutral	4	"I stayed quiet, not really making a big deal about it. I forgot about it pretty quickly."
Appreciative	3	"I responded by acting appreciative of what he did."
Display Inauthentic Emotion	2	"I pretended to be enthusiastic and happy to receive the praise."

^a Number of responses in each thematic coding category; some responses overlap.

**Uncertainty Reduction as a Mechanism for Building Positive Relationships:
A Study of Cross-Cultural Mentoring**

Jelena Zikic & Kyle Ehrhardt

Diverse mentoring relationships bring about a range of challenges not experienced in other dyadic contexts (Ragins, 1997a). Diverse mentoring relationships, however, also offer unique opportunities for learning, growth, and personal development for both mentors and protégés alike (Young, Haffejee, & Corsun, in press). In effect, while the challenges of a diverse mentoring relationship are real, its potential payoff for each participant is also substantial. What can be done, therefore, to ensure that mentors and protégés in diverse mentoring relationships are able to reap the rewards from their relationship?

Addressing this question, our objective in this study was to uncover key mechanisms for constructing positive relationships in diverse relational contexts. To do so, we focused on a research context involving a culturally diverse formal mentoring program in Canada. The program, which is organized and conducted by a community-based organization in Toronto, matches immigrant professionals new to Canada (protégés) with local professional employees working in a variety of different organizations (mentors). The program's objective is to assist these newcomer protégés in learning about the Canadian labor market and local business culture, as well as in building a network of relationships that can facilitate in their job search and eventual integration into a local organization (Zikic, Bonache and Cerdin, 2010).

Study Overview

We adopted an inductive, qualitative research design for our study. More specifically, the primary source of data consisted of semi-structured interviews with a matched sample of fifty mentor-protégé dyads. Each interview was conducted independently (there were thus one

hundred interviews conducted in total) near the end of the six-month formal mentoring program. Beyond these interviews with protégés and mentors, we also conducted informational interviews with key constituents involved in administering the program. This included managers at the job search agencies that recommended protégés for the program, along with directors in the local corporations that provided mentors for the program. Finally, in addition to collecting interview data, the lead author also took part as a participant-observer during multiple orientation sessions where mentors and protégés met each other for the first time. Similar to our informational interviews, participating in these orientation sessions allowed for additional understanding of the formal mentoring program structure and goals.

Consistent with our study objectives, all mentor-protégé dyads reflected culturally diverse pairs. About 50% of the mentors were born in Canada or had lived in Canada for greater than twenty years. Mentors were mostly middle- to senior-level managers, and more than 40% had greater than fifteen years of work experience. The newcomer protégés, in contrast, were primarily early- to mid-career professionals, with 70% having between one and fifteen years of work experience. Mentors were also somewhat older than protégés, and women made up about 45% of the overall sample.

Using an inductive, grounded theory approach, our data analyses proceeded in three stages (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Patton, 2002). We began by identifying first order themes using individual level data taken from our independent interviews with mentors and protégés. We then moved to the dyadic level, creating working memos (Strauss & Corbin 1998) in which we compiled the main themes that emerged for each matched mentor-protégé dyad. Finally, we used the key topics that emerged within each dyad, along with the degree of overlap

across dyads, to create second order themes that reflected different mechanisms mentor and protégé dyads used in developing their relationships.

Uncertainty Reduction as a Central Mechanism for Building Positive Relationships

Although several themes emerged in our data analysis, the most dominant theme reflected uncertainty reduction as a key mechanism for building positive relationships in diverse relational contexts. Across the fifty culturally diverse mentor-protégé dyads in our sample, significant variance existed in how partners approached and resolved uncertainty inherent at the start of their formal mentoring relationship. This uncertainty stemmed from several sources, but most notable source of uncertainty was their disparate cultural backgrounds, which influenced each member's expectations for what constituted prototypical behavior in a mentoring relationship and the roles mentors and protégés are expected to play (c.f., Sanchez-Burks, Nisbett, & Ybarra, 2000).

The way partners negotiated and attempted to resolve this uncertainty proved critical as it laid the groundwork for how relationships were able to progress into varying degrees of quality. For example, in relationships that proved more successful (i.e., those that were of higher quality), mentors and protégés engaged in an explicit process of uncertainty reduction at the outset of their formal mentoring relationship. This initial experience helped to establish a foundation of trust between mentors and protégés, and created a norm of openness that carried through the mentoring relationship (c.f., Thomas, 1993; Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). In contrast, in relationships that proved more dysfunctional (i.e., those that were of lower quality) mentors and protégés were consistently unable to define and understand the norms of their mentoring relationship. The uncertainty in expectations thus remained a significant roadblock, effectively leading to more closure and problematic dynamics as the relationship progressed. We will share

illustrative quotations from mentor-protégé dyads reflecting each of these scenarios during the presentation.

Contributions and Connections to Literature

The importance of uncertainty reduction has not received significant attention in past mentoring research, or research on work relationships more generally. However, it is useful to note that uncertainty reduction has a rich theoretical history in the communication literature. For example, communication scholars observe that interpersonal relationships are socially constructed entities that are created, maintained, and altered through communication (Sigman, 1995); and that when two individuals first meet, their primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction – defined as increasing predictability about their own behavior and that of the other party in a relationship (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Communication scholars further recognize that uncertainty in any relationship emerges from three separate components: 1) doubts about one's own participation, 2) doubts about the partner's involvement, and 3) doubts about the relationship itself (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999, 2005).

This research from the communication literature offers mentoring and other relationship researchers a theoretical foothold for studying uncertainty reduction as a mechanism for building positive relationships in diverse relational contexts. In the mentoring arena, an uncertainty reduction lens is moreover particularly relevant for studying positive relationship in a formal mentoring context (as was the context for this study), where individuals with little to no history are required to establish and develop a connection with one another, often in a relatively short period (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Regardless of the specific context, though, as diverse interpersonal relationships are becoming increasingly salient within organizations given diversity and globalization trends (Ragins, 1997b; Young et al., in press), we believe that the value of

uncertainty reduction as a lens for understanding how positive relationships may be built has significant utility for work relationships research going forward.

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