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Sometimes it's better to leave me alone: The moderating role of culture on the relationship between leaders' mentoring and subordinate motivation

Pengji WANG (Ph.D)

Faculty of Law Business and Creative Arts,

James Cook University, Singapore

600 Upper Thomson Road,

Singapore 574421

Email: pengji.wang@jcu.edu.au

Xiuxi ZHAO (Ph.D.)

CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

89 Science Park Drive, #03-07/08 The Rutherford Lobby B,

Singapore Science Park I, Singapore 118261

zhaos@ccl.org

Maw Der FOO, Ph.D

Management & Entrepreneurship

University of Colorado at Boulder

Leeds School of Business

419 UCB, Boulder, CO 80309, USA.

foom@colorado.edu

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Abstract

This paper examines two types of leadership mentoring behaviors: career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring. First, factor analysis was conducted to confirm the two factor solution. Second, this study examined the impact of leaders' self-report mentoring behaviors on subordinates' motivation using multisource data. Finally, this study also tested the moderating effect of two cultural factors, assertiveness and power distance. It is found that leaders' career and psychosocial mentoring were both positively related to subordinate motivation across 38 countries. The relationship between leaders' career mentoring and subordinate motivation was stronger in high assertiveness cultures, whereas the relationship between leaders' psychosocial mentoring and subordinate motivation was weaker in high assertiveness cultures. Moreover, the relationship between leaders' career mentoring and subordinate motivation was weaker in high power distance cultures.

Key Words: mentoring, motivation, multi-source analysis, multi-level analysis, culture

Most research shows that leader mentoring behaviors, both psychosocial and career, positively predict subordinate satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen, Eby, O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008). Psychosocial mentoring refers to such behaviors as counseling, encouraging, careful listening, sharing personal experiences, conveying empathy, and showing acceptance and confirmation (Noe, 1988; Ragins, & McFarlin, 1990; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Tharenou, 2005). Career mentoring is more instrumental in nature and refers to the behaviors that sponsor employees' career advancement, such as assigning challenging tasks, increasing their exposure to and interaction with senior decision-makers in the organization, coaching them and preparing them for more responsibilities (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Ragins, & McFarlin, 1990; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Tharenou, 2005). There have been some exceptions to the generally positive impact of mentoring behaviors on employee attitudes. For example, some studies have noted negative or at most marginal effect of the mentoring relationship (Darling, 1985; Myers, & Humphreys, 1985; Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004). The negative or marginal effect of mentoring has been attributed to the misfit between what leaders offer and what subordinates expect or value (Eby et al., 2004). Although leaders provide mentoring, some employees may not positively respond to such behaviors. To better understand whether mentoring impacts employees' motivation, we need to understand the relationship between leaders' behaviors and subordinates' expectations of, and preferences for, such behaviors. When previous studies tried to explain the negative or marginal effects of mentoring behaviors, the focus was on the individual level: the problem with the mentor, mentee or both. Recent research suggests that national culture places boundaries on human behavior by defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Pooringa, 1992) and hence, national cultural values have important implications for superior-subordinate relationships, subordinates' trust in superiors (Lee, Pillutla, & Law, 2000; Costigan, Insinga, Berman, Ilter, Kranas, Kureshov, 2006), and the feedback seeking or feedback

giving processes between superiors and subordinates (Earley, & Stubblebine, 1989; Morrison, Chen, & Salgado, 2004).

Given the role of national culture in interpersonal attitudes, interactions and outcomes, we argue that culture should have an influence on the effectiveness of leaders' mentoring behavior on subordinate motivation. Unfortunately, how cultural factors shape mentoring effectiveness has not received much attention (Allen, & Eby, 2007; Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2008). This gap in mentoring research limits our understanding of mentoring and leadership development during a time when globalization and cross-border employee assignments are a business reality. Our paper addresses this gap by studying effects of two cultural dimensions from the GLOBE project, namely assertiveness and power distance, on employee motivation. The GLOBE, or Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness, is a research project started in 1991 by Robert House to map cultural dimensions and leadership paradigms across cultures. We selected the assertiveness and power distance dimensions of culture as they set the boundary of people's understanding of success, self-development, communication, and interaction between leaders and subordinates (House Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004), and thus are relevant to subordinates' responses to career and psychosocial mentoring offered by leaders.

Our study uses reports of mentoring behaviors and employee motivation for over 8000 leaders from 38 countries makes the following contributions. First, we contribute to mentoring research by showing that the effectiveness of mentoring on employee motivation, depends on the cultural context that employees are embedded in. Such a cultural perspective is particularly important given the global nature of business. Our study suggests that there is no one-size-fit-all approach to mentoring across cultural boundaries. Mentoring has been believed to be an important tool to build the relationship between leader and followers, and thus increase leaders'

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influence. With globalization of business and the increase in the number of US and non-US owned multinationals, it is vital to incorporate cultural difference to understand the applicability of such US-developed concepts to other national contexts. As our findings imply, managers have to adjust their mentoring behaviors according to the employees' culture.

Second, we contribute to mentoring research by providing a macro explanation of why mentoring behaviors, which mostly have positive employee outcomes, can at times lead to lower or marginal employee motivation (Darling, 1985; Myers, & Humphreys, 1985; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2004). Such a macro perspective goes beyond the specific characteristics of the individual, mentor or mentee characteristic, to the cultural context in which the interaction is embedded in. Culture influences expectations of leader-subordinate interactions, expectations which in turn influence effectiveness of mentoring behaviors.

Third, we contribute to the GLOBE project, one of the most major set of culture studies. The GLOBE team and some following researchers have tried to create the linkage between culture dimensions and the leadership paradigms (e.g., House et al, 2004; Randolph, & Sashkin, 2002; Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges, & de Luque, 2006, etc.). This study extends the reachability of GLOBE culture dimensions to the context of leaders' mentoring behaviors. Such knowledge can help leaders to select appropriate mentoring and thus improve the receptivity and effectiveness of mentoring in specific countries.

In the next section, we develop the hypotheses. We first explain why mentoring behaviors, psychosocial and career, usually positively impact employee motivation. Next, we explain how two cultural components, assertiveness and power distance, changes the strength of the mentoring to motivation relationship.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Mentoring behaviors have been conceptualized to consist of two broad categories: career and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1983; Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). Career mentoring includes those aspects of the mentoring relationship that prepares the subordinates for career advancement. Career mentoring includes mainly four aspects: sponsoring, exposing, coaching, and protecting (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). First, mentors can provide sponsorship by nominating subordinates for desirable projects, lateral moves, promotions (Kram, 1983; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), or giving assignment or tasks that prepare subordinates for leadership positions (Noe, 1988); Second, mentors can help increase subordinates' exposure and visibility in the organization and to important people (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Third, mentors can coach subordinates by assigning challenging tasks, sharing ideas, providing feedback and suggesting strategies to accomplish work objectives (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Lastly, mentors can protect subordinates from unnecessary risks by avoiding people and situations that may be harmful (Kram, 1983; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Psychosocial mentoring addresses more personal aspects of a relationship that tend to enhance subordinates' sense of professional competence and identity (Kram, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring includes several aspects. First, mentors often play the role of friends; they hang out with subordinates informally, one-on-one or in a group. Subordinates often feel that they can trust and confide in their mentors. Second, mentors show acceptance and confirmation to subordinates, by conveying unconditional positive regard (Noe, 1988). Third, mentors also provide counseling to subordinates. They care about subordinates' personal problems; they encourage subordinates to talk openly about anxieties and fears, they also listen and share personal experience, and convey empathy (Noe, 1988).

Both career and psychosocial mentoring behaviors from leaders can motivate subordinates. According to the taxonomy proposed by Leonard, Beauvais and Scholl (1999), there are four sources of motivating factors, including two intrinsic sources and two extrinsic sources. Intrinsic process motivation refers to motivation due to the enjoyment of the task, wherein work itself becomes motivational for the individual due to sheer enjoyment of performing the task (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998). Self-concept internal motivation was drawn from McClelland's (1961) need for higher level of achievement. Instrumental motivation factors refer to external factors such as money or promotion drive employee motivation to perform a task (Leonard et al., 1999), while self-concept external motivation refers to motivation that comes from affirmation of values, competencies, and traits (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998).

Previous literature suggests that with the career mentoring from the leaders, subordinates have more opportunities to develop their job-related knowledge, skills and capabilities, and to be visible to key decision makers; hence, they are more likely to be successful in their career. Several previous studies confirm that subordinates who receive career mentoring enjoy higher performance ratings, salary or salary growth, promotion rate (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Kirchmeyer, 2005), career mobility/opportunity/recognition (Fagenson, 1989) and are more satisfied with their jobs (Baugh, Lankau, & Scandura, 1996; Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992; Koberg, Boss, Chappell & Ringer, 1994),. These extrinsic rewards and intrinsic satisfaction lead subordinates to be involved in continuing relationship with their leaders (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Subordinates accordingly are motivated to pay back with higher level of job involvement (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998), career commitment and motivation (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990), and organizational commitment (Scandura & Williams, 2004).

Whereas career mentoring directly help the subordinates succeed in his or her career, psychosocial mentoring enhances subordinates' emotional well-being and personal growth through giving subordinates acceptance and confirmation, showing respect and conveying empathy (Kram, 1985). Thus subordinates perceive self-concept external motivators. Previous literature has shown that employees who receive psychosocial mentoring have higher level of self-esteem and career self-efficacy (Day & Allen, 2004; Johnson, Lall, Holmes, Huwe, & Nordlund, 2001). Subordinates in turn will have higher level of job involvement (Koberg, Boss, & Goodman, 1998). In summary, both types of mentoring appear to provide intrinsic motivators, or extrinsic motivators or both. Subordinates can be effectively motivated. Hence, our first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: Leader's career (1a) and psychosocial (1b) mentoring behaviors are positively related to subordinate's motivation.

Having explained why career and psychosocial mentoring predicts subordinate motivation, we now turn to how culture impacts this relationship. Culture is an important variable that influences and shapes social behaviors and the expectation of social behaviors. In different cultural environments, people have different value and expectations for leaders, with certain behaviors being more desirable in some cultures than others. Based on Hofstede's (1980, 1997) work, the GLOBE project identified nine cultural dimensions (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). In this paper, we investigate two cultural dimensions from the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004), assertiveness and power distance. We argue that they will moderate the relationship between leaders' mentoring behaviors and subordinates' perceived motivation effectiveness.

Assertiveness is the extent to which a society encourages people to be tough, confrontational, assertive and competitive rather than modest and tender (House, 2001). There

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are two aspects of assertiveness. First, assertiveness is about expression and communication styles. People from high assertive cultures are more direct and are more willing to contradict and disagree with each other, i.e., to say no and to strive for what they want. In contrast, low assertive cultures prefer to communicate indirectly and try to save face (Javidan, Dorfman, Luque, & House, 2006). Second, assertiveness is about the individualistic aspect of self-fulfilment and value. High assertiveness societies tend to have a can-do attitude and value competition. They have sympathy for the strong and the winner (House, 2001). They emphasize results over relationships, attempt to exercise control, act opportunistically, and think of others as opportunistic (Den Hartog, 2004). People build trust on the basis of calculation (Den Hartog, 2004). In contrast, low assertiveness societies tend to prefer warm and cooperative relations and harmony. They have sympathy for the weak and emphasize loyalty and solidarity (House, 2001). People build trust on the basis of predictability (Den Hartog, 2004).

We argue that assertiveness will strengthen the positive relationship between leaders' career mentoring and subordinates' perceived motivation effectiveness. On one hand, when a leader offers opportunities for subordinates to voice, participate, or give direct negative feedback, the receptivity of the subordinates in highly assertive cultures is greater because such an open communication environment is more consistent with the desired communication style in highly assertive cultures. It is more likely that the subordinates will feel that they are given more opportunities to fight for what they want, or that they are given clear and necessary feedback to improve. Thus, they are more likely to be motivated by career mentoring behaviors. In contrast, subordinates in low assertiveness cultures may feel uncomfortable with some career mentoring behaviors. For example, when leaders provide negative feedback, subordinates may consider the feedback judgmental, rather than a means to improve. As another example, when a leader exposes subordinates to participative decision-making to prepare them for leadership positions,

the subordinates may feel pressurized because discussion and participation in decision-making potentially lead to conflicts, preferring instead to remain silent to avoid conflict. Hence, there can be a misalignment between the communication style in low assertiveness culture and some forms of career mentoring behaviors, resulting in lower subordinate motivation.

On the other hand, leaders' career mentoring behaviors such as offering coaching, providing challenges and opportunities to develop competence, and increasing exposure to senior management are more aligned with the subordinates' preferences in high assertiveness societies which highlight success, progress and competition, while contradicting with those from low assertiveness societies where people value cooperation and relationship. Therefore, subordinates in high assertiveness cultures, more so than their low assertiveness counterparts, are likely to be motivated by career mentoring behaviors.

Hypothesis 2a: Assertiveness moderates the relationship between leaders' career mentoring behaviors and subordinate motivation, in that the relationship is stronger in high assertiveness cultures.

We argue that psychosocial mentoring is more important in low assertiveness cultures than in high-assertiveness cultures. Fisher (1985) suggests that positive effects of social support may occur only for individuals who value relationships with others at work. Individuals who perceive work relationships as superficial and task-oriented are more likely to seek social support from individuals outside the formal work environment (Henderson & Argyle, 1985). Kram (1985) suggests that the importance that individuals place on interpersonal relationships at work will have a significant influence on the success of mentoring relationships. If a subordinate does not believe that interpersonal relationships can be valuable for personal and professional development, it is likely that he/she will not be receptive to the mentor's psychosocial mentoring behaviors. Relationships are more valued in low assertive cultures where people prioritize

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cooperation and harmony over career success. Psychosocial mentoring behaviors, such as caring about subordinates' personal issues and conveying empathy and giving confirmation, are valued in low assertiveness cultures as they create a cooperative and warm working environment. In contrast, in a high-assertive society, psychosocial mentoring is not valued as much because subordinates tend to form their trust based on instrumental outcomes, such as career advancement. Leaders who provide psychosocial support are likely to be viewed as too soft in a competitive context and the psychosocial support may be seen as irrelevant, or less important. Hence, the impact of psychosocial mentoring behaviors and subordinate motivation is weaker in high assertiveness cultures as compared to low assertiveness cultures.

> *Hypothesis 2b: Assertiveness moderates the relationship between leaders' psychosocial support and subordinate motivation, in that the relationship is weaker in high assertiveness cultures.*

Having explained the moderating impact of assertiveness, we now turn to the other cultural dimension, power distance, and how power distance moderates the mentoring to subordinate motivation relationship. Power distance is the extent to which societal members believe that power should be concentrated in the hands of only a few people, and that those people should be obeyed without question and afforded special privileges (Carl et al., 2004). In high power distance societies, power is seen as providing social order, upward social mobility is limited, resources are available to only a few, and information is localized and hoarded (House et al., 2004). Those subordinates in high power distance cultures typically opt for an authoritarian or paternalistic style (Hofstede, 1980, 1997; House et al., 2004). In case of failure or mistakes, the subordinate is to be blamed. Because the emphasis on the hierarchy and the importance of power, other people are seen as a constant threat to one's power and trust is rarely established (Hofstede, 1997). In contrast, in low power distance societies, upward social mobility is common.

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Resources and information is available to almost all. People are more likely to believe that they should have voice in decision making processes, or at least more than would be the case in high power distance cultures (Salama, 2011). In case of failure or mistakes, usually the system or method is to be blamed, not the individual (Hofstede, 1995).

Power distance can mold subordinates' reaction to leaders' mentoring behaviors. Compared with their counterparts in low power distance countries, subordinates in high power distance countries are typically more reluctant to challenge their supervisors and more fearful of expressing disagreement with their leaders (Adsit, London, Crom, & Jones, 1997). Even if a manager provides career mentoring behaviors by encouraging subordinates to share opinions and to participate in decision-making, subordinates may hesitate to do so. First, information is equated with knowledge power in high power-distance cultures, and people believe managers should have more information than subordinates (Randolph & Sashkin, 2002). Hence, subordinates would probably think the opinions they give are not comprehensive or relevant enough, and thus they will be judged by their leaders as being incompetent. Second, subordinates may be afraid that their opinions are contrary to what the leaders expect and thus create conflict, which can lead their leaders to judge them as not supporting the leaders' decisions. Third, subordinates in high power distance societies have a clear understanding of the responsibilities associated with their jobs. They are careful to avoid taking roles not within their job scope, as this action can be interpreted as encroaching on a superior's role (Gelfand, Frese, & Salmon, 2011). Previous studies show that subordinates in high power distance societies are unwilling to voice or to participate in the decision-making process (Aycan, Kanungo, & Sinha, 1999; Brockner et al., 2001; Newman & Nollen, 1996), and are particularly unwilling to give any negative feedback (Brockner et al., 2001). Since they do not see intrinsic satisfaction or extrinsic

rewards from these types of career mentoring behaviors, these behaviors may not have motivational effect.

In addition to avoiding participative decision-making, subordinates in high power distance cultures may also avoid another form of career mentoring, challenging tasks. In such cultures, the relationship between leaders and subordinates is strictly ruled and dependent on the decisions of the boss. Subordinates expect to be told what to do by their superiors because they consider each other as unequal. Leaders set goals and subordinates are rarely involved in this process (Erez, Kleinbeck, & Thierry, 2001). Supposing a manager assigns a difficult and challenging assignment, the subordinate may worry that he or she will fail and blamed for this failure (Klank, 2010); the leader may feel a loss of face if mistakes are made on his or her watch (Gelfand et al., 2011). Hence, the relationship between the subordinate and the leader is at risk because of the failure, and hurting future interactions. With this pressure to perform in mind, subordinates are less likely to feel intrinsically motivated from challenging assignments. Taken together, with less preference to participate in decision making and the fear of failing challenging assignments, career mentoring behaviors are less likely to motivate subordinates in high power distance cultures.

> *Hypothesis 3a: Power distance moderates the relationship between leaders' career mentoring behaviors and employee motivation, in that the relationship is weaker in high power distance cultures.*

Finally, we turn to how power distance moderates the impact of psychosocial mentoring on employee motivation. Power distance should weaken the relationship between psychosocial mentoring behaviors and subordinate motivation. In high power distance cultures, the power differences between leaders and subordinates are legitimized (Hofstede, 1980). Employees are more likely to respect, defer to, and trust their leaders (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe,

2009). Research show that, the negative impact of abusive supervision, a type of leadership behaviors that is hostile, unfair, and unsupportive (Tepper, 2000), is mitigated in high power distance countries (Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2012). This is probably because in high power distance cultures, individuals who are in the subordinate position believe that they should not act against their leaders and they are more likely to be submissive and receptive to their leaders' decisions and behaviors (Kirkman et al., 2009). Hence, in high power distance cultures, subordinate respect and trust to their leaders is not determined by whether or to what extent leaders show emotional support.

However, in low power distance cultures, leaders' psychosocial mentoring will make a significant difference. In low power distance cultures, employees are more egalitarian and less likely to submit to authority (Lam, Schaubroeck, & Aryee, 2001). Their respect and trust towards leaders depend on leaders' behaviors (Kirkman et al., 2009). They also perceive managers to be socially close and prefer open communication with them (Kirkman et al. 2009). In a low power distance context, whether a leader show personal concern and provide morale support will make a huge difference on subordinate motivation. When subordinates sense that the leader cares about them and understand them, they will trust the leaders more and the motivation level will also increase. So we hypothesize that:

> *Hypothesis 3b: Power distance moderates the relationship between leaders' psychosocial support and employee motivation, in that the relationship is weaker in high power distance cultures.*

METHODS

Sample and Data

Data were gathered from an archival database of multisource ratings from leaders who participated in development programs. As part of the program, a developmental feedback

instrument called BENCHMARKS® (Lombardo & McCauley, 1994; Lombardo, McCauley, McDonald-Mann, & Leslie, 1999; McCauley & Lombardo, 1990) gathered ratings from the self and multiple observer perspectives.

The final sample for the current study is based on: (a) leaders currently working in their countries of origin; (b) usable and complete multisource data of at least 20 leaders per country; and (c) the country being part of the GLOBE study. After dropping observations with missing values for the concerned variables, we obtained a sample of 8374 leaders in 38 countries from year 2000 to 2011.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures

Dependent Variables

Subordinate motivation. Subordinate motivation was measured using a general measure of work motivation first developed and validated by Patchen and his associates (Patchen, 1970; Patchen, Pelz, & Allen, 1965). Individuals were asked to rate themselves on how involved they are in their work (direction), how hard they work (intensity) on a set of five-point response scales. We employed Patchen's (1970) motivation scale representing intensity and direction of effort, by adopting three items from BENCHMARKS®, a survey created and administered by the Centre for Creative Leadership. The items were, "the leader does not motivate team members to do the best for the team," "the leader fails to encourage and involve team members," and "the leader does not help individuals understand how their work fits into the goals of the organization," with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.93.

We used subordinate ratings because of two reasons. First, the most meaningful data in terms of motivation is from the perspective of subordinate (Ashford, 1989; Atwater &

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Yammarino, 1992; Bass, 1990). Second, the purpose of this study was to examine how direct

reports viewed motivation effect from the career-related and psychosocial mentoring behaviors

of their leader. Direct reports of each target-leader rated the extent to which the target-leader

achieve the above outcome on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 5 = to a very great

extent). We calculated the mean of all the subordinates' ratings of each leader as the rating for

subordinate motivation.

Independent Variables

Career support and psychosocial support. In BENCHMARKS® project, each target-leader

rated the extent to which he or she displayed some leadership behavior on a 5-point Likert-type

scale (1 = not at all to 5 = to a very great extent).We first reviewed all of the BENCHMARKS®

items to identify those that were related to the concept of career and psychosocial support,

resulting in 14 relevant items of career support functions and 10 relevant items of psychosocial

support functions. Using the 24 items, we conducted EFA and CFA respectively. In the EFA

with half of the dataset, The KMO and Barlett's Test were satisfied (KMO: 0.948. The Barlett's

test was significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting the original correlation matrix was an identity matrix

(Field 2000: 457). Some 12 items were loaded on one factor and 6 items loaded on the other

factor, as shown in table 2. The first factor addresses the career mentoring behaviors and the

second factor addresses psychosocial mentoring behaviors. The scales were reliable, with

Cronbach Alphas of 0.91 for career support and .74 for psychosocial support.

Insert Table 2 about here

We also conducted confirmative factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS based on the other

half of the dataset to test the convergent validity. Results from CFA confirmed our EFA results.

NFI and CFI were 0.965 and 0.969, indicating a good fit. RMSEA was 0.04, which confirms that

our model is satisfactory. To further demonstrate validation evidence of our measure of mentoring support, we conducted a survey to 92 managers from CCL client portfolio. In the survey, we employed both of our items and those from Ragins and Cotton (1999). Participants were fairly evenly split in terms of gender (female=34%), had an average age of 46.2, and they are working in 19 countries in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa, and had an average of 12 years of work experience.

Culture

We used the published country scores of assertiveness and power distance from GLOBE as our measure of culture value in each country. We opted to use the societal values scores (how things should be) rather than the societal practice scores (how things are) as it best reflected the cultural values and preferences (see House et al., 2004, for description of scale development).

Control variables

We controlled leaders' age, organization tenure, education, gender since these variables can account for variance in motivating outcomes (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Age and organization tenure were mean centered to reduce multicollinearity. Education was a categorical variable with four levels: high school, associate, undergraduate, master and PhD. Gender was a dummy variable with 1 indicating male and 0 indicating female. We also controlled for leaders' organizational level, organization sector (private/public) and organization type because the leaders in our study worked across different levels and a variety of organizations. Organizational level was a categorical variable with four levels: low level, middle, middle high and top leaders. Organization type was a categorical variable indicating industries the organization is operating in: Manufacturing, finance and banking, health, transportation and utilities, wholesale/retail and trade, private nonprofit in education, private nonprofit in health, public health, public education,

public military and others. We further controlled for the number of female and male direct reports as gender of the direct reports may account for their evaluation.

Statistical Analysis

We used hierarchical linear regression model to test the model. This is because each leader in our sample was nested under the corresponding country culture from which he or she came. Using multilevel modeling to analyze nested data is superior to using ordinary least square (OLS) regression because including individuals from the same groups (e.g., countries) violates regression assumptions and can underestimate or overestimate standard errors for parameter estimates, leading to the overestimation or underestimation of relationships (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Snijders & Bosker, 1999).

In the current study, to test the main effects of cultural context variables on perceived motivation effectiveness from each rating source, we estimated an intercept-only regression model for leadership ratings at Level 1 and predictive effects of cultural variables on the Level-1 random intercept were estimated at Level 2.

Our hypotheses suggest a conceptual model covering two levels of analysis. Hypothesis 1 is a level-one model (two individual-level variables) while Hypothesis 2 is a level-two model (the published assertiveness and power distance societal value score as a ''level-two'' variable). We used the SPSS 19 software for our analyses.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis: the employment of mentoring behaviors across culture.

The descriptive statistics and correlation matrix was shown in Table 3. We firstly conducted T-test on the use of career mentoring behaviors and psychosocial mentoring behaviors across different culture contexts, as shown in table 4. Results show that leaders tend to employ

more career mentoring behaviors and psychosocial mentoring behaviors in high assertiveness culture than in low assertiveness culture. Leaders tend to employ less career mentoring behaviors in high power distance culture than in low power distance culture.

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        Insert Table 3 about here
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One way ANOVA (null) Model

The first HLM model is a One-way ANOVA (null) model with no predictors and subordinate-ratings of target-leader work motivation as the outcome variable, shown in Table 5. The chi-square test [F = 5.1, $p < .001$] revealed statistically significant variation. Rejecting the null assumes that all countries statistically do not have similar ratings in performance, which permitted us to pursue our hypotheses. The partical Eta squared value is 0.022, suggesting that country of origin accounted for 2.2% of the variance in the sample.

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Random coefficient model—Testing Hypothesis 1

We firstly conducted the ANCOVA analysis without considering the data structure. The -2LL was 13216.007. Then we incorporate the hierarchical data structure, treating country of origin as the level 2 variable and conducted random coefficient model. The -2LL was 13175.971. The χ^2_{change} was 40.024, with the df_{change} as 2. Such significant change in -2LL suggests the intercepts for the relationship between career and psychosocial mentoring behaviors and subordinates' perceived motivation effectiveness vary significantly across countries, confirming the appropriateness of using the ''Random-Coefficient" model to test our hypotheses.

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Career support and psychosocial mentoring behaviors were centered around their respective group means for meaningful interpretation and to reduce multicollinearity. Results in model 1 in Table 6 showed both career mentoring behaviors and psychosocial mentoring behaviors were positively related to subordinate motivation ($\beta = 0.194$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.034$, $p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Insert Table 6 about here

Slopes-as-outcomes models—Testing level 2 moderating hypotheses

We then tested Hypotheses 2 and 3, with assertiveness and power distance as two cross-level moderators. The results were presented in models 2 to 5 in Table 6. In model 2, we introduced in the main effect of assertiveness. In model 3, we included the interaction between assertiveness and career and psychosocial mentoring behaviors. In model 3, the main effect of career mentoring behaviors was positively significant ($\beta = 0.206$, $p < 0.001$). The main effect of psychosocial mentoring behaviors was negatively significant ($\beta = 0.037$, $p < 0.05$). The main effect of assertiveness was not significant. The interaction between assertiveness and career support was positively related with subordinate motivation ($\beta = 0.060$, $p < 0.1$), while the interaction between assertiveness and psychosocial support was negatively related with subordinate motivation ($\beta = -0.062$, $p < 0.05$). Hence, Hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported.

In model 4, we introduced in the main effect of power distance. In model 5, we included the interaction between power distance and career and psychosocial support. In model 5, the main effect of career support was positively significant ($\beta = 0.206$, $p < 0.001$). The main effect of psychosocial support was positively significant ($\beta = 0.039$, $p < 0.01$). The interaction between power distance and career support was negatively related with subordinate motivation ($\beta = -0.149$, $p < 0.05$), while the interaction between assertiveness and psychosocial mentoring

behaviors showed negative sign but was not significant. Results supported our prediction in hypothesis 3a, but not hypothesis 3b.

To further illustrate the moderating effect of the culture dimensions, we plot the relationship between two types of mentoring behaviors and motivation respectively using the value of the lowest-scoring country on assertiveness (Turkey scoring 2.68) and the highest-scoring country on assertiveness (Japan scoring 5.84) in Figures 1a and 1b. We plot the relationship between the two types of mentoring behaviors and subordinate motivation respectively using the value of the lowest-scoring country on power distance (Colombia scoring 2.21) and highest-scoring country on power distance (South Africa scoring 3.80) in Figures 2a and 2b.

Insert Figures 1a and 1b about here

Insert Figures 2a and 2b about here

DISCUSSION

Mentoring has been linked to many beneficial outcomes for the mentored, such as career advancement, higher salaries (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Kirchmeyer, 2005), and job satisfaction (Baugh, Lankau, & Scandura, 1996; Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Koberg, Boss, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994). Not surprisingly then, mentoring is an active research area. Despite the pervasive and wide ranging impact of mentoring some studies have found mixed, or marginal, effects. Our study using a sample of reports of the mentoring behaviors of over 8000 leaders and subordinate motivation adds to this body of work by showing that culture, specially assertiveness and power distance, partly account for these mixed effects.

As our results imply, while mentoring generally predicts higher motivation, culture moderates the mentoring to motivation effects. Consistent with preference for high assertiveness cultures for more feedback, greater participation, and less "soft" leadership behaviors, assertiveness strengthens the career motivation to subordinate relationship while weakening the psychosocial to subordinate motivation relationship. In comparison, given the preference for high power distance cultures to avoid—at least relatively to their low power distance counterparts—participative decision making, challenging tasks (as such challenging tasks can increase failure rates), and the downplay of subordinate expressed emotions in front of superiors, power distance weakens the impact of career and psychosocial mentoring on subordinate motivation. The results are interesting as they offer new insights to the link of culture with preferred leadership style. According to research from a GLOBE study, a high value placed on assertiveness was not strongly associated with any global leadership dimension (CLT). Our study gives some evidence that in high assertiveness cultures, more instrumental leadership style may be more appropriate.

Our study has important theoretical implications for mentoring research. First, our study shows that there is no contradiction that most studies find positive, while some studies find negative, or marginal effects of mentoring on subordinate outcomes. Our study, which uses a large number of managers across 38 countries, provides confidence that main and direct effects of mentoring on subordinate outcomes are positive. But our study also highlights the moderating effects of culture. In fact, in the some cases, such as those shown in figures 1b and 2b where assertiveness and power distance are low respectively, mentoring behaviors predicts lower subordinate motivation. The graphs in figures 1b and 2b must be interpreted with caution since we chose extreme countries, from the 38 in our sample, to graph, but the take home message is that under some circumstances, mentoring can impair subordinate motivation.

An important theoretical implication of our study is that mentoring researchers should not take a one size fit all approach to determine the effectiveness of mentoring behaviors. As we show, culture plays a vital role in influencing the efficacy of mentoring behaviors. Our study uses a national culture approach. Such an approach is particularly important in an increasingly mobile workforce where it is not surprising to see people from different nationalities working in the same office. Our study highlights one important challenge for mentoring research. Our finding that subordinates in high power distance cultures value some forms of career mentoring behaviors less. The results are consistent with the finding from the GLOBE study, which suggests that high power distance is negatively related to the effectiveness of participative leadership. Furthermore, we also find in high power distance cultures, psychosocial support is negatively related to subordinate motivation. The results seem to indicate that high power distance is not compatible with mentorship. Given these findings, an important challenge for mentoring research is to find leader behaviors that can facilitate employee career advancement that will at the same time motivate them.

Beyond the implication to cross country cultures, researchers studying workers of one nationality should also note that people, even of the same nationality, can differ in their levels of cultural dimensions. That is, while mentoring researchers should be aware of between country effects, they should also be aware of within country effects. More broadly, we reasoned that leader behaviors congruent with subordinates' preferences and expectations strengthen, while behaviors incongruent to these preferences and expectations weaken, the mentoring to motivation relationship. A general implication of this finding is that mentoring researchers should be aware of drivers of subordinate preferences and expectations. These preferences and expectations can come from individual factors such as personality, team factors such as group norms, organizational factors such as firm culture, industry factors such as industry norms (e.g.,

the military has high power distance), and profession factors such as occupational norms (e.g., academics value autonomy). Again echoing the theme that there is no one size fits all, mentoring research can examine how individual, team, organizational, industry, and profession factors affect expectations, expectations that in turn shape their responses to leader mentoring behaviors.

The research findings have important implications for the practice of management, particularly for expatriate leaders in multinational firms, in guiding them to formulate their strategy to build up a solid and smooth leader-subordinate relationship. When expatriates are sent to another culture, mentoring behaviors are still needed to motivate subordinates and enhance team performance. However, expatriates should keep in mind that the employees may have different expectations and they need to adapt their behaviors to these expectations.

Limitations and Future Research

Our study is based exclusively on survey data from an existing multisource instrument designed for the development of practicing leaders. Data were gathered concurrently for each participant, and, as a result, we are unable to infer causal relationships. Future research should use longitudinal designs to determine whether previous mentoring behaviors predict perceived motivation effectiveness in order to identify causal relationships. Secondly, we assigned country scores from assertiveness and power distance based on country of origin, implicitly assuming cultural boundaries were country boundaries. While this is a common practice in the cross-cultural literature, we recognize that it fails to take into account any within country differences due to subcultures within a given country. Future research can consider within- and between-country differences.

How subordinates respond to mentoring behaviors depends on the subordinates' expectations and preferences, with national culture influencing these expectations and preferences. Our study confirms the generally positive role of career and psychosocial mentoring

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on subordinate motivation; we also partly explain the negative, or marginal, findings in some studies since culture moderates the mentoring to motivation relationship. In fact as our figures demonstrate, in some cultures, mentoring behaviors predicts less motivated subordinates. In those instances, perhaps it is best for leaders to simply leave their subordinates alone. Our study should spur more research on cultural impact on mentoring outcomes, and more generally how expectations, driven by individual, team, organizational, industry, and profession factors, influence mentoring outcomes.

Table 1 Sample Countries and the GLOBE Culture Indices

	Country	Number	Assertiveness	Power distance
1	Argentina	38	3.18	2.30
2	Australia	630	3.83	2.77
3	Austria	30	2.85	2.52
4	Brazil	65	3.06	2.59
5	Canada	1467	4.15	2.73
6	China	69	5.52	3.01
7	Colombia	29	3.45	2.21
8	Denmark	60	3.59	2.96
9	Egypt	66	3.22	3.20
10	Finland	32	3.91	2.46
11	France	186	3.57	2.96
12	Germany	198	3.21	2.66
13	Hong Kong	44	4.80	3.00
14	India	149	4.65	2.58
15	Indonesia	66	4.50	2.38
16	Ireland	113	4.00	2.66
17	Italy	48	3.87	2.51
18	Japan	48	5.84	2.76
19	Korea, South	47	3.69	2.39
20	Malaysia	45	4.73	2.75
21	Mexico	146	3.67	2.75
22	Netherlands	266	3.13	2.61
23	New Zealand	220	3.52	3.56
24	Nigeria	21	3.14	2.66
25	Philippines	93	4.93	2.54
26	Poland	48	3.95	3.19
27	Russia	64	2.90	2.73
28	Singapore	356	4.28	2.84
29	South Africa	28	3.97	3.80
30	Spain	293	4.01	2.23
31	Sweden	49	3.49	2.49
32	Switzerland	67	3.31	2.54
33	Taiwan	36	2.91	2.77
34	Thailand	51	3.43	2.74
35	Turkey	42	2.68	2.52
36	United Kingdom	612	3.76	2.82
37	United States	2527	4.36	2.88
38	Venezuela	25	3.34	2.43

Note: we have a much larger sample size for US leaders. However, we randomly chosen 2527 US based respondents to make sure the sample is not biased to US context.

Table 2 Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

	The leader	1	2
1	develops employees by providing challenge and opportunity (challenging assignments)	0.75	
2	sets a challenging climate to encourage individual growth (challenging assignments)	0.72	
3	coaches employees in how to meet expectations (coaching)	0.68	
4	pushes decision making to the lowest appropriate level and develops employees' confidence in their ability to make those decisions (sponsorship)	0.61	
5	interacts with staff in a way that results in the staff feeling motivated (coaching)	0.59	
6	uses his/her knowledge base to broaden the range of problem-solving options for direct reports to take (coaching)	0.59	
7	provides prompt feedback, both positive and negative (coaching - feedback)	0.58	
8	effectively builds and maintains feedback channels (coaching - feedback)	0.57	
9	is willing to delegate important tasks, not just things he/she doesn't want to do (sponsorship)	0.55	
10	rewards hard work and dedicated to excellence (coaching – recognition)	0.54	
11	encourages direct reports to share (sponsorship)	0.54	
12	actively promotes his/her direct reports to senior management (exposure & visibility)	0.51	
13	conveys compassion toward them when other people disclose an personal loss (counseling)		0.74
14	is willing to help an employee with personal problems(counseling)		0.69
15	shows interest in the needs, hopes, and dreams of other people (counseling)		0.61
16	is sensitive to signs of overwork in others (counseling)		0.58
17	is calm and patient when other people have to miss work due to sick days (counseling)		0.58
18	understands and respects cultural, religious, gender and racial differences (acceptance & confirmation)		0.56

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix [a]

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Subordinate motivation	4.21	0.55													
2. Career support	3.81	0.44	0.19***												
3. Psychosocial support	4.00	0.50	0.14***	0.58***											
4. Assertiveness	4.03	0.47	0.04***	0.04***	0.04***										
5. Power distance	2.79	0.22	0.01	0.07***	0.06***	0.1***									
6. Leader age	42.09	6.97	0.01	0.11***	0.07***	0.11***	0.04***								
7. Leader tenure	10.16	7.84	0.06***	0.03**	0.04***	0.05***	0.04***	0.39***							
8. Manger gender [b]	0.69	0.46	-0.06***	0.00	0.08***	0.09***	0.04***	0.06***	0.03**						
9. No. of female subordinates	2.26	1.37	-0.04***	0.04**	-0.01	0.04***	-0.01	0.05***	0.07***	0.19***					
10. No. of male subordinates	1.95	1.24	0.03**	0.02+	0.05***	0.07***	0.05***	0.03**	0.00	0.19***	0.13***				
11. Public sector	0.24	0.43	0.05***	-0.03*	0.01	0.18***	0.12***	0.20***	0.13***	0.12***	0.08***	0.09***			
12. Leader education level	3.41	0.98	0.00	0.04***	0.02*	0.06***	0.06***	-0.02	0.12***	0.02*	0.01	0.03**	0.02*		
13. Leader level	3.10	0.75	0.01	0.12***	0.02+	-0.02+	-0.03**	0.19***	-0.03**	0.10***	0.07***	0.00	0.10***	0.09***	1

[a] $n = 8374$

[b] Gender was dummy-coded 1, "male", and 0, "female".

+ $p < 0.1$

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

*** $p < 0.001$

Table 4 Employment of career support and psychosocial support across cultures [a]

	Low assertiveness (1)	High assertiveness (2)	Difference (2)-(1)
Career support	3.80	3.83	0.03[***]
Psychosocial support	3.97	4.02	0.05[***]
No. of observation	3510	4864	
	Low power distance (1)	High power distance (2)	Difference (2)-(1)
Career support	3.83	3.81	-0.02[*]
Psychosocial support	4.01	4.00	-0.01
No. of observation	3253	5121	

Note: we used median of two culture dimensions (4.15 for assertiveness and 2.75 for power distance) to categorize.

[a] $n = 8374$

+	$p < 0.1$
*	$p < 0.05$
**	$p < 0.01$
***	$p < 0.001$

Table 5 Does perceived motivation effectiveness vary across countries? - Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	55.72[b]	37	1.51	5.10	.00	.02
Intercept	39747.02	1	39747.02	134618.14	.00	.94
S_CuCoun	55.72	37	1.51	5.10	.00	.02
Error	2461.27	8336	.30			
Total	150753.93	8374				
Corrected Total	2516.99	8373				

[a] $n = 8374$

[b] R Squared = .022 (Adjusted R Squared = .018)

[c] Computed using alpha = .05

Table 6 HLM to Test Hypotheses

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Career support (H1a)	0.19^{***}	0.19^{***}	0.21^{***}	0.195^{***}	0.21^{***}
Psychosocial support (H1b)	0.03^{*}	0.04^{**}	0.03^{*}	0.038^{**}	0.04^{**}
Assertiveness		-0.03	-0.04		
Career support× Assertiveness (H2a)			0.06^{+}		
Psychosocial support × assertiveness (H2b)			-0.06^{*}		
Power distance				0.032	0.02
Career support× power distance (H3a)					-0.15^{*}
Psychosocial support × power distance (H3b)					-0.06
Control variables:					
Leader gender	0.04^{***}	0.04^{**}	0.04^{**}	0.04^{**}	0.04^{**}
Leader age	-0.00^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}
Leader tenure	0.00^{***}	0.00^{***}	0.00^{***}	0.00^{***}	0.00^{***}
No of male subordinates	-0.02^{***}	-0.02^{***}	-0.02^{***}	-0.02^{***}	-0.02^{***}
No of female subordinates	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public sector	-0.02	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
Leader education 1	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Leader education 2	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Leader education 3	-0.01	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01	-0.00
Leader education 4	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Org level 1	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Org level 2	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Org level 3	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Intercept	4.21^{***}	4.21^{***}	4.22^{***}	4.22^{***}	4.22^{***}

[a] $n = 8374$

[b] Gender was dummy-coded 1, "male", and 0, "female".

+ $p < 0.1$

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

*** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1a Career support - motivation effectiveness across high and low assertiveness societies
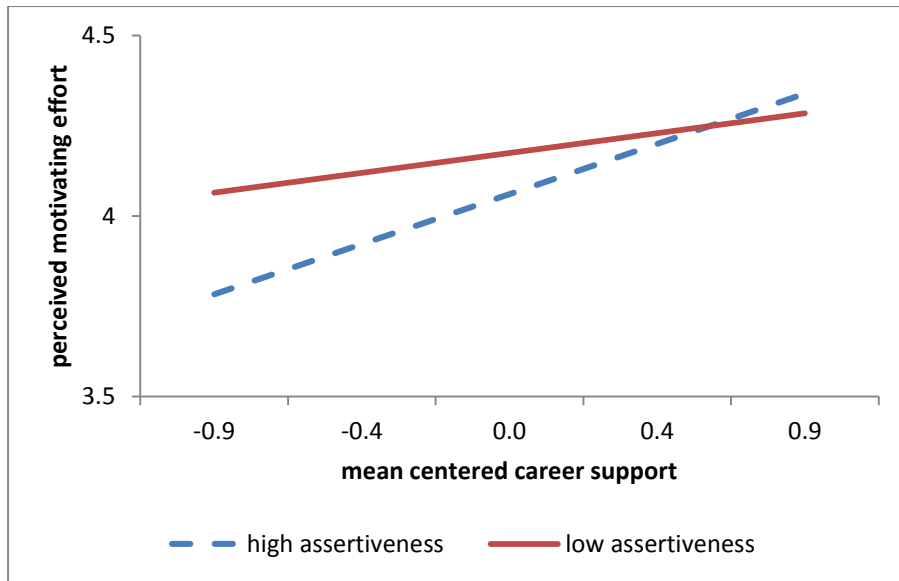

Figure 1b Psychosocial support - motivation effectiveness across high and low assertiveness societies
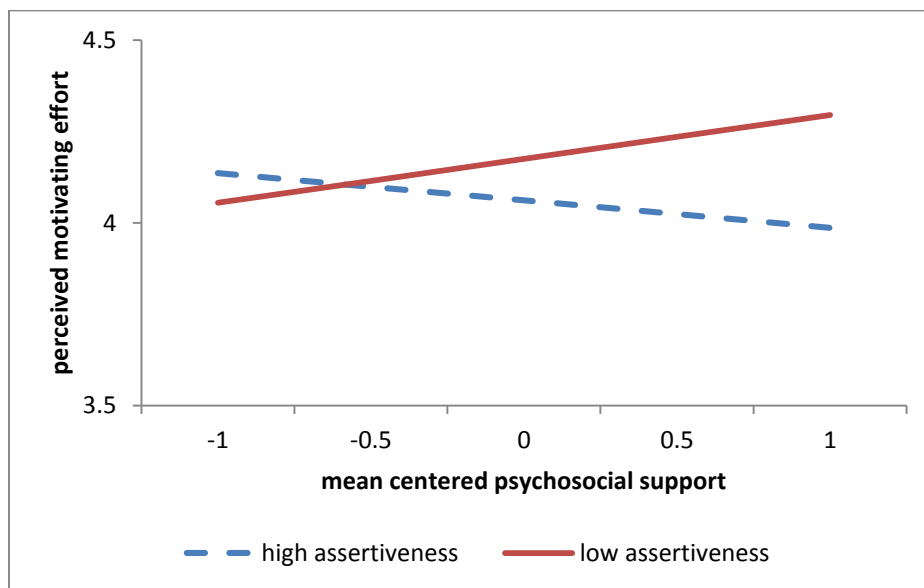
Figure 2a Career mentoring behaviors - subordinate motivation across high and low power distance societies
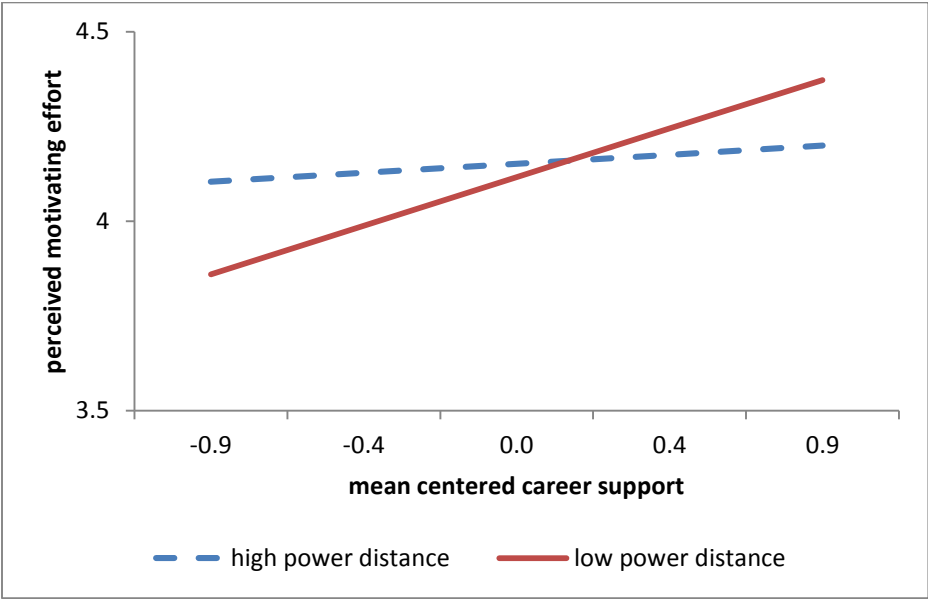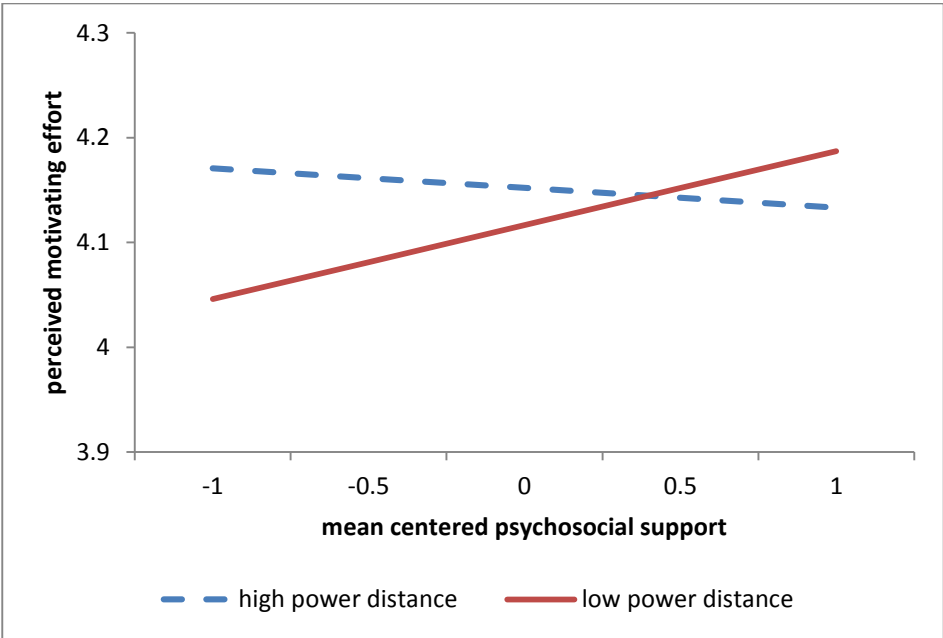

Figure 2b Psychosocial mentoring behaviors - subordinate motivation across high and low power distance societies

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