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Personality predictors of participation as a mentor

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Personality
predictors

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to focus on the personality characteristics of mentors.

Design/methodology/approach – The five factor model of personality was used to examine relationships between personality and participation as a mentor. A sample of 194 practicing veterinarians were surveyed on the five factor model of personality and a scale assessing their participation as a mentor across junior professionals, interns and high school students.

Findings – Results indicated that extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience were positively correlated with participation as a mentor. Personality traits also explained significant variance in participation as a mentor after controlling for prior experience with a mentor. These results suggest that participation as a mentor could be influenced to some degree by personality. Mentoring involves active engagement in an environment requiring social, task, and idea-related capabilities, thus individuals who are extroverted, conscientious, and open to experience would likely feel more comfortable.

Research implications/limitations – The study was only a survey study with data gathered from a single source, so any causal inferences are limited.

Practical implications – If individuals volunteer for mentoring based primarily on personality tendencies, then it is possible that many talented employees would not be attracted to a mentoring situation due to their personalities. In order to have the best mentors, organizations might have to develop mechanisms to attract, select, motivate, and train talented employees to volunteer for and remain in such service.

Originality/value – Relatively little research has focused on the personality characteristics of mentors.

Keywords Mentoring, Personality, Mentors, Personality tests

Paper type Research paper

Research supports mentoring as an effective means for enhancing work outcomes and career development (Allen *et al.*, 2004; Kram, 1985). Mentoring programs have been initiated across a wide range of business and professional fields, including accounting (Weinstein and Schuele, 2003), healthcare (Perrone, 2003), public administration (Milam, 2003), and veterinary medicine (Walsh *et al.*, 2003). While the value and quality of mentoring depends partly on the quality of the mentors, little research has focused on the characteristics of the mentors (Allen, 2003; Allen *et al.*, 1997a, b). The existing research has examined three levels of individual characteristics of mentors – demographic, experiential, and personality – and their influence on the willingness to be a mentor (Allen *et al.*, 1997b). Demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational level, as well as prior experience as a mentor or protégé, have been found to be related to the willingness to mentor (Allen *et al.*, 1997b; Olian *et al.*, 1993; Ragins and Cotton, 1993). Only a few studies have examined personality predictors of the



willingness to mentor. Allen and her colleagues (Allen, 2003; Allen *et al.*, 1997a) found that a prosocial personality predicted the willingness to mentor others, while other researchers supported locus of control (Allen *et al.*, 1997b; Turban and Dougherty, 1994) and upward striving (Allen *et al.*, 1997b; Hunt and Michael, 1983) as personality-based motivators of mentoring activity.

The purpose of the present study was to extend the research on personality correlates of a person's participation in mentoring. Specifically, this exploratory study examined whether a professional's personality was related to his or her participation as a mentor for different audiences of protégés. We explored the degree to which there were predictable theoretical and statistical relationships between personality, as defined by the five-factor model (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Costa and McCrae, 1992), and the person's self-reported activity involving the mentoring of junior professional employees, interns, and students. This study focused strictly on personality and participation in mentoring rather than exploring any intervening cognitive processes in the decision to mentor. Given the dearth of work in this area, it was first necessary to establish the degree of predictable baseline relationships between personality and participation in mentoring.

Theory development

Mentoring is generally defined as activity in which an individual with advanced knowledge or experience actively provides assistance and support to enhance the career development of an individual with less knowledge and experience (Kram, 1985). Kram (1985) found that mentors serve two key functions in their relationships with protégés. First they offer career development functions, involving sponsorship, advice, coaching, protection, visibility and exposure, and challenging assignments. Second, they offer psychosocial support, including role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship.

While organizations have sought to implement formal mentoring programs that require participation of managers and assign them to lower level employees (e.g. Burke and McKeen, 1989), many effective mentoring relationships are informal in which mentors have the choice to participate and select protégés (Chao *et al.*, 1992). The focus of the present research is on these informal mentoring experiences, as they represent situations that would allow personality to have an influence on the choice to be a mentor. Informal mentoring is volitional and there are no structured guidelines for directing the informal mentoring relationship (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). With formal mentoring, protégés and mentors are assigned and the goals of the relationship are specified at the start. For informal mentoring, protégés and mentors are involved in mutual selection and mutual adjustment throughout the relationship, with the goals and expectations evolving over time to adapt to the specific needs of the protégé (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). Formal mentoring programs specify requirements for scheduled meetings or time allotted to the protégé, but informal mentoring relationships meet when needed or desired (Murray, 1991). Finally, informal mentoring generally carries no explicit rewards for or sanctions against the mentor for participation. While benefits clearly accrue to the mentor through the relationship (Allen *et al.*, 1997a; Green and Bauer, 1995), there are generally no explicit organizational rewards for informal mentoring. Given these situational characteristics, informal mentoring would reflect a "weak" situation. As Weiss and Adler (1984)

theorized, personality predictors will likely be stronger in weak situations compared to strong situations (i.e. those with clear structure, specific expectations, and evident rewards). Thus, as a weak situation, an individual's decision to participate in informal mentoring is likely to be more a function of his/her personality than other situational factors.

The five-factor model of personality has become widely accepted by personality and industrial psychology researchers. It includes traits of extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Digman, 1990). The five-factor model has demonstrated validity in predicting a variety of work behaviors, including work performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991), motivation (Judge and Ilies, 2002), leadership (Judge *et al.*, 2002), and workplace deviance (Colbert *et al.*, 2004). Research, however, has only begun to explore the impact of the five-factor model on the mentoring process. Waters (2004) found that the personalities of the mentor and the protégé, specifically agreeableness, openness, and extroversion, were significant predictors of protégé – mentor agreement about the provision of psychosocial support.

The five-factor model offers an established framework for the application of personality traits to work behaviors, rather than a piecemeal search for potential personality correlates. The traits of the five-factor model are also relevant to the mentoring situation.

First, mentoring requires that the mentor communicate with the protégé (Kram, 1985). Mentors must be willing to communicate with protégés to develop their work habits, provide career advice, and direct task behaviors, as well as support protégés in their personal development (Dreher and Ash, 1990; Kram, 1985). In Ragins and McFarlin's (1990) scales of the functions of mentors, at least 12 of the 20 items assessing career and psychosocial support refer directly to some form of communication (e.g. helping the protégé learn, advising protégé, suggesting specific career strategies, bringing protégé's accomplishments to the attention of others, providing support, and providing feedback). Extroversion describes an individual who is comfortable with social relationships. Extroverts are viewed as warm, gregarious, assertive, active, and exhibiting positive emotion (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Given extroverts' propensity to seek new relationships and the social nature of mentoring, extroverts were expected to be more likely than introverts to volunteer their service as mentors. In their qualitative study of mentors, Allen *et al.* (1997a) found that mentors were attracted to protégés with people and communication skills, and also sought mentoring opportunities in order to develop close relationships. While introverts might not avoid a specific mentoring opportunity for other reasons, extroverts will likely seek such opportunities more often than introverts simply due to the communication aspects. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H1.* Extroversion will be significantly and positively related to the frequency of participation as a mentor.

McManus and Russell (1997) conceptualized informal mentoring as a specific form of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), since mentoring represents behavior that is prosocial and extends beyond one's formal role in the organization. They called for research to explore the relationship between OCB and informal mentoring. In response to this, Allen (2003) found that a prosocial personality was significantly correlated with

the willingness to mentor. One personality trait that has been found to be strongly correlated to OCB is that of conscientiousness (Organ, 1994; Organ and Ryan, 1995). Conscientiousness refers to a characteristic involving goal focus, dutifulness, self-discipline, and competence (Costa and McCrae, 1992). A conscientious person is committed to doing the task the right way. Mentoring requires commitment as well – a commitment of time, and “a personal, extra-organizational investment in the protégé by the mentor” (Scandura and Schriesheim, 1994, p. 1589). Given the prosocial and extrarole aspects of informal mentoring, and that conscientiousness has been shown to be one of the few consistent personality predictors of OCB, conscientious individuals were expected to participate as a mentor more frequently than less conscientious individuals. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Conscientiousness will be significantly and positively related to the frequency of participation as a mentor.

Mentors have noted that they have gained new perspectives and ideas from working with a protégé (Allen *et al.*, 1997a). Informal mentoring is replete with many emergent activities and mutual adjustment (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). This suggests that mentors must be prepared to deal with ambiguity. Each mentor-protégé relationship presents opportunities to increase the mentor’s own learning or help the protégé solve personal or career related problems (Allen *et al.*, 1997a). The personality trait of openness to experience refers to the number of interests attracting a person and the depth to which those interests are pursued (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Openness to experience suggests an attraction to new ideas, concepts, actions, or feelings. Individuals with high levels of openness to experience would likely be attracted to mentoring because such relationships offer opportunities for learning new perspectives and dealing with ambiguous situations. Those at a low level of openness would likely avoid mentoring, choosing to maintain the status quo in their activity level. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3. Openness to experience will be significantly and positively related to the frequency of participation as a mentor.

While aspects of informal mentoring situations can be linked theoretically to extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, linkages for neuroticism and agreeableness are not as clear. Neuroticism is defined as the degree to which stimuli elicit negative emotions from the person. Individuals at low levels of neuroticism will be emotionally stable and resilient in the face of stimuli in their environment. Individuals at higher levels of neuroticism will be less resilient and more likely to develop negative emotions in the face of such stimuli (Costa and McCrae, 1992). Do informal mentoring situations present aspects that would attract individuals who are either high on neuroticism or emotional stability? There is no research directly linking neuroticism to mentoring, but evidence from other studies of the five-factor model and work behaviors suggest a possible negative relationship. As noted earlier, informal mentoring involves extra efforts on the part of the mentor. Colbert *et al.* (2004) found that neurotic individuals would be more likely to withhold efforts. In situations involving the need for effort, neurotic individuals felt less secure and self confident compared to emotionally stable individuals. In a meta-analysis of the five-factor model and leadership, Judge and his colleagues (Judge *et al.*, 2002) found neuroticism to

consistently be negatively correlated with leadership emergence and effectiveness. These results combined, while not coincident with mentoring, suggest that individuals high in neuroticism will likely be less comfortable in situations where they will need to be leaders and to put forth extra efforts in their work. Based on this logic, the following hypothesis was proposed:

- H4.* Neuroticism will be significantly and negatively related to the frequency of participation as a mentor.

Agreeableness is defined as the number of sources from which an individual takes his or her norms for appropriate behavior (Costa and McCrae, 1992). An agreeable person will defer to many other people for attitudinal or behavioral cues. Costa and McCrae (1992) describe an agreeable person as trustworthy, compliant, modest, and altruistic. This is an interesting mix of traits. While mentors need to develop trust with protégés (Allen, 2003; Ragins and Cotton, 1999) and being altruistic (i.e. prosocial) is supported as a predictor of willingness to mentor (Allen, 2003), the inclusion of “compliant” to the definition of agreeable adds confusion. Recent studies in leadership and work involvement demonstrate this confusion created by agreeableness as “compliant.” First, there is the work of Judge *et al.* (2002) and their meta-analysis of leadership and the five factor model. Since mentoring is often considered to be “a personal leader-follower relationship” (Scandura and Russell, 2004, p. 992), it makes sense to examine parallel work in leadership to better understand some aspects of the mentoring process. Judge *et al.* (2002) found agreeableness to be negatively related to leadership emergence and the least relevant of the five factors in relationships to leadership in general. The authors suggested that agreeable people, while altruistic, are generally passive and compliant, two traits that are not likely to be found in leaders. A second perspective on this confusion regarding agreeableness-as-compliance and mentoring is found in research on work involvement. As a prosocial work behavior, informal mentoring can be considered as a form of work involvement. Bozionelis (2003) found agreeableness to be negatively related to work involvement. He reasoned that agreeable people seek to maintain relationships not only at work but also outside of work. These interests outside of work often impinge upon involvement with work. At the opposite extreme, less agreeable people are viewed as more antagonistic and self-serving, yet they take a very strong interest in their own career paths. Thus, less agreeable people appear to be more involved with work. Given the confusion surrounding the possible relationship between agreeableness and participation in mentoring, no hypothesis will be proposed. The general research question concerning the relationship between agreeableness and participation in mentoring will be explored.

Research has found that prior experience as a protégé or a mentor is one of the strongest demographic predictors of the willingness to be a mentor (Allen *et al.*, 1997b; Ragins and Cotton, 1993). Those who have been protégés have found such relationships to be important in their own professional development, and seek to pass such support on to a new generation of professionals (Allen *et al.*, 1997a). While prior experience is important, it is believed that personality will still have an impact on participation as a mentor above and beyond the influence of such prior experience. Given the exploratory nature of this study, no prediction was made concerning exactly which dimensions of the Big Five will contribute to the variance explained above that

of prior experience. The purpose of this hypothesis was strictly to establish if personality has an influence above prior experience. Thus, the following was hypothesized:

- H5.* The five factor model of personality will explain variance in the frequency of participation as a mentor above and beyond the influence of prior experience in a mentoring relationship.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of practicing veterinarians in the USA who were members of a Midwestern state veterinary medical association. Many association members work with the state veterinary medicine college, but there is no formal program for mentoring students or hiring students as interns. The college was interested in developing a more formal program, but wanted to study the current level of mentoring taking place. This study was thus part of a larger study of mentoring in the veterinary field. All current participation in mentoring by the veterinarians was completely voluntary.

Surveys were mailed to all 900 members of the state veterinary medicine association, along with a cover letter from the researchers and the veterinary medical association state office as well as a postage-paid return envelope. Of the total, 194 surveys were returned, for a response rate of approximately 22 percent. The survey included measures of the five-factor model personality traits, items assessing their participation as a mentor with various groups, and their prior experience with a mentor, along with other scales concerning their experience as a protégé which were not relevant to the present study. Of the sample, 80 percent reported that they had prior experience with at least one mentor in their careers. The survey was designed such that demographic information was only collected from those respondents who reported that they had prior experience with a mentor. For this group, 80 percent were male, they had been out of veterinary school for an average of 22 years, and all were Caucasian. It should be noted that the gender and experience of the veterinarians in the mentored sample reflected similarities with the overall population of veterinarians in the association, which was 90 percent male with an average experience of 20 years.

Variables

Previous experience with a mentor. This question was the first item on the survey and included the following definition of the term “mentor”:

... an influential individual in your work or profession that has advanced knowledge and experience, and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to your career.

Respondents were asked if “anyone in the veterinary profession (or in a related field) served as a mentor to you?” This item was measured with a dichotomous response of “yes” (2) or “no” (1).

Five-factor model personality traits. The traits of extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience were measured using the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI) measure devised by John *et al.* (1991). The BFI has been shown to have strong convergent validity with other measures of the five factor model, as well as high reliabilities for its dimensions (John and Srivastava, 1999). This

measure was selected because it is somewhat shorter than other measures, yet retains the five factor structure and psychometric properties of other scales. All items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints of “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7).

Participation as a mentor. This measure was intended to capture the frequency by which subjects participate as a mentor. It assessed respondent’s participation as a mentor for protégés at all possible levels – pre-veterinary students, veterinary students, and graduates. It focused only on the self-perceived level of participation, as opposed to more qualitative aspects or activities associated with the mentoring experience. Specifically, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with three statements: “I have served as a mentor to new veterinary professionals,” “I have served as a mentor to local students interested in the veterinary profession,” and “I have supervised veterinary interns interested in my area of practice.” All three items were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints of “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The score for participation was the sum of the scores for the three items divided by three. Higher scores suggested strong participation at all levels, thus an indication of frequent participation as a mentor.

Results

Table I shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations of all measured variables. All reliability coefficients are in the acceptable range. In the correlations, the five personality dimensions correlated significantly with each other except for two – agreeableness did not correlate with either extroversion or openness to experience.

Correlations between the personality dimensions and participation as a mentor supported *H1*, *H2*, and *H3*. Significant positive correlations were found between participation as a mentor and extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Thus, veterinarians who have participated as mentors are generally very social, attentive to their work, and open to different viewpoints. *H4* was not supported as participation as a mentor was not related to the level of neuroticism in the sample. There was also no correlation between participation as a mentor and agreeableness.

To test *H5*, a hierarchical regression approach was used, in which prior experience with a mentor was loaded in Step 1, and all five dimensions of personality were loaded in as a group in Step 2. Table II shows the results of the regression analysis. It is clear that veterinarians’ prior experience with a mentor was significantly associated with

Variables	Means	s.d.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Participation as a mentor	5.08	1.23	(0.76)					
(2) Extroversion	4.76	1.01	0.20**	(0.84)				
(3) Conscientiousness	5.67	0.63	0.15*	0.17*	(0.83)			
(4) Agreeableness	5.43	0.69	-0.02	0.02	0.22***	(0.77)		
(5) Neuroticism	3.12	0.80	-0.08	-0.21**	-0.23***	-0.42***	(0.815)	
(6) Openness to experience	5.00	0.75	0.25***	0.23***	0.24***	0.10	-0.14*	(0.81)

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; reliabilities are shown on the diagonal in parentheses; $n = 194$

Table I.
Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for measured variables

their participation as a mentor, supporting the findings of Ragins and Cotton (1993). The change in R^2 for Step 2 – the addition of the five factor model of personality – was significant, supporting *H5*. The five factor model as a group explained significant variance (6.6 percent) in participation as a mentor above the variance explained by prior experience. Interestingly, of the five personality dimensions, only openness to experience showed a significant beta coefficient.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the degree of correlation between dimensions of personality, specifically the five factor model, and an individual’s voluntary participation as a mentor in a variety of contexts. The findings suggested that those who often participate as mentors are likely to be extroverted, conscientious, and open to new experiences. Personality traits explained an additional 6.6 percent of the variance in the mentor participation variable above and beyond that explained by prior experience with a mentor. Mentoring involves the development of a relationship with a protégé, including such communication functions as advising, networking, directing, and supporting (Kram, 1985). Such activities require the mentor to be comfortable with communicating, more likely found in extroverts than introverts. Mentoring is also a prosocial activity, requiring the mentor’s commitment to task accomplishment and the relationship with the protégé. Conscientious individuals will likely honor such commitments more than less conscientious individuals. Finally, the lack of structure in mentoring brings opportunities to learn new perspectives and solve problems. Such situations are likely to attract individuals who are open to new experiences.

These findings mirror those of Judge *et al.* (2002) regarding personality and leadership. They found extroversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience to be strong predictors of leadership effectiveness and emergence across different situations. Work by Ashton and Lee (2001) suggests that these three traits of the five factor model do indeed cluster together. In their research on personality, they included the five factor model plus a sixth dimension of honesty. Their research found the three dimensions of conscientiousness, extroversion, and openness were all associated with active engagement in three domains of endeavor – social, task, and idea-related. Mentoring offers an environment in which individuals are actively engaged in all three areas. This would suggest that individuals possessing this cluster of traits should be more likely to gravitate toward mentoring than those with lower levels of these traits.

Hierarchical regression: controlling for prior experience as a protégé ($n = 194$)			
	Total R^2	ΔR^2	β
1. Prior experience as a protégé	0.121	0.121***	0.35***
2. Personality dimensions	0.187	0.066**	
Extroversion			10
Agreeableness			-0.09
Conscientiousness			0.04
Neuroticism			-0.07
Openness to experience			0.18*

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table II. Regression for participation as a mentor and personality dimensions

Future research should explore the degree to which these traits continue to cluster in mentoring and other situations.

The hypothesis concerning neuroticism was not supported. It was expected that a negative relationship would exist, but the data showed no relationship. Judge *et al.* (2002) found a negative relationship between neuroticism and leadership emergence in their meta-analysis, reflecting a consistent finding in leadership studies. The present study did find a negative correlation, which was marginally significant ($p < 0.10$) but not significant at a more rigid statistical threshold. In essence, this means that individuals at high or low levels of neuroticism were equally likely to participate in mentoring. It is possible that neuroticism is more predictive of mentoring effectiveness rather than the choice or willingness to participate in mentoring. Given that the present data showed a distribution across the neuroticism trait for all levels of mentoring participation, it would be interesting to study if mentors who demonstrate high levels of neuroticism will be more or less effective than mentors who are more emotionally stable. While the trait might not correlate with a person's choice to mentor, it might play a role in the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

Data also showed no relationship between mentoring participation and agreeableness. As noted earlier, agreeableness includes aspects that could motivate as well as suppress a person's interest in mentoring. One facet of agreeableness includes altruism and building trust, while another facet includes compliance. In the Judge *et al.* (2002) meta-analysis, agreeableness was the least relevant of all of the five factors of the model, showing no relationship with leadership emergence. They suggested that the primary motive of agreeable individuals is often affiliative, which has been shown to be negatively associated with leadership emergence. Thus, while agreeable individuals like situations where they can satisfy their focus on altruistic endeavors and build trust, their tendency toward compliance might prevent them from stepping forward as mentors/leaders in a voluntary situation. Similar to neuroticism, the data in the present study suggested that agreeableness does not discriminate between those who volunteer for mentoring and those who do not. The question of whether agreeableness serves as a predictor of mentoring effectiveness remains to be seen. Given that there seems to be a range of agreeableness levels across participation as a mentor, future research could study whether facets of agreeableness contribute to successful mentoring experiences.

The present study also expanded the umbrella of impact of the five-factor model in organizational behavior. This model of personality has been useful in predicting a number of work behaviors in a variety of settings. The supported relationships with openness to experience, conscientiousness, and extroversion as correlates of mentoring participation broaden the range of predictive validity for the five-factor model.

For the future, there is much more to explore concerning the motivations and personalities of mentors. Are some personality types more likely to be effective mentors? Do certain personality characteristics in mentors predict how they will select protégés? Are mentors with specific personalities attracted to protégés of similar or complimentary personalities? Regarding the last question, research suggests that when mentors and protégés share similar cognitive styles the relationship will be more effective (Armstrong *et al.*, 2002). There are a variety of questions related to personality that seem relevant in the formation and effective maintenance of mentoring relationships.

The findings of the present study not only clarify personality traits of individuals who serve as a mentor, but also who avoids such service. In any organization, there is a preference that new professionals learn from talented, experienced mentors. Is personality more of a predictor of mentoring participation than ability? In other words, are talented individuals avoiding participation in mentoring because they are somewhat introverted or averse to uncertainty? As more institutions develop mentoring programs, there will be a premium on attracting talented mentors, as well as reaching all types of new employees. Perhaps by understanding the types of personalities most likely to participate as mentors, organizations can develop mechanisms to locate other talented individuals who might not initially volunteer due to personality tendencies. Specifically, managers in organizations establishing mentoring programs should seek out those higher level employees who have significant talent in their area of expertise, no matter their personalities, and develop incentive systems to encourage their participation in the mentoring program. Highly talented employees may see little value in participating in such programs if they result in activities that are not rewarded by the organization, particularly if they take away from “productive” work that is rewarded. Once talented mentors are located, training and support systems may be necessary to assist the mentors in developing behaviors that result in effective mentoring experiences for protégés. Present research does not indicate if certain personality traits are predictive of effective mentoring functions of career and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985), so general training could be offered to all mentors as they enter the program.

Limitations of the study

The cross-sectional nature of the survey study prevents drawing conclusions as to the causal priorities among the variables. As with most personality research, it is not clear whether extroverted, conscientious, and adaptable individuals participate in mentoring roles because of their traits or if the traits emerged after service as a mentor. The present study did not examine reasons why the individuals participated as mentors, only seeking correlations between their participation and personalities. The respondents in the study provided all data, thus the results must be tempered with the possibility of single source bias.

The sample in the present study presented a number of limitations. First, it focused on veterinarians, a specialized profession. Second, it represented a relatively small proportion of the total population of veterinarians in the state association (22 percent), and one might question whether a specific response bias existed in which there were certain personality types who responded to the survey. A simple comparison of the means and variances of the present study to other recent studies involving the five factor model did not reveal any specific differences in means or distributions for the variables in the present study. The sample was also very homogeneous, with very few women and no minorities. While this sample was representative of the local population of practicing veterinarians in the state association, the results need to be recognized as focusing on a white male population of mentors. Despite these issues concerning the sample, the findings mirrored those from the meta-analysis of leadership and personality by Judge *et al.* (2002) and showed a similar clustering of traits predicted by Ashton and Lee (2001). This network of relationships suggests some degree of validity.

Finally, the measure of participation as a mentor consisted of a self-reported scale assessing the degree to which the individual participated in mentoring three students, interns and new professionals. It did not reference any specific mentoring relationship nor did it assess the specific number, length, or quality of the mentoring relationships. Its anchors relating to agree-disagree could be criticized as not allowing respondents to precisely quantify their estimations of time spent in mentoring. Still, this measure did show an acceptable reliability coefficient (0.76) and displayed more variance than any of the five factor model measures ($SD = 1.23$). Since the intent of the present study was exploratory, as a general examination of the personality dimensions of those who choose to be mentors, it is believed that the scale used was appropriate. The findings resembled the general findings for leadership emergence and personality, suggesting that the measure offered a reasonable estimation of the frequency with which the veterinarians mentor students, interns and new professionals. In the future, it would be advisable to refine the present measure or develop a stronger measure of mentoring frequency and replicate these findings.

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