
Taking the Mentor's Perspective

The Relevance of Age and Other-oriented Motivations in Volunteer Mentoring

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Mentoring programs in which volunteers support disadvantaged children and adolescents are gaining popularity in the Netherlands. Based on Dutch survey data and in-depth interviews, this paper draws attention to the motivations of volunteer mentors. The sample included 122 mentees and 196 mentors for which questionnaire data was gathered and an additional 45 in-depth interviews (N=363). The concept of self-oriented versus other-oriented motivations forms the theoretical framework of this paper. The following questions are addressed. (1) What types of motivations can be identified for volunteer mentors? (2) How do standard socio-demographic variables influence the motivations of mentors? (3) What is the influence of the mentor's motivations on the perceived results of the mentorship? Results show that other-oriented motivation exerts a significant positive effect on the perceived results of the mentorship. Self-oriented motivation does not influence the perceived results. The mentor's age is also a strong predictor of the perceived results of the mentorship. This justifies the preliminary conclusion that both older mentors and mentors driven by an other-oriented stance are more capable of producing positive results in mentoring programs than younger mentors and mentors primarily driven by self-oriented motivations.

Keywords: youth mentoring, volunteering, disadvantaged youth, volunteer motivations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, youth mentoring programs in which volunteer middle class citizens (mentors) offer social support to disadvantaged children and adolescents (mentees) have gained popularity in the Netherlands. In the United States, youth mentoring dates back to the early twentieth century. Rhodes (2002) estimates that in the United States over two million volunteers are participating in youth mentoring programs. In The Netherlands youth mentoring is a relatively new phenomenon. On a small scale, buddy programs for chronically ill people and mentoring for socially isolated elderly have been around since the late seventies. In 2006 youth mentoring was voted Holland's top social priority in an election organized by Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* and the Dutch Council for Social Development (RMO). As a result, hundreds of youth mentoring programs were initiated in the Netherlands the past four years.

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In the United States, a number of empirical studies have been conducted on the effects of youth mentoring (for an overview see Allen & Eby, 2007). In a randomized controlled trial of almost 1,000 respondents, Grossman & Tierney (1998) concluded that the mentoring program 'Big Brothers Big Sisters' produced significant positive results. Participants in the program were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol and less prone to display aggressive behavior. School performance and attitudes of mentees improved, as well as their peer and family relationships. In a meta-analysis of 55 mentoring programs, Dubois et al. (2002) address certain critical factors concerning mentoring organizations, such as continuous training and support for mentors, monitoring of progress and effects, involvement of the pupil's parents in the program, and the stimulation of active mentoring styles.

Until recently, research on youth mentoring in the Netherlands was scarce and rarely met scientific standards. Studies mainly focused on school-based mentoring programs (see e.g. Veugelers, 2000; Crul, 2003) and were of small scale. Outcomes of these studies are consistent with existing international research: overall effects of mentoring on disadvantaged youth are positive, though many questions about how mentoring leads to the desired outcomes remain unanswered. In 2009 the Netherlands Centre for Social Development (MOVISIE) conducted a study of nine Dutch youth mentoring programs to explore the *conditions* that are beneficiary for the mentee's progress in a mentoring relationship (see Uyterlinde, Lub, De Groot & Sprinkhuizen, 2009). Which factors in particular produce positive results? And which conditions in a mentoring relationship should be avoided? The study was based on questionnaire data and in-depth interviews of mentors and mentees (N=363) and included both school-based and community-based youth mentoring programs. The results showed that distinct styles of mentoring can have separate effects on outcome-indicators such as social skills, social-emotional development and the broadening of the mentee's horizon (meeting new people, entering new places and situations). An active and instrumental approach produce best results (see also Langhout et al., 2004), provided that the mentor combines an active and instrumental style with supportive elements and the mentee is able to identify with the mentor in terms of a perceived low level of social distance (Uyterlinde, Lub, De Groot & Sprinkhuizen, 2009).

Taking the mentor's perspective

International and Dutch research on youth mentoring to date still mainly focuses on effects regarding the personal development of the mentee. Although some authors briefly discuss the mentor's perspective (Freedman, 1993; Rhodes, 2002), empirical data on this topic is limited. So far, little is known about specific motivations of volunteer mentors, which socio-demographic factors influence different forms of motivations and to what extent socio-demographic variables and mentoring motivations predict results of the mentorship. Understanding the motivations of volunteer mentors is a critical issue in the field of youth mentoring. Gaining insight in their motivations can help solve the imbalance between the need for mentors and their actual availability (Keller, 2007). It can also – and maybe even more importantly – contribute to more efficient selection, matchmaking and training procedures, which can ultimately help improve the mentee's personal development. A deeper

understanding of mentoring motivations can thus harness the full potential of mentoring (Rhodes, 2002). In this paper, we will explore the motivations of volunteer mentors in youth mentoring programs empirically by secondary analysis of statistical and qualitative data.

Theoretical framework and research questions

The concept of recruiting volunteers in order to build a strong, sustaining relationship with an adolescent is based on general conceptual frameworks developed to understand voluntarism. Individual factors in these models generally represent either the capacity or inclination to become involved (Keller, 2007). According to Wilson (2000), variables indicating possession of human capital, particularly level of education and accessibility to social networks, tend to predict volunteering. Penner (2002) identifies two personality traits, which are associated with voluntary behavior: other-oriented empathy and helpfulness. Consistent with these expectations, research suggests that both being a mentor and having a longer mentoring relationship are being associated with college education and family income (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen & Shapiro, 1999).

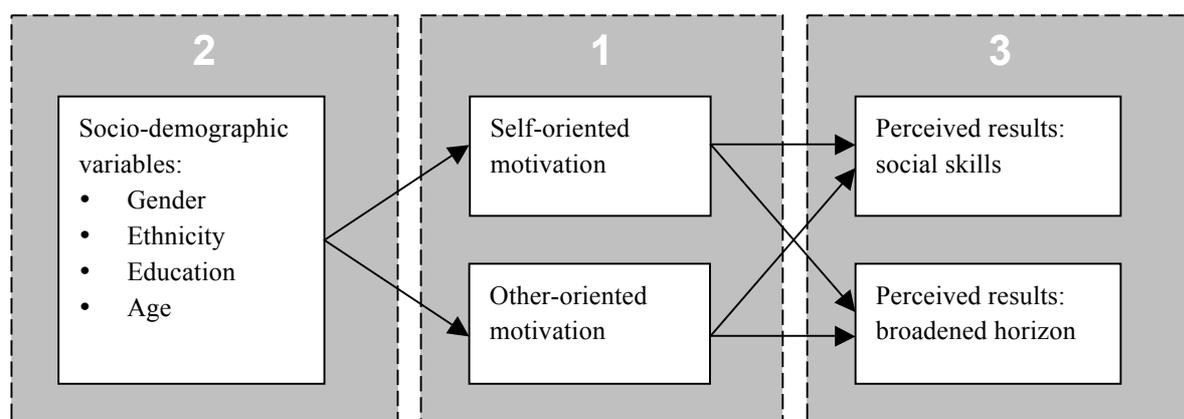
In an approach to describe volunteer motivations, researchers developed scales assessing seven different motivations: (1) humanitarian values; (2) career options (gaining experience); (3) understanding (learning about the self and others); (4) enhancement (increasing self-esteem); (5) protective (distraction from own problems); (6) social (meeting expectations of others); and (7) demonstrating involvement in a community (Clary et al., 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). In a qualitative study on natural mentors – e.g. teachers and relatives, as opposed to formal mentors in volunteer programs – Philip & Hendry (2000) identified four explanations why adults fulfilled a mentoring role: (1) enabling mentors to make sense of their past experiences; (2) gaining insight into another person's life; (3) establishing a different type of relationship (cross-generational, cross-cultural) and (4) building skills in providing a helping relationship. Keller (2007) suggests that these four types of motivations correspond to the functions a volunteer mentor serves, such as helping youth to stay out of trouble, promoting personal development and strengthening community relations with adolescents.

The question arises to what extent these conceptualizations of volunteer motivations are applicable to mentoring. Current theory and research data provide little empirical knowledge on this particular topic. What exactly drives volunteer mentors and which factors influence the different forms of motivations? Referring to Erikson's concept of *generativity*, Keller (2007) suggests a convergence of self-oriented and other-oriented motivations for mentoring based on earlier conceptualizations by Freedman (1993) and Rhodes (2002). Scales of volunteer motivations by Clary et al. (1998), Omoto & Snyder (1995) and Philip & Hendry (2000) tend to emphasize self-oriented motivations as an explanation for natural mentoring. In volunteer mentoring, Rhodes (2002) stipulates the reciprocal nature of the emotional connection between the mentor and the mentee.

The concept of self-oriented versus other-oriented motivations for volunteer mentoring forms the theoretical framework to examine the motivations of volunteers in youth mentoring

programs. In sum, this paper seeks to address the following questions. (1) What types of motivations can be identified for volunteer mentors? (2) How do socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, and ethnicity) influence the motivations of mentors? (3) What is the influence of the mentor's motivation on the perceived results of the mentorship? In figure 1 all expected relations are illustrated. First, we will explain the methodological approach (data & measurements). Next we will present which types of motivations can be identified and which socio-demographic variables influence the motivations of volunteer mentors. The final analysis examines the influence of the mentor's motivations on perceived results of the mentorship. The paper concludes by discussing the most salient findings and implications for the field of mentoring.

Figure 1. Conceptual model: influence of socio-demographic variables on the mentor's motivations and the (potential) mediating effect of motivations on perceived results of the mentorship



2. DATA & MEASUREMENTS

The statistical data in this study draws on an evaluation of nine Dutch volunteer mentoring programs (Uyterlinde, Lub, De Groot & Sprinkhuizen, 2009). These nine mentoring programs vary in size, ranging from 30 active matches in the smallest program, to more than 650 active matches in the largest program. The sample contains data from 122 mentees and 196 mentors, who completed questionnaires (N=318). In addition to the survey, in-depth interviews were held with 23 volunteer mentors and 22 mentees participating in four of the evaluated programs.

Based on a secondary analysis of both the statistical and qualitative data, we try to gain insight into the motivations of volunteer mentors. The statistical analysis of the data therefore prioritizes the mentor's motivations, the perceived results of the mentorship and the influence of socio-demographic factors. The analysis is consequently based on the results of the mentor survey. The average mentor-response rate of the nine mentoring programs in this study is 42 percent. Qualitative data was analyzed to investigate how mentors describe their motivations and in what way they experience benefits from the mentorship. Quotes from the in-depth interviews mainly serve as an illustration and explanation of the statistical outcomes.

Motivational variables: self-oriented & other-oriented motives

In the survey, different items were presented which apply to the mentor's motivations. In total respondents answered to five separate assertions on why they had enrolled in a mentoring program (*I became a mentor because...*). This was measured on a Likert scale (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree):

- 1) I feel the need to help someone else;
- 2) I want to convey my own life experience and knowledge to someone else;
- 3) I want to learn more about the social environment of others;
- 4) I want to learn new skills;
- 5) I want to gain insight into my own personal experiences and/or problems.

Bi-variate correlation and factor analysis reveal that items 1 and 2 and items 3 and 4 can be grouped into two distinct components.¹ Therefore, adjusted variables were constructed to combine these items. Referring to Erikson's concept of *generativity*, we have dubbed these variables *self-oriented motivation* (items 3 and 4) and *other-oriented motivation* (items 1 and 2). Self-oriented motivation comprises personal motives to become a mentor, reflecting the need for personal development (i.e. individual growth, learning new skills) and wanting to learn more about the social environment of the mentee. Other-oriented motivation reflects the desire of the mentor to help another person (the mentee) and in doing so, utilizing ones own personal experience and knowledge to support the mentee.

Perceived results of the mentorship: social skills & broadened horizon

The survey presented mentors with 13 detailed items that evaluate the progress of their mentee. Respondents were asked to answer on a Likert scale (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree) whether they perceived progress on particular items. The result-items include improved school performance, improved social skills, improved social interaction with others (such as peers, parents and adults), coming into contact with new places and people and entering new situations as a result of the mentorship, improved self-esteem and an improved ability to carry out practical tasks (such as making formal appointments, filling out forms etc.).

We performed two statistical tests to reach reliable scales regarding the measurement of perceived results of the mentorship. First, we carried out a reliability analysis for the total of the result-items. This yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .891. Second, we performed a factor analysis. This revealed that we could extract two scales out of the 13 items. The first scale is measured by 5 items and refers to the *social skills* of the mentee (improved general social skills and improved social interaction with others). The second scale is measured by 4 items and refers to a *broadened horizon* of the mentee as a result of the mentorship (increased contact of the mentee with new places and new people, and entering new situations). A reliability test shows that both scales are reliable. The Cronbach's coefficient for social skills is .872, and for broadened horizon .832. These are to be considered highly reliable values, as

¹ Spearman's correlation items 1&2: .331 p < .001. Spearman's correlation items 3&4: .481 p < .001. Component loadings factor analysis: *Self-oriented* (component 1): item 3: 0.77, item 4: 0.84. *Other-oriented* (component 2): item 1: 0.77, item 2: 0.73.

scales require a reliability of 0.70 or higher to be used as an instrument of statistical measurement.

Socio-demographic variables

Standard socio-demographic variables were selected as independent variables: age (in years), gender, education and ethnicity. For use in regression tests, gender was recoded into a dummy variable (0 = female, 1 = male). The same was done for ethnicity, with value 0 corresponding with native Dutch respondents and value 1 representing respondents belonging to an ethnic minority group. The majority of mentors in the sample are native Dutch (89%); the ethnic minority mentors consist of Surinams (3%), Indonesians (1%), former Yugoslavians (1%) and twelve other countries. The educational level of mentors consists of 5 categories, ranging from secondary school to an academic degree. The descriptive statistics of the independent variables show that the mentor's age in the sample ranges from 18-68 years, with a mean age of 34, that the majority of the sample are women (62%) and Dutch native (89%) and that most mentors possess an educational degree at college or academic level (68%).

Statistical models

Multiple univariate regression tests were carried out to gain a first impression of the influence of socio-demographic variables on each of the mentor's separate motives. This is important to test separately, because it provides a first detailed view of effects. This analysis also includes motivational item 5, which cannot be grouped in the two adjusted variables (self-oriented and other-oriented motivation). Because the research questions addressed in this paper ultimately require the measurement of several different outcome variables, a multivariate design was used. A MANOVA-test was carried out to assess the influence of socio-demographic variables on the two types of motivations (self-oriented & other-oriented) and the two scales of perceived results (social skills & broadened horizon). Unlike univariate regression tests, MANOVA can handle several dependent variables all together. Performing only multiple tests on each of the different dependent variables would also increase the risk of making a Type 1 error (i.e. incorrectly rejecting a null-hypothesis). This makes MANOVA a more sound statistical procedure for this purpose.

In total, three statistical models were constructed. In model 1, the influence of socio-demographic variables on self-oriented and other-oriented motivation is measured. Model 2 assesses the effect of socio-demographic variables on perceived results of the mentorship. Adding self-oriented and other-oriented motivation in the regression analysis in model 3, allows us to test the effect of the two types of motives on perceived results and assesses the potential mediating effect of motivations on the influence of socio-demographic variables regarding perceived results.

3. RESULTS

What types of motivations can be identified for volunteer mentors?

Table 1 shows the range, mean results and standard deviation for the five assertions on motivation in the survey (scale 1-5: 1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree). Not surprisingly, it becomes clear that most mentors are primarily motivated by the prospect of helping someone in need. The in-depth interviews supply numerous illustrations of this type of motivation. In both studies, the majority of interviewed mentors describe 'doing good', 'helping others' and 'the sense of making a difference' as their most important motive for volunteering. Many of those interviewed had been involved in various other kinds of volunteering, before they came into contact with mentoring as a means to fulfill this goal. Elisabeth, who enrolled in an Amsterdam-based mentoring program, explains why she decided to become a mentor:²

“This may sound a bit idealistic, but as a mentor I want to make a contribution to the local Amsterdam community. We all have to live together peacefully in this city and I tend to think we will be better off when we're all well involved in society. Some youngsters can use a little help with that.”

The desire to convey one's own life experience and knowledge to a mentee also shows a high mean score. Mentors are driven by gratitude for their own happy and successful life and as a result they want to give something in return to society. Sophie, a 33-year-old female mentor:

“Many kids do not have a two-parent family. Of course, I've had my struggles growing up, but my mom and dad are still happily together, I have two lovely brothers and I've had the opportunity to take piano lessons and ballet classes... I felt the need to give something in return and I do think these kids can use some extra attention.”

Some mentors think they understand what their mentee is going through and they feel the need to share the life lessons they learned in their own childhood. Mentor Arnold grew up in a family taking care of foster children. As a volunteer, he feels the need to continue a family tradition.

Motivations that apply to learning more about the social environment of others and learning new skills are valued slightly less by mentors. This is signified both by a relatively lower mean score compared to the need to help others (item 1), and the outcome that some respondents totally disagree with these assertions. In the in-depth interviews, several respondents explained how the mentorship provides a lens through which they can see the social environment of lower class adolescents (Rhodes, 2002). Miriam, a 52-year-old architect:

“It confronts me with a different part of society. Holland is fairly segregated; we have no clue about other cultures. I live in the heart of Amsterdam, in a mixed neighborhood, but in a more expensive area which is 100% white. I play tennis; but at the tennisclub there are no

² All names of respondents of the in-depth interviews are fictitious for reasons of privacy.

Moroccans, no Surinams at all. Although there's not much you can do about it, I do find it very strange.”

The in-depth interviews also provide a few examples of mentors who are eager to learn new skills. Bianca, a 38-year-old mentor, explains how the mentorship contributes to her personal development.

“I'm not a very outgoing person, so this feels like a learning process for myself as well. It took me a long time to decide to enroll in the mentoring program and I'm glad I finally did. So far it has been an important learning experience for me.”

Finally, gaining insight into ones own personal experience and/or problems does not form a considerable motivation for mentors. On the contrary, the relatively low mean score (2.26) reveals that most mentors disagree with this assertion. However, analysis of the in-depth interviews explains how this type of motivation does play a role for certain mentors. Mentor Janet noticed how certain aspirant-mentors behaved in the training sessions prior to the mentorship.

“It seems to me that many of these mentors are in search of their deeper self. At the training I have seen some pretty unstable people, of whom I wasn't sure an adolescent would benefit from their support.”

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of mentor motivations (range, mean and standard deviation).

	Range	Mean	S.D
1. I became a mentor because I feel the need to help someone else	2-5	4.06	0.539
2. I became a mentor because I want to convey my own life experience and knowledge to someone else	2-5	3.90	0.746
3. I became a mentor because I want to learn more about the social environment of others	1-5	3.75	0.848
4. I became a mentor because I want to learn new skills	1-5	3.65	0.917
5. I became a mentor because I want to gain insight into my own personal experiences and/or problems	1-5	2.26	1.045

How do socio-demographic variables influence the motivations of volunteer mentors?

Table 2 provides the regression coefficients for socio-demographic variables on the five separate motivational items in the survey (univariate analysis). How do the mentor's age, gender, education and ethnicity influence motivations?

The first item, the need to help someone else, yields no significant effects, although ethnicity comes close to a positive effect ($b = 0.240$, $p = .088$). This suggests that the desire to

help another person through a mentorship forms a slightly stronger motivation for mentors belonging to an ethnic minority group than for native Dutch mentors. The second motivational item shows a positive effect for age, indicating that the older the mentor, the stronger the need to convey one's life experience and knowledge to the mentee. A mentor's desire to learn more about the social environment of others (item 3) is not dependent on any of the socio-demographic variables. Item 4, the objective to learn new skills, shows a negative effect for age and ethnicity. The younger the mentor, the more important learning new skills becomes as a motivation of the mentor. The same conclusion applies to native Dutch mentors. Because of the significant negative effect ($b = -0.583$; $p < .05$), it would seem that mentors belonging to ethnic minority groups are not particularly motivated by the prospect of learning new skills in becoming a mentor. Finally, the regression analysis reveals that the desire to gain insight into one's own personal experiences and/or problems as a motive for mentoring is dependent on the respondent's age and education. The younger and less educated the mentor, the stronger the wish to gain insight into personal questions becomes a motivation. Gender does not influence the mentor's motivations in any significant way.

Table 2. Regression coefficients for socio-demographic variables on motivational items

Motivational items (I became a mentor because...)	1. I feel the need to help someone else	2. I want to convey my life experience and knowledge to someone else	3. I want to learn more about the social environment of others	4. I want to learn new skills	5. I want to gain insight into my own personal experiences and/or problems
<i>Socio-demographic variables</i>					
Gender (male)	.018 (.099)	.032 (.134)	-.194 (.155)	-.064 (.170)	.031 (.190)
Education	-.017 (.037)	.053 (.051)	.046 (.058)	-.068 (.062)	-.202** (.070)
Ethnicity (ethnic minority)	.240 (.140)	.005 (.180)	-.279 (.218)	-.583* (.229)	.028 (.255)
Age	.003 (.004)	.013* (.005)	-.007 (.006)	-.021** (.007)	-.015* (.008)

Note. Unstandardized b-coefficients of univariate analysis. Standard errors between parentheses. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

Table 3 provides the parameter estimates from the multivariate model on self-oriented and other-oriented motivation (model 1). Interestingly, model 1 reveals that both types of motives are significantly dependent on the mentor's age, but in opposite directions. The older the mentor, the more he is driven by other-oriented motives. The younger the mentor, the more important self-oriented motivation tends to be. Self-oriented motivation is also dependent on the respondent's ethnicity. Ethnicity exerts a fairly high significant negative effect on self-oriented motivations ($b = -0.452$; $p < .05$). This indicates that respondents belonging to an

ethnic minority group are less inclined to favor personal motives to become a mentor than native Dutch mentors.

Table 3. Parameter estimates from multivariate model on self-oriented and other-oriented motivation of mentors

Model 1		
<i>Social demographic variables</i>	<i>Self-oriented motivation</i>	<i>Other-oriented motivation</i>
Gender (male)	-.119 (.137)	.016 (.095)
Education	.010 (.137)	.027 (.036)
Ethnicity (ethnic minority)	-.452 (.193)*	-.136 (.133)
Age	-.011 (.005)*	.008 (.004)*
<i>Intercept</i>	4.101***	3.599***
<i>Wilk's lambda</i>	.204; F=312.469 (2); p < .001; $\eta^2=2.796$	

Note. Unstandardized b-coefficients of multivariate analysis. Standard errors between parentheses. * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001. Wilk's lambda is a test statistic used in MANOVA as a direct measure of the proportion of variance in the combination of dependent variables that is unaccounted for by the independent variable.

The influence of the mentor's motivations on the perceived results of mentorship

Table 4 provides the parameter estimates from multivariate models on perceived results of the mentoring relationship (Model 2 & 3). Model 2 shows that of the socio-demographic variables, only age produces a significant effect on the perceived results. This positive effect applies to both scales of perceived results: social skills and broadened horizon. The parameter estimates indicate that as the mentor's age increases, he also perceives increased social skills and a broadened horizon in the development of the mentee. In Model 3, we added the two types of motivations in the Multivariate analysis. It demonstrates that other-oriented motivation of the mentor exerts a significant positive effect on the perceived results of the mentorship. Self-oriented motivation does not influence the results in any significant way. Model 3 also shows that mentoring motivations have no mediating effect on the influence of socio-demographic variables regarding perceived results. Significant parameter estimates for age on perceived results remain nearly the same when the two types of motivations are added. This indicates that the mentor's age is a relatively strong predictor of the results of the mentorship (as perceived by the mentor), regardless of mentoring motivations. We interviewed Angela, a 55-year-old Surinam mentor, supporting an 11-year old Indonesian boy. She describes the personal growth of her mentee:

“We have been working on several things. For example, I recently helped his mother to find a tutor for him because he was not doing well at school. [...] And I think, when I first met him, he was a very shy kid. He's always willing to help others, but always in a modest, reserved way. But when I see him now, he seems much more outgoing and more self-confident.”

Based on these results, one could argue that the older the mentor, the more progress he achieves. Second, it seems that mentoring motives that are rooted in an other-oriented stance, have a positive influence on the progress of the mentee. However, the analysis below applies to *perceived* results of the mentor and is not based on the measurement of the mentee's factual progress. This proposes some alternative explanations for the outcomes. Older mentors who are primarily oriented towards helping the mentee instead of towards self-learning, might have a more optimistic disposition about the progress of the mentee to begin with. In other words, it is possible that older mentors are more inclined to assess their mentee's progress as substantial, even though this may not be the case *de facto* (increasing age and other-oriented motivation might cause 'wishful thinking' on the part of the mentor: the tendency to overestimate the mentee's progress). A second explanation is that younger and self-oriented mentors are less able to detect progress with their mentee, even though their mentee might well gain improvements as a result of the mentorship.

Table 4. Parameter estimates from multivariate models on perceived results of mentorship

Models	2		3	
	<i>Socio-demographic variables</i>		<i>Socio-demographic variables + self-oriented & other-oriented motivations</i>	
	<i>Perceived results (social skills)</i>	<i>Perceived results (broadened horizon)</i>	<i>Perceived results (social skills)</i>	<i>Perceived results (broadened horizon)</i>
<i>Socio-demographic variables</i>				
Gender (male)	-.157 (.199)	-.175 (.141)	-.180 (.116)	-.237 (.141)
Education	.040 (.043)	-.004 (.053)	.044 (.044)	-.002 (.053)
Ethnicity (ethnic minority)	.215 (.155)	.095 (.191)	.269 (.162)	.099 (.197)
Age	.014** (.004)	.014** (.005)	.012* (.005)	.013* (.006)
<i>Motivational variables</i>				
Self-oriented			.008 (.068)	.010 (.082)
Other-oriented			.221** (.097)	.260* (.118)
<i>Intercept</i>	2.501***	3.013***	1.627***	2.015***
<i>Wilk's Lambda</i>	.433; F=106.043 (2) p < 001; $\eta^2=567$.894; F=9.110 (2) p < 001; $\eta^2=106$	

Note. Unstandardized b-coefficients of multivariate analysis. Standard errors between parentheses. * p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001. Wilk's lambda is a test statistic used in MANOVA as a direct measure of the proportion of variance in the combination of dependent variables that is unaccounted for by the independent variable.

4. CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

This paper shows the relevance of the mentor's perspective in volunteer mentoring. The results specify what exactly drives volunteer mentors, which socio-demographic factors influence different forms of motivations and to what extent mentoring motivations and socio-demographic variables predict results of the mentorship. The statistical outcomes can be considered a first empirical test of these issues, and as a result provide directions for future research. Below we will discuss the most salient findings, after which we will explore implications for the field of mentoring.

What types of motivations can be identified for volunteer mentoring?

In line with earlier conceptualizations, the motivations of mentors found in this study resemble two forms of volunteer motivations: *self-oriented* and *other-oriented*. Self-oriented motivation comprises personal motives to become a mentor, reflecting the need for personal development (i.e. individual growth, learning new skills) and wanting to learn more about the social environment of the mentee. Other-oriented motivation reflects the desire of the mentor to help the mentee and in doing so, utilizing one's own personal experience and knowledge to support the mentee. Overall, the results provide empirical evidence that volunteer mentoring motivations indeed stipulate a reciprocal nature of the emotional connection between the mentor and the mentee (see Rhodes, 2002): mentors are driven by both personal motives (seeking individual fulfillment) and altruistic motives (helping the mentee). However, other-oriented motivations turn out to be slightly more important for volunteers to enroll in a mentoring program.

Gaining insight into one's personal experiences or problems does not seem to be a considerable motivation for mentors, but it cannot be completely ruled out. It is possible that respondents debunked this item in the survey because they consider it an illegitimate motive for mentoring. The in-depth interviews provide at least some evidence that this type of motivations does play a role for certain volunteer mentors. The univariate analysis shows that the younger and less educated the mentor, the stronger the wish to gain personal insights as a motivation for mentoring becomes. Whether this has an effect on the mentoring relationship and the mentee's personal development cannot be answered based on our analysis. However, the question arises to what extent volunteers who enroll in a mentoring program for personal problem solving, are likely to provide a disadvantaged adolescent with the support it needs.

How do socio-demographic variables influence the motivation of mentors?

Gender, education, ethnicity and age were selected as independent variables. Consistent to existing research on the influence of gender on the effects of mentoring (Liang & Grossman, 2007), our analysis reveals no significant differences between male and female volunteer mentors in their respective motivations. Both the univariate and multivariate analysis show that *gender* exerts no significant effect on mentoring motivations. This does not imply that the 'gender perspective' in mentoring is not important. Many programs refrain from matching male mentors to female mentees in order to guarantee the personal integrity of juvenile girls or to avoid love relationships. Some mentoring programs in the Netherlands are specifically

aimed at supporting young girls who fell victim to abuse or were rejected by their family. These programs therefore exclusively recruit female mentors.

Like gender, *education* does not seem to be an important background factor in mentoring motivation. The only significant effect found in this respect is a negative influence of education on the desire to gain insight into personal problems through mentorship. The less educated the mentor, the stronger the mentor strives to enhance personal insights through the mentoring relationship. To some extent, *ethnicity* effects mentoring motivations. Ethnic minority mentors are less inclined to favor a self-oriented motivation than native Dutch mentors. This implies that these mentors are primarily motivated by the prospect of supporting the mentee and less by seeking individual fulfillment through a mentorship. Local authorities in the Netherlands are keen on increasing active citizenship among the ethnic urban middle-class (Bochove, Rusinovic & Engbersen, 2009), and many Dutch mentoring programs have difficulty recruiting volunteer mentors of non-Dutch descent. Taking subtle differences in mentoring motivations into consideration, might help recruit volunteer mentors of ethnic minority groups.

Finally, *age* stands out as the most influential socio-demographic variable in volunteer mentoring motivations. Both the univariate and multivariate models yield several significant effects. The younger the mentor, the more important self-oriented motivations. The older the mentor, the more he is driven by other-oriented motivations. A picture emerges where – on average – younger mentors tend to utilize a mentorship more often for self-learning purposes, whereas older mentors are mainly motivated by transferring knowledge and experiences to their mentee.

What is the influence of the mentor's motivation on perceived results of the mentorship?

The multivariate analysis demonstrates that other-oriented motivations of the mentor exert a significant positive effect on the perceived results of the mentorship. Self-oriented motivations do not influence the perceived results in any significant way. The mentor's age is a strong predictor of the perceived results of the mentorship. As the mentor's age increases, he also perceives increased social skills and a broadened horizon in the development of the mentee. Mentoring motivations have no mediating effect on the influence of socio-demographic variables regarding perceived results of the mentorship. In sum, older mentors and other-oriented mentors perceive more progress than younger and self-oriented mentors. These outcomes provide three possible explanations, which apply to the ability of mentors to correctly judge the progress of their mentee.

- 1) Mentoring motivations that are rooted in an other-oriented stance, have a more positive influence on the progress of the mentee in terms of improved social skills and broadened horizon, compared to mentoring motivations that are self-oriented. This would imply that the judgment of the mentor fully corresponds with the factual progress of the mentee.
- 2) Older mentors and other-oriented mentors judge more optimistically about the development of the mentee (both in terms of social skills and broadened horizon). This would imply that a higher age and a stronger other-oriented motivation contribute to

‘wishful thinking’ on the part of the mentor: the tendency to overestimate the mentee’s progress.

- 3) Younger and self-oriented mentors are less able to detect progress in their mentee’s personal development, even though their mentee might well have made progress as a result of the mentorship. This would imply that older mentors are more capable to correctly judge their mentee’s progress than younger mentors.

Since the statistical analysis in this paper applies to results perceived by the mentor (and not on the measurement of the mentee’s factual progress), we cannot draw definite conclusions. It is possible that some mentors underestimate and some overestimate the progress of their mentees. Research that systematically compares different mentor age groups and mentors who display either more self-oriented or other-oriented motivations with the results of mentees could reveal which of the three explanations is most valid. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that volunteers are able to correctly judge their mentee’s progress because the outcomes of the multivariate test are based on highly reliable scales – which are in turn constructed from detailed items regarding the mentee’s progress. This justifies the preliminary conclusion that both older mentor and mentors driven by an other-oriented stance are more capable of producing positive results in mentoring programs than younger mentors and mentors driven by self-oriented motivations.

Implications for the field of mentoring

Applying knowledge about volunteer mentor motivations into mentoring programs can enhance the effectiveness of mentoring as a social intervention. The findings from this study make several relevant contributions to the field of mentoring; in particular when it comes to recruiting and training volunteer mentors and optimizing matchmaking procedures. Although further research is required, the statistical analyses show that volunteer mentor motivations matter.

During recruitment and application procedures, mentoring organizations should thoroughly investigate the motives of aspirant mentors in terms of self-oriented versus other-oriented motivations. Of course, an aspirant-mentor cannot be labeled as either self-oriented or other-oriented; a volunteer mentor embodies a combination of both. Based on the findings in this study it is recommended to recruit mentors that are predominantly driven by other-oriented motives, because they seem to achieve significant results. However, self-oriented motivations should not be neglected when recruiting mentors. It remains important that the mentor can obtain personal benefits from the mentoring relationship, for example by learning new skills and broadening one’s horizon.

The second recommendation refers to age. Older mentors tend to be more strongly motivated by ‘helping the other’ and ‘making a difference’. Therefore they may be more committed to build a sustainable and intense relationship with the mentee. Since older mentors also tend to perceive more progress in the mentee’s development, age is a serious factor to incorporate into matchmaking procedures. Several mentoring programs exclusively recruit students as mentors (peer-mentoring), based on the assumption that younger mentors

are better able to empathize with children and adolescents. These programs seem to underestimate the importance of experience of life of older mentors. On the contrary, our findings suggest that older mentors are even more successful in supporting a mentee than younger mentors.

Therefore, peer-mentoring programs should at least stimulate aspirant-mentors to focus on supporting the mentee and make them aware of their opportunity to help the mentee, instead of primarily pursuing personal growth. By incorporating other-oriented aspects into training procedures, younger mentors can be helped to develop an other-oriented stance, which can contribute to increase the progress of the mentee.

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