

PRRAEPGDA 2020**Personal and Regulatory Resources in Achieving Educational and Professional Goals in the Digital Age****MODELS OF MENTORSHIP IN GUIDING TALENTED PEOPLE**

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Abstract

The publication is devoted to the study of models of mentorship for gifted persons and selecting an appropriate mentor. The choice of a mentor is one of the determining factors in the overall behavioural strategy of a gifted person. Personal goals of the instructed subject and the mentor should be congruent which will provide a synergistic effect in their joint activities. Four different mentor models are highlighted in the article. The resource-based approach to describing the styles of professional activity, as well as the MERIDA model adapted for research purposes, are the methodological basis for their identification and description. In the questioning 64 practicing mentors from Russia, who were involved in educational and acceleration programs in entrepreneurship, take part. The result of the study is a three-level description of the four models of a mentor's professional activities in business and entrepreneurship, as well as a matrix of performance indicators for different combinations of the gifted personality's behavioural strategies and the prevailing mentor style. The findings of the investigation are of practical interest for further studies of mentorship, for the development of educational programs for mentors, and for the organization of an effective system for supporting giftedness while studying, as well as talent management in a company.

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1. Introduction

The important role of mentorship in the organization and academia is widely known and hotly debated by managers and governors. In the early studies in the field, when the phenomenon of the mentorship was rather new, the must-to-be personal characteristics, of both the mentors and their protégée (mentee), were mainly in the focus (Frey & Noller, 1983). From the very beginning, researchers proposed a concept of mentorship which covered not only the definition of the mentorship, but the whole process of mentorship, including the activities through which functions of mentorship should be expressed (MacLennan, 2017). Afterwards many researchers have investigated the crucial role of mentorship in the context of knowledge management. As a result, the talent management approach became one of the wide-discussed topics in the field, providing a lot of models and management techniques (Cappelli & Keller, 2017; Serrat, 2017). But as Kram (1988) stated earlier, the relationships between junior and senior managers in one corporate are «significantly affected by the context in which they evolve and by the expectations, needs, and skills that individuals bring to them». The latter is of special focus because the personal behavioural strategy, both in professional and personal terms, are of great importance for young generations. For example, “millennials” are known as ones who challenge the norms of previous generations, “from the environment to technology to lifestyle” (Jayadeva, 2018, p. 29).

1.1. Mentorship of talented persons

In the pedagogical studies it has been repeatedly stated that the “mentorship has the most important role for talent development” (Worrell et al., 2019, p.557). “Mentorship is a vehicle by which students who are bored with or tuned out of the school environment can be “caught” in the act of living a true passion and practicing a related talent”, – describes the process of mentoring talents Schatz (1999, p. 74). Though Sibgatullina (2018) highlights the ambiguity of system management of talents, especially the ability of a mentor “to help “arrange” or re-arrange the life goal-setting of a talented person” (p. 119). Sometimes mentorship is considered as one of the crucial competences for teaching career (Alexandrache, 2017). Not surprisingly, many papers proposed the universal list of recommendations for the successful mentorship (Alred & Garvey, 2019; Axelrod, 2019). But the majority of scientific papers include the description of the experience of specific mentor programs. They were defined a lot by the organizational culture, strategy and values, though it is stated that 71 percent of the Fortune 500 have adopted formal mentorship programmes (Holt et al., 2016). Some of such programmes, especially in academia filed, are based on the physiological models, like the American Psychological Association Catalyst Program (Subotnik et al., 2010), which was derived from Bloom’s (1985) model of talent development in six domains. The main focus of the mentioned study is the optimal instruction for talent development.

1.2. Mentorship models and styles

Mentorship itself is a rather complex process. The cooperation between a mentor and an instructed person should not be considered one-dimensional. There are different forms and roles of mentorship, for example an educational, personal development or an entrepreneurial development mentor. The profound

review study (Hennissen et al., 2008) shows that the most popular aspects for the purpose of classification different styles of mentorship are ‘input’ and ‘directiveness’. And thus, the two-dimensional model MERIDA from the field of teacher education (Crasborn et al., 2011) has shown to be one of the useful analytical frameworks for how mentorship styles could be described and distinguished. For example, Kubberoed and Hagen (2015) made an adaptation of the model to present different mentorship styles in the field of entrepreneurial mentorship. The model was used to explore the quality of mentoring dialogues (Beek et al., 2019; Mena et al., 2016). Some studies provide empirical proofs that the particular mentoring styles are preferable. They allow for better deployment of mentors’ functions and facilitate the development of protégé outcomes (St-Jean & Audet, 2013).

2. Problem Statement

While the topic of mentorship has been discussed from various perspectives and provided a lot of practical models for implementation, the problem of mentor-protégé matchmaking, though it was clearly formulated (Memon et al., 2014; Schatz, 1999), has left challenging and viable options for the further studies in the field. The scientific research on this topic is rather scant and vague. Our main hypothesis is that there are some effective and ineffective combinations for the behavioural strategy of an instructed person and the particular mentorship model. If this assumption is confirmed, then will be possible to predict and evaluate the outcome of mentor-gifted person joint activity.

3. Research Questions

Though the methods for conceptualization of mentorship are well designed, their practical implementations for mentoring talented persons are debatable. They provide the universal approach to the mentor dialogue, though the practice shows, that it has to be defined by the personal behaviour strategy.

Hence, the research questions are:

- How do young people, and especially the gifted ones, who are usually better oriented in their carrier opportunities, have to choose their mentors?
- What are the factors and incentives, which make the relationship of mentor and protégé more effective?
- What are the distinctive features of the models of mentoring if they are described as professional styles?

4. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to describe the best match-ups of mentorship models and behavioural strategies of talented people. Besides in this paper we examine key components of mentor’s motivation that may contribute to the effectiveness of mentor’s dialogue both in learning outcomes and in comfort of the communication process.

We begin with a review of the proposed research method, which has some references to MERIDA (Crasborn et al., 2011) and other models, which helps us to analyse the stated problem. We then explore

the proposed matchmaking scheme and test it, providing the results of the survey, conducted among 64 practicing mentors in business and entrepreneurship from Russia.

5. Research Methods

The primary assumption of the research is that the process of the mentorship depends a lot on the style of mentoring dialogue and the personal behavioural goals, both of mentors and instructed persons.

5.1. Situational modelling of mentorship

In the course of previous empirical investigations (Prokhorova et al., 2018; Prokhorova et al., 2019) it was elicited, that there were two aims of activity of mentors of youth business projects. They could to train by motivating and guiding their project job or by involving and assisting in it. Depending on these goals, their mentoring dialogue could be described as project-oriented and process-oriented. Based on these conclusions and other concepts (Crasborn et al, 2011) we design a model, which connects two aspects of situations when the mentoring dialogue is being held (Figure 1). The dimensions ‘directiveness’ and ‘goal’ are assumed to be independent of each other.

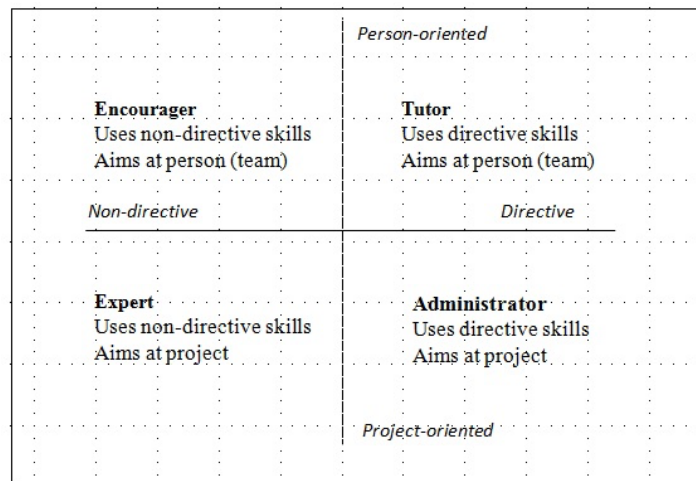


Figure 1. The two-dimensional model of mentorship

The model highlights four different positions of a mentor, including those of encourager, tutor, administrator and expert. While experts and administrators are highly interested in achieving the project goals, tutors and encouragers are more process-oriented, they aim at coaching the person (leader) or the whole project team.

5.2. Mentorship styles

In Russian psychology, a great deal of attention is paid to the investigation of styles. The methodologist of the theory of styles Tolochek (2018) highlights their diversity (cognitive styles, individual styles of activity, emotional styles, styles of leadership and management, communicative styles, etc.). In the structure of a style the scientist distinguishes between three hierarchical levels:

subjectively convenient conditions of activity, operational structures, type of organization of activity. This approach was used when distinguishing the mentoring models in the survey.

5.3. Behavioural strategies of gifted persons

During the preliminary studies of the research team, based on data analysis of 288 biographies of gifted famous persons, the four different strategies were found. They were named after the most known by their behaviour myths representatives of clusters. The results were presented in the same two-dimensional concept field (Figure 2), though the aspects of the personal behaviour styles were defined by the situational descriptors.

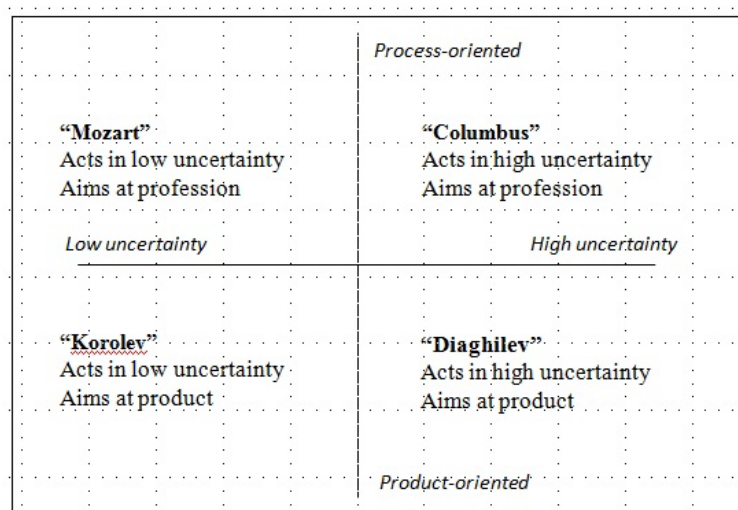


Figure 2. The two-dimensional model of behavioural strategies of gifted person

The so-called “Mozart” and “Columbus” express themselves in their professional activities, aims at professional self-fulfilment and self-excellence. But while “Mozart” type is not ready to change the specialization, “Columbus” type is more flexible and is in the permanent search of professional self-expression. The “Korolev” type was named after the lead Soviet rocket engineer and spacecraft designer. His life path was determined by the dream of space and spacecrafts from the very beginning. And Serge Diaghilev was the founder of the Ballets Russes. Like “Korolev”, the “Diaghilev” type is in the process of developing a product, but it is not initially defined. A dream product can be determined by a public request or a market situation.

6. Findings

The survey instrument consisted of 10 questions. It was administered in April 2020 to 64 practicing mentors in business and entrepreneurship from Russia. They have leaded mentoring dialogues with the gifted young leaders of innovation and entrepreneurial projects. Only 22 % of respondents were mentors for less than 1 year, while 25 % received more than 7 years of mentor experience. The majority of them (51 %) were middle-aged (from 31 to 45 years old). For the purposes of the study, it was important that respondents represented a wide range of areas of activity and different styles of mentoring.

So, the results showed that they were from technical (13 %), natural (17 %), humanitarian (12 %), socio-economic (39 %) and other (19 %) areas. Table 1 presents the results of almost equal distribution of mentorship models among the respondents.

Table 1. The respondents' mentorship models

Models of mentorship	Type of skills	Type of goals	Functions	Percent
Tutor	Directive skills	Person-oriented	Maintain interest in the subject, motivate for personal development, professional self-realization and self-excellence	34,4 %
Administrator	Directive skills	Project-oriented	Achieve project goals, plan activities, coordinate, control the project process	25,0 %
Encourager	Non-directive skills	Person-oriented	Engage, inspire, come up with new ideas in cooperation	28,1 %
Expert	Non-directive skills	Project oriented	Share experience and knowledge, advise on specific issues	12,5 %

The survey instrument defined 4 models of mentorship (Table 2) and established three hierarchical levels of style descripton (Tolochek, 2018).

6.1. The first level. Personal qualities

In early researches (Frey & Noller, 1983), when the phenomenon of mentorship was rather new, it was concluded that the success of mentoring relationship, both informal and formal, was largely dependent upon characteristics of the mentor him(her)self. The results of our survey showed that there was a clear diversification of key personal qualities of mentors of different types (Table 2). While some personal qualities were common to all respondents (for example, such as a tendency to change activities), for some of them one could directly distinguish the owners of different models of mentorship.

Table 2. Personal qualities of mentors of different types

Models of mentorship	Availability of qualities	Lack of qualities
Tutor	Informal decision making	Risky decision making
Administrator	Educability Resilience	Risky decision making High emotional level
Encourager	Educability Invention of new methods	Performance according to the algorithm and instructions Professional perfectionism
Expert	Informal decision making Performance according to the algorithm and instructions	High emotional level New methods creation

6.2. The second level. The competence profile

All types of mentors highly value such competencies as communication skills, analytical thinking and goal setting. At the same time, the following competency differences can be noted: for the

Encourager type, a significant excess of such competencies as creativity and professional competencies in a specific field is characterized by an average level; Tutor type is characterized by a high level of critical thinking and manifestation of empathy, while technical and digital skills are manifested to a lesser extent; for type Expert leadership qualities are least manifested; for the type of Administrator, technical and digital skills can be distinguished among strong competencies, while competencies associated with empathy and professional skills in a particular area are significantly reduced.

6.3. The third level. Factors to single out models of mentorship

According to the results of the survey the specific manifestation of the style of activity for each model of mentorship can be described by the most significant group factors (Table 3). It is important to note that project-oriented and personality-oriented models of mentorship are found to have the same group of factors. They are determined by the characteristics of the project or an instructed person, respectively.

Table 3. The factors to single out models of mentorship

Models of mentorship	Factors
Tutor	Personal motivation; individual personality characteristics of an instructed person
Administrator	Level of responsibility (depends on the project goals); level of competence in the field of the project
Encourager	Individual personality characteristics of an instructed person; personal motivation
Expert	The urgency of the project tasks; the level of project uncertainty

6.4. Combinations of mentorship models and behavioural strategies of gifted persons

According to Schatz, “mentoring is a reciprocal relationship - mentors give of their time and expertise, and in return are rewarded by the satisfaction of helping to nurture and develop young talent” (Schatz, 1999, p. 77). A harmonious combination of the mentor’s and mentee’s (protégé’s) goals helps to achieve a synergistic effect in their joint activities. Based on the results of our research these combinations were distributed as follows (Table 4). It was found out, that two best match-up of mentor and protégé model could be got (index = 1), while other two proved no effects at all (index = 0) or would have been even negative for both sides (index = - 1). These results were proved both by logical combination of behavioral models and by the results of the questioning, when the representatives of each mentorship models had chosen the person for mentoring by personal goals and strategies of the gifted individuals.

Table 4. Performance indicators for combinations of mentorship models and behavioural strategies of gifted persons

Models for mentorship / Behavioral strategies	Tutor	Encourager	Administrator	Expert
“Korolev” type	- 1	1	0	1
“Dyagilev” type	1	0	1	- 1
“Mozart” type	1	-1	1	0
“Columbus” type	0	1	- 1	1

7. Conclusion

The effectiveness and intensity of the cooperation between a mentor and an instructed person depends on many factors, including the personality of the mentor. For these reasons, understanding, how to choose a mentor, is becoming increasingly important both for involved partners.

Effective and ineffective combinations of mentorship models and behavioural strategies of gifted individuals were revealed in the study. A matrix with 16 different combinations of mentorship models and personal strategies of gifted individuals was designed. Synergy, accumulated in the joint activities of the mentor and the gifted person, was the main peculiarity of effectiveness of such combinations.

Four models of mentorship were singled out and the factors, that determined behavioural styles, in this research. These models were named as follows: Tutors, Administrators, Encouragers and Experts. It was stated, that some of personal qualities and competence profiles had much in common. Clear differences were distinguished between the models of mentorship.

The described combinations and models of mentorship will be useful in practice of choosing and training any mentor.

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