

Can less be more? Mentoring functions, learning goal orientation, and novice entrepreneurs' self-efficacy

Novice
entrepreneurs'
self-efficacy

Etienne St-Jean

*Research Institute on SMEs, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières,
Trois-Rivières, Canada*

Miruna Radu-Lefebvre

Audencia Business School, Nantes, France, and

Cynthia Mathieu

Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Trois-Rivières, Canada

Received 22 September 2016

Revised 3 March 2017

12 June 2017

11 July 2017

Accepted 11 July 2017

Abstract

Purpose – One of the main goals of entrepreneurial mentoring programs is to strengthen the mentees' self-efficacy. However, the conditions in which entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) is developed through mentoring are not yet fully explored. The purpose of this paper is to test the combined effects of mentee's learning goal orientation (LGO) and perceived similarity with the mentor and demonstrates the role of these two variables in mentoring relationships.

Design/methodology/approach – The current study is based on a sample of 360 novice Canadian entrepreneurs who completed an online questionnaire. The authors used a cross-sectional analysis as research design.

Findings – Findings indicate that the development of ESE is optimal when mentees present low levels of LGO and perceive high similarities between their mentor and themselves. Mentees with high LGO decreased their level of ESE with more in-depth mentoring received.

Research limitations/implications – This study investigated a formal mentoring program with volunteer (unpaid) mentors. Generalization to informal mentoring relationships needs to be tested.

Practical implications – The study shows that, in order to effectively develop self-efficacy in a mentoring situation, LGO should be taken into account. Mentors can be trained to modify mentees' LGO to increase their impact on this mindset and mentees' ESE.

Originality/value – This is the first empirical study that demonstrates the effects of mentoring on ESE and reveals a triple moderating effect of LGO and perceived similarity in mentoring relationships.

Keywords Mentoring, Networks, Psychology, Learning goal orientation, Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, Perceived similarity

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In recent decades, countries all over the world have implemented support programs contributing to the development of entrepreneurial activity as part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Spigel, 2015). Among these initiatives, the mentoring of novice entrepreneurs was emphasized as highly beneficial for enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and entrepreneurial skills (e.g. Crompton, 2012; Gravells, 2006; Radu Lefebvre and Redien-Collot, 2013; St-Jean and Audet, 2013). Extensive empirical research (Ozgen and Baron, 2007; Sullivan, 2000; Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2008) confirmed the positive impact of mentoring relationships on both mentees' cognitions (improving opportunity identification, clarifying business vision) and emotions (reducing stress and feelings of being isolated, establishing more ambitious goals). However, there is limited knowledge of how mentoring relationships produce these outcomes. We thus know little about the individual and relational variables moderating the impact of mentoring relationships. This paper makes a theoretical and practical contribution to our



International Journal of
Entrepreneurial Behavior &
Research

© Emerald Publishing Limited
1355-2554

DOI 10.1108/IJEBR-09-2016-0299

understanding of how, and under what conditions, mentor input (mentor functions), along with a mentee variable (mentee's learning goal orientation (LGO)) and a mentoring relationship variable (perceived similarity with the mentor) combine to develop novice entrepreneurs' ESE. This, in turn, will enable entrepreneurial support programs to better match and support mentoring dyads.

Despite their potential effects on mentees' ESE (Egan, 2005; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015), research dedicated to the study of ESE development while simultaneously taking into account mentor functions, perceived similarity with the mentor, and mentees' LGO is scarce. Studies based on goal orientation theory (Dweck, 2008; Dweck and Leggett, 1988), social learning theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997) and social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) generated consistent evidence related to the development of ESE through supportive relationships such as mentoring. Goal orientation theory emphasizes the role of LGO in producing positive effects on mentees' ESE (Godshalk and Sosik, 2003; Kim, 2007), whereas social learning theory and social comparison theory focus on the importance of perceived similarity in producing positive ESE outcomes at the mentee level (Ensher and Murphy, 1997; Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). The present paper builds on these three streams of literature to test the combined effects of perceived similarity with the mentor and mentees' LGO on mentees' ESE. Moreover, we build on previous mentoring research in entrepreneurship that has established that the input mentors bring in mentoring relationships can be effectively operationalized as a set of mentoring functions. These mentoring functions can be related to career development whereas others are more focused on the mentees' attitude change and skills development (St-Jean, 2011; St-Jean and Audet, 2013).

The aim of the present study is to demonstrate that the impact of mentoring functions on mentees' ESE is moderated by the mentee's LGO and perceived similarity with the mentor. The reason for combining these three streams of literature to test our moderating model is that together they contribute to our understanding of the impact of mentoring relationships on novice entrepreneurs. First, the social comparison perspective within mentoring relationships is considered by testing the moderating effect of perceived similarity with the mentor on mentees' ESE development. Second, goal orientation is taken into account as part of novice entrepreneurs' psychological disposition upon entering a mentoring relationship, and how these relationships can have an impact on their ESE. Third, we highlight the potential combined effect of mentees' LGO and perceived similarity with the mentor in explaining the conditions in which mentees' ESE could develop to allow them to reach their full potential.

The paper is structured as follows: first, we present the theoretical background and the main hypotheses. Then we focus on our empirical study and the methods used to test the hypotheses. Based on a sample of 360 entrepreneurs supported by a mentoring program in Canada, the study shows that mentoring functions foster ESE under certain conditions, which supports the hypotheses concerning the moderating role of mentees' LGO and perceived similarity with the mentor. We demonstrate that high perceived similarity with the mentor increases mentees' ESE and we show that mentoring functions increase mentees' ESE, particularly when mentees have low levels of LGO. We discuss these findings and highlight their theoretical and practical implications for entrepreneurial research and policy.

Theoretical background

This section first presents the notion of ESE and its relevance in the context of mentoring for entrepreneurs. We then focus on the issue of the mentor's input and show the importance of mentor functions and mentees' perceived similarity with the mentor for mentees' ESE development. Mentees' LGO is also introduced and we highlight its direct and moderating effects on mentees' ESE enhancement. Finally, the combined effect of mentees' LGO, mentor functions and perceived similarity with the mentor is examined to explore how these

variables may influence the development of mentees' ESE as a result of involvement in mentoring relationships.

ESE refers to the subjective perception of one's ability to successfully accomplish a specific task or behavior (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997, p. 77), ESE beliefs are constructed through four main sources of information: enactive mastery experiences that serve as indicators of capability; vicarious experiences that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influence that may persuade the individuals that they possess certain capabilities; and physiological and affective states from which people partly judge their capability, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction. Although mentoring may not support ESE development through enactive mastery experiences, indirect evidence obtained from previous studies (ref. Bandura, 1997) suggests that mentoring can develop ESE through the three other processes (vicarious learning, verbal persuasion, physiological and emotional states). Mentors may act as role models in a vicarious learning relationship which consists in facilitating mentees' self-evaluation and development of entrepreneurial and business skills through social comparison and imitative behavioral strategies (BarNir *et al.*, 2011; Johannisson, 1991; Scherer *et al.*, 1989). Indeed, vicarious learning from mentors was identified as the most significant contribution to mentoring relationships, regardless of the context being studied (Barrett, 2006; Crocitto *et al.*, 2005; D'Abate and Eddy, 2008; Gordon and Brobeck, 2010; Hezlett, 2005; Lankau and Scandura, 2002; St-Jean and Audet, 2012). Furthermore, mentors may use verbal persuasion strategies to help mentees explore and sometimes change their attitudes and beliefs (Marlow and McAdam, 2012; Radu Lefebvre and Redien-Collot, 2013; St-Jean and Audet, 2013). Finally, mentors may influence mentees' emotional states by reducing their levels of stress related to perceived uncertainty and future challenges (Kram and Hall, 1989; Sosik and Godshalk, 2000).

It is, however, important to note that not all mentors are equally invested in mentoring relationships; some may only provide marginal mentoring (Ragins *et al.*, 2000) or worse, harmful mentoring experiences (Eby *et al.*, 2000, 2004; Simon and Eby, 2003). The quality and depth of mentoring relationships can be assessed by mentor functions (Kram, 1985) that allow mentees to benefit from the mentoring relationship in various ways, particularly in terms of positive changes regarding their ESE (Day and Allen, 2004; Powers *et al.*, 1995; Wanberg *et al.*, 2003). Mentor functions studied in large organizations, as well as in entrepreneurship, refer to three categories of support a mentee can receive: psychological, career-related, and role modeling (Bouquillon *et al.*, 2005; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2005; St-Jean, 2011; Waters *et al.*, 2002). Mentor functions can act as an indicator of the quality of the mentoring provided or received (Hayes, 1998). These functions influence the mentoring process, more specifically the development of mentees' ESE; prior research has demonstrated that higher levels of psychological support improve mentees' ESE (Kram, 1985). As a result of their focus on providing challenging tasks to the mentee or in guiding them throughout the decision-making process, career-related functions also play a significant role in the development of mentees' ESE (Kram, 1985; St-Jean, 2011). To sum up, there is consistent evidence that mentor functions have a direct impact on mentees' ESE. Our goal is to demonstrate the contribution of two moderating variables that may enhance or diminish the impact of mentoring functions on mentees' ESE development: perceived similarity with the mentor and mentees' LGO, as indicated in Figure 1.

The role of perceive similarity with mentor in supporting mentees' ESE development

The notion of "perceived similarity" was introduced by Festinger (1954), who stressed that when individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities, there is a tendency to look to external sources of information such as role models. Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954)

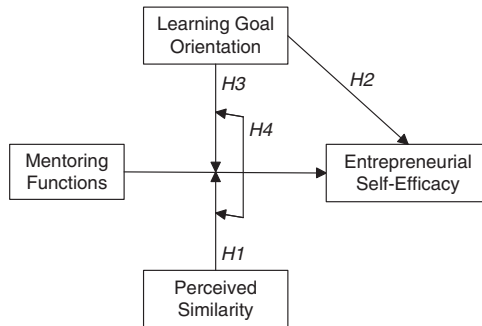


Figure 1.
Tested theoretical model

complements Bandura's social cognitive learning theory in suggesting that the greater the perceived similarity to the role model, the greater the impact of that role model on the observer's ESE (Bandura, 1997). Social comparison theory highlights that the observer's identification with the role model is crucial for maintaining the social comparison process. Perceived similarity regarding age, gender, background (Wheeler, Petty, and Bizer, 2005), values and goals (Filstad, 2004) reinforces identification to the role model. Individuals tend to compare themselves with people they perceive as similar to themselves, and avoid comparing themselves with people perceived as too different (Festinger, 1954). Mentoring relationships with low levels of perceived similarity are thus likely to reduce the social comparison process and generate a negative impact on vicarious learning; this decrease in vicarious learning would negatively impact the observer's ESE.

To generate positive outcomes as role models, one condition seems essential: mentors of entrepreneurs must be perceived as similar by their mentees (Elam, 2008; Terjesen and Sullivan, 2011; Wilson *et al.*, 2009). In three recent meta-analyses in mentoring contexts, Eby *et al.* (2013), Ghosh (2014) and Ghosh and Reio (2013) demonstrated that perceived similarity with mentors is correlated to positive mentoring outcomes. The process through which perceived similarity influences mentoring outcomes was characterized by Mitchell *et al.* (2015) as "relational identification" in work relationships (cf. the theory of relational identification; Sluss and Ashforth, 2007). Prior empirical research has shown that entrepreneurs tend to choose role models of the same gender. This tendency is stronger for women entrepreneurs (Murrell and Zagenczyk, 2006), who start a business in what is still perceived as a male dominated social milieu (Wilson, Kickul, and Marlino, 2007). Interestingly, mentoring research has emphasized that perceived similarity is more important than actual similarity (Ensher *et al.*, 2002). When identification is effective, mentors share their values and attitudes, and they may model desired entrepreneurial behaviors or attitudes.

Comparing oneself to a mentor is an upward social comparison that can stimulate mentees' motivation to engage in a learning process when perceived similarity with the mentor is high (Schunk, 1983). On the other hand, upward social comparisons can also reduce mentees' ESE if the mentor's level of proficiency seems unattainable and perceived similarity is low (Lockwood and Kunda, 1997). As a consequence, a high level of perceived similarity will facilitate upward social comparison with the mentor and enable mentees to improve their ESE through the mentor function received. These considerations suggest the following hypothesis:

- H1.* The mentee's perceived similarity with the mentor has a positive moderating effect on the relation between mentor functions and the mentee's ESE.

Mentees' LGO

LGO (also known as mastery goal-orientation) is a relatively stable psychological disposition that individuals develop through their interpersonal relationships (Dweck, 1986).

Individuals with a high LGO tend to perceive their abilities as malleable and subject to change (Dupeyrat and Mariné, 2005). These individuals will therefore approach the tasks at hand with self-confidence, and with the intention of developing new skills. They will consequently value hard work and self-improvement and will be constantly looking for new challenges to enhance their skills (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). By doing so, they engage in new activities, regardless of their difficulty (Button *et al.*, 1996). Conversely, individuals with low levels of LGO tend to see their intelligence and their skills as “stable” and “unchangeable,” and they tend to have a lower level of ESE than those who perceive their skills as malleable (Ames, 1992). Their approach toward, and expectations of, a mentoring relationship will undoubtedly differ from mentees with high levels of LGO.

LGO does not seem to be related to short-term or long-term goal setting (Harackiewicz *et al.*, 2000); however, individuals with low LGO and high LGO use different strategies to reach their goals. For instance, given that LGO is related to self-regulated learning, low LGO individuals rely more heavily on external support than individuals with high LGO, who will mobilize external sources of information to learn but will behave more autonomously (Wolters *et al.*, 1996). The notions of “goal orientation” and “goal setting” are distinct (Phillips and Gully, 1997).

LGO plays a crucial role in understanding how mentees perceive their ability to master a number of skills. From a learning perspective, prior research has shown that mentees enter mentoring relationships either with a desire to grow and improve their current skills (Barrett, 2006; Benton and Sankaran, 2005) or to receive advice and suggestions on how to improve their entrepreneurial project (Gaskill, 2001; Gibson, 2003) without having to change their current skills. LGO may be related to these mentoring outcomes from the mentees' perspective and thus depend on their motivation to grow/learn or to receive advice/help from their mentors. High LGO mentees could exhibit the first category of motivations whereas low LGO mentees may prefer the second types of motivations.

In a study that investigated children's behavior after a failure in school, Diener and Dweck (1978) found that learning-oriented children make fewer attributions and focus on remedies for failure, while helpless children (i.e. low LGO) focus on the cause of failure. In school, students who adopt a high LGO engage in more self-regulated learning than the others (Ames, 1992; Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). Furthermore, a high LGO mindset, also called a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008), is demonstrated to be related to high intrinsic motivation (Haimovitz *et al.*, 2011), goal achievement (Burnette *et al.*, 2013) and ESE (Ames, 1992). Therefore, we assume that mentees with a high level of LGO will also have a high level of ESE, based on the influence the former has on the latter. These considerations lead us to the following hypothesis:

H2. Mentee's LGO is positively related to his/her ESE.

As we mentioned earlier, mentees can enter mentoring relationships harboring different motivations: to learn and to improve their skills or to receive advice and suggestions on how to manage their business. Who would benefit most from mentoring relationships with regard to ESE development? There is evidence that LGO is associated with feedback seeking behaviors (Tuckey *et al.*, 2002; VandeWalle, 2004; VandeWalle and Cummings, 1997); entrepreneurs with high LGO should thus be attracted to mentoring, as it procures feedback in a career setting where there are no hierarchical superiors for assessing one's skills and performance. Additionally, entrepreneurs with high LGO should be stimulated by mentoring relationships and consider their mentors as a potential learning source (St-Jean and Audet, 2012; Sullivan, 2000) to develop their intelligence and skills (Ames and Archer, 1988). On the other hand, low LGO entrepreneurs would prefer situations in which they can perform well (performance goal orientation) (Dweck, 2008). Given that they perceive their intelligence as fixed in time, when facing a difficult task or receiving a

bad performance, they will seek help or try to avoid the task at hand rather than try to learn new skills that could allow them to face a similar challenge in the future.

As previously mentioned, individuals with high LGO tend to exhibit a higher level of ESE. Despite the fact that mentoring can be a source of learning for them, it is unlikely that they will significantly improve their ESE. As mentioned by Bandura (1997), vicarious experience (i.e. observing someone similar to oneself succeeding in a particular task will improve the observer's beliefs that he/she can also master the task) as well as verbal persuasion allow individuals to adjust their ESE to a more realistic level, either upward or downward. Thus, considering the high level of ESE of mentees with high LGO, it is highly probable that, at best, they will maintain their high ESE, or experience a decrease in ESE to a more realistic level.

The picture is quite different for low LGO mentees. They believe their intelligence to be stable and immovable. When facing a difficult task or receiving negative performance feedback, they will either seek help to accomplish the task or try to avoid it in the future (Dweck, 2008). Novice entrepreneurs, despite feeling incompetent at performing certain tasks, are often required to complete these tasks because they often do not have the resources to hire qualified individuals to help them. Under these conditions, external support may become the preferred way to overcome this personal limitation as it may help them feel more effective in their management decisions. Given that low LGO entrepreneurs do not believe their intelligence is malleable, they are not likely to work on developing new skills to face challenging situations. Consequently, mentoring can help them feel more confident about their efficacy in managing their business (i.e. ESE). However, the increase of their ESE is dependent on the mentor functions received, and therefore it may only last as long as they stay in the mentoring relationship.

To sum up, mentoring may have less of an effect on high LGO novice entrepreneurs' ESE. For these entrepreneurs, mentoring may represent a source of learning (along with formal education, entrepreneurs' clubs, media, learning through action, etc.). Mentoring will thus keep their ESE high or slightly readjust it to a more realistic level. On the other hand, low LGO novice entrepreneurs may view mentoring as a significant source of help to overcome their perceived inability to deal with career-related goals and tasks. With the support of a mentor, the latter type of mentee should consequently perceive themselves as more suited to accomplish the tasks related to their entrepreneurial career, and thus experience an improvement of their ESE. These considerations suggest the following hypothesis:

- H3.* Mentee's LGO has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between the mentor functions and the mentee's ESE, such that the relationship would be stronger for low LGO mentees.

As previously mentioned, low LGO mentees do not think that they are able to significantly improve their abilities. Thus, they will seek advice, support and help from mentors to compensate for their perceived weaknesses. Given that mentoring offers an opportunity to compare with others and because low LGO mentees may not believe they can change their abilities, perceived similarity with the mentor may act as a moderator of the relationship between mentor functions and mentees' ESE. Indeed, mentees would probably be more willing to accept advice and support from a mentor if the former is perceived as highly similar to the latter, causing in turn the mentor functions to improve ESE to a greater extent. Furthermore, throughout social comparison processes (Corcoran *et al.*, 2011; Festinger, 1954), the more the mentor exerts his/her functions, the more adapted the mentee will feel toward his/her entrepreneurial career, which, in turn, will have a positive influence on his/her ESE. However, when the mentee perceives himself/herself as not being very similar to the mentor, social comparison processes will stop (Festinger, 1954). Therefore, mentor

functions would have less effect in improving the mentee's ESE as the mentee would feel less adapted to an entrepreneurial career (Lockwood and Kunda, 1997). This suggests the following hypothesis:

- H4. The impact of the mentor functions on the mentee's ESE is enhanced when the mentor is perceived as highly similar and when the mentee's LGO is low.

Methodology

We conducted a study of mentoring relationships within *Réseau M*, a mentoring network launched in 2000 by the *Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat*, an organization dedicated to Quebec's economic development. *Réseau M* provides mentoring support to novice entrepreneurs through a network of 70 mentoring cells implemented across the province of Quebec (Canada). These cells are generally supported by various economic development organizations such as local development centers (LDC's), Community Future Development Corporations, and local chambers of commerce. These organizations ensure the program's local and regional development, while subscribing to the mentoring model provided by the *Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat*. Local organizations have cell coordinators in charge of recruiting mentors, organizing their training, promoting the program to novice entrepreneurs, and pairing and guiding mentor-mentee dyads. Before the first pairing, every mentor receives a mandatory three hour training session on the mission of mentoring and the main guidelines to follow. Novice entrepreneurs benefit from mentor support for a minimal cost: a few hundred dollars per year, and in some cases, for free. The program is available to every novice entrepreneur who wants to be supported by a mentor. Mentees are seeking career-related support (e.g. advice, a sounding board for decision-making, expertise, etc.), as well as psychological support (e.g. to ease loneliness, to be reassured or encouraged, etc.) from their mentors. Each mentor acts as a volunteer to help novice entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial journey. Most of them are experienced entrepreneurs that are retired and want to stay active by supporting those less experienced, and a few of them are still working in the business world (e.g. bankers, practitioners, etc.). To ensure the coordination of the mentoring cells, the *Fondation* organizes workshops dedicated to the development of mentor-mentee relationships. *Réseau M* provides a Code of Ethics and a standard mentoring contract signed by mentors and mentees at the beginning of their interaction.

Sample

The sample for this study was composed of mentored entrepreneurs from *Réseau M* of the *Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat*, who had attended at least three meetings with their mentor or were still in a mentoring relationship, and whose e-mail addresses were valid at the time of the survey. In 2008, mentees were invited to participate in the study by e-mail, and two follow-ups were conducted with non-respondents, resulting in a total of 360 respondents (a response rate of 36.9 percent). Given that the *Fondation* was not able at that time to provide information concerning the demographic characteristics of the sample, we decided to compare early respondents (who answered the first time), and later respondents (who answered after follow-ups), as suggested by Armstrong and Overton (1977). There are no significant differences between the two groups in terms of demographic variables, business-related variables, and the variables measured in the study. The respondents are thus representative of the studied population. Table I shows the characteristic of the sample.

Measures

ESE. To gain better insight into the dimensions of ESE, we combined the scales developed by Anna *et al.* (2000) and De Noble *et al.* (1999). This allowed us to measure several perceived

<i>Mentoring relationship characteristics</i>	
Male mentees	162 (51.6%)
Female mentees	152 (48.4%)
Paired with male mentors	275 (81.4%)
Paired with female mentors	63 (18.6%)
Mean mentoring relationships length	16.07 months (SD = 14.4)
Mean meeting length	68.52 minutes (SD = 14.4)
Median meeting frequency	Each month
<i>Mentees characteristics</i>	
Mean age	39.8 years old (SD = 8.97)
Mentees with university degree	173 (55%)
Experience in industry before startup	Less than 5 years: 61.6%
Experience in entrepreneurship	Less than 5 years: 82.9%
<i>Firm characteristics</i>	
Mean number of employees	4.48 (SD = 9.69)
Annual turnover	Less than \$100,000CAD: 62.8%
Annual gross profit	Less than \$25,000CAD: 68.1%
Professional services	23.0%
Manufacturing	14.4%
Retailing	11.9%
Others	50.7%

Table I.
Sample characteristics

abilities such as: defining strategic objectives (three items), coping with unexpected challenges (three items) (De Noble *et al.*, 1999), recognizing opportunities (three items), engaging in action planning (three items), supervising human resources (three items), and managing finance issues (three items) (Anna *et al.*, 2000). These items are similar to those suggested by other authors (McGee *et al.*, 2009). Seven-point Likert scales were used. The Cronbach's α was 0.936, which is well above the average (Cronbach, 1951). A mean score of all the items was calculated.

Mentor functions. The measure of mentor functions was developed by St-Jean (2011), and includes nine items assessed on a seven-point Likert scale. This scale provides an assessment of the depth of mentoring provided. The Cronbach's α was 0.898, which is well above average. A mean score of all the items was calculated.

Perceived similarity. We used the measure developed by Allen and Eby (2003), which includes similarity in values, interests, personality, and those suggested by Ensher and Murphy (1997), including similarity in worldview. Seven-point Likert scales were used and the Cronbach's α was 0.897, which is well above average. A mean of all the items was calculated.

LGO. The study used a measure developed by Button *et al.* (1996), which includes eight items. Seven-point Likert scales were used. The Cronbach's α was 0.927, which is well above the average suggested. A mean score of all the items was calculated.

Control variables. There are certain exogenous variables that may impact ESE, such as the respondents' gender (Mueller and Dato-On, 2008; Wilson *et al.*, 2009), age (Maurer, 2001), education level and management experience. They were all included in the analysis.

The research was conducted in French. Thus, all the items have been translated into English and proofread by a professional translator, to ensure the validity of measures.

Common method bias

Using self-reported data and measuring both predictors and dependent variables may result in common method variance (CMV) (Lindell and Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To reduce the possibility of CMV, we first ensured confidentiality for each respondent in

order to reduce social desirability, respondent leniency, and taking on perceptions consistent with the researchers' objectives (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). We also performed Harman's single factor test as a *post-hoc* test. This procedure involved conducting an unrotated exploratory factor analysis on all of the items collected for this study. Results indicate that data converge into four factors, with the first factor explaining 26.87 percent of the variance. Furthermore, data show negative correlation or no correlation between the main variables (Table I shows no significant correlation between LGO and perceived similarity or mentor functions), which is unlikely to appear in data contaminated with CMV. Moreover, when the variables are too complex and cannot be anticipated by the respondent, as observed in this study, this reduces the potential effects of social desirability and therefore reduces CMV (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Given that personality is usually measured through self-report instruments, the fact that we used a self-report questionnaire for LGO does not constitute a limitation of the current study (Spector, 2006). We thus believe that the risk of CMV with the data used for the present study is relatively low.

Data analysis

A hierarchical regression analysis of ESE was conducted to test the hypotheses. We started by entering control variables, and then we considered the main effects of mentees' LGO, perceived similarity with the mentors and mentor functions. Lastly, we entered the interactions between independent variables and we ended with a triple interaction analysis. To calculate the interaction between variables and to avoid collinearity, we first multiplied the relevant variables and focused on the results of each mean. After removing surveys where participants left out answers, the remaining sample was composed of 314 respondents.

Results

Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables are shown in Table II.

Table II illustrates the results of the hierarchical regression of ESE. As expected, Model 1 takes into account control variables ($R^2 = 0.069$), Model 2 adds the main effects ($R^2 = 0.175$), while Model 3 takes into consideration the moderators ($R^2 = 0.268$), and Model 4 adds the three-way interaction between independent variables ($R^2 = 0.284$). The hypotheses were validated with Model 4. Indeed, Model 4 shows that age has a negative effect on ESE, whereas the level of education and prior management experience produced a positive impact on ESE ($p = 0.073$). LGO is related to ESE level ($\beta = 0.344$, $p = 0.000$), which confirms *H2*. The moderation of the LGO (*H3*) and perceived similarity (*H1*) on ESE is also confirmed ($\beta = -0.357$, $p = 0.000$ and $\beta = 0.205$, $p = 0.008$, respectively). Finally, the three combined independent variables simultaneously influence ESE, which confirms *H4* ($\beta = -0.160$, $p = 0.023$). Overall, the two-way and three-way interactions explain 0.099 percent of the variance of ESE (Δ adj. R^2) (Table III).

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	0.48	0.50	1.00						
2. Age	39.81	8.97	-0.01	1.00					
3. Education	2.53	0.94	0.12*	0.08	1.00				
4. Managerial experience	2.29	1.56	-0.13*	0.25*	-0.09	1.00			
5. LGO	6.24	0.88	0.12*	-0.05	-0.02	0.04	1.00		
6. Perceived similarity	4.71	1.40	0.01	-0.14*	-0.09	-0.01	-0.00	1.00	
7. Mentor functions	5.39	1.15	0.06	-0.14*	-0.00	-0.03	0.01	0.61*	1.00
8. Ent. self-efficacy (ESE) (dependent variable)	5.89	0.76	0.01	-0.21*	0.05	0.08	0.33*	0.16*	0.16*

Note: * $p \leq 0.05$

Table II.
Means, standard deviations and correlations of variables

	Model 1 Std. β	Model 2 Std. β	Model 3 Std. β	Model 4 Std. β
Gender	0.051	0.003	-0.048	-0.041
Age	-0.244***	-0.205***	-0.202***	-0.207***
Education	0.098	0.133*	0.110****	0.119*
Managerial experience	0.135*	0.118****	0.127*	0.107****
Learning goal orientation (LGO)		0.284***	0.293 ***	0.344***
Perceived similarity		0.147****	0.115	0.107
Mentor functions		0.035	0.139****	0.151****
LGO \times Similarity			0.241***	0.235***
LGO \times Functions			-0.348***	-0.357***
Functions \times Similarity			0.130****	0.205**
Functions \times Similarity \times LGO				-0.160*
Sig. <i>F</i> variation	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.023
R^2	0.069	0.175	0.268	0.284
Adj. R^2	0.053	0.151	0.236	0.250

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$; **** $p \leq 0.10$

Table III.
Entrepreneurial self-efficacy hierarchical regression

Figure 2 shows that perceived similarity positively influences the interaction between mentor functions and ESE. Thus, when mentees perceive little similarity with their mentor, there is no shift in their ESE. Yet, in dyads where mentees perceive their mentor as highly similar, an increase in mentor functions increases mentees' ESE as well.

Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effects of LGO on the relationship between mentor functions and ESE. Results indicate that mentees with high levels of LGO slightly reduce their ESE when they experience a comprehensive mentoring relationship (high mentor functions), while mentees with lower LGO levels report an increase of their ESE in the same situation.

Figure 4 illustrates the three-way interaction between variables. When a mentee has a high LGO, the mentor functions lower his/her ESE, no matter the level of perceived similarity. For mentees with low LGO, mentor functions increase their ESE level. This effect is the most significant when mentees perceive their mentors as similar, which indicates that mentoring relationships are the most effective at enhancing mentees' ESE when mentees have a low LGO orientation and a high level of perceived similarity with their mentor.

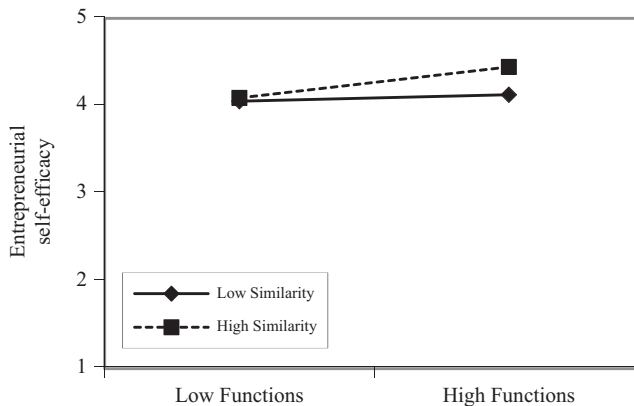
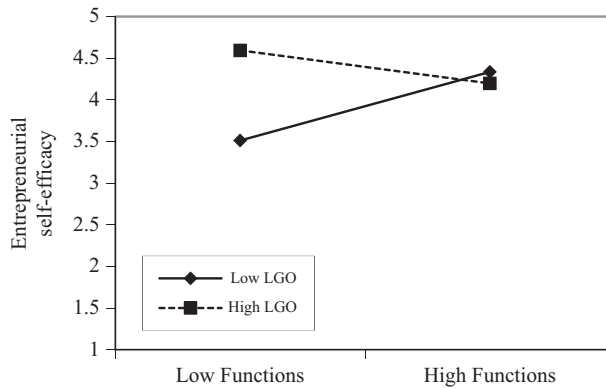


Figure 2.
Moderating effect of perceived similarity on the interaction between mentor functions and ESE



Novice
entrepreneurs'
self-efficacy

Figure 3.
Moderating effects
of LGO on the
interaction between
mentor functions
and ESE

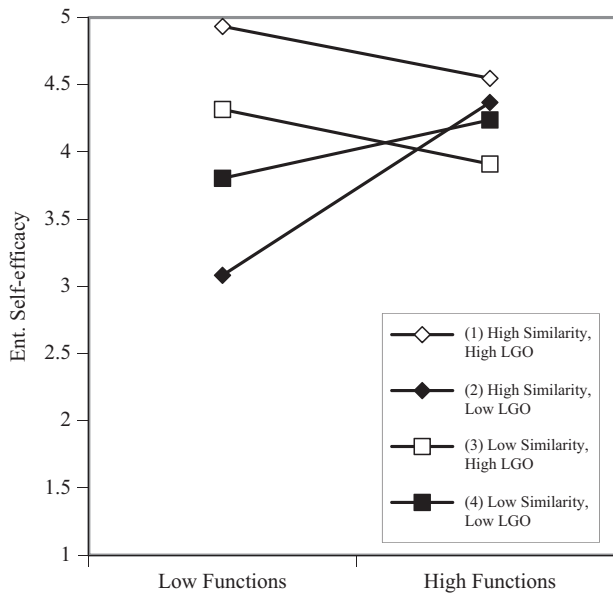


Figure 4.
Three-way interaction
between mentor
functions, LGO,
and perceived
similarity for the
development of ESE

Implications

The present research results show the positive effects of mentor functions on mentees' ESE when perceived similarity with the mentor is high. This suggests that entrepreneurial role models may play a similar role in improving ESE as found with other types of support relationships, such as entrepreneur-in-residence programs and business incubators (Christina *et al.*, 2015; George *et al.*, 2010), peer learning networks (Kempster and Cope, 2010; Kutzhanova *et al.*, 2009) and, more generally, in the context of public support for entrepreneurs (Delanoë, 2013; Robinson *et al.*, 2010).

Findings suggest that high and low LGO mentees do not share the same motivations when entering mentoring relationships. Mentees with low levels of LGO are looking for advice and approval relative to their entrepreneurial skills (reassurance motivation) because external feedback may enable them to go beyond their perceived abilities

(guidance motivation). On the other hand, mentees with high LGO levels are probably looking for a mentoring relationship that may enable them to improve their skills by learning from their mentor's experience, a support relationship that may stimulate them in terms of new ideas and practices (motivation to be challenged). The present research also demonstrates that low LGO mentees benefit most from mentors' help in improving their ESE. High LGO mentees experienced a higher ESE when mentor functions were lower; conversely, when mentor functions were fully exercised, these mentees' ESE had a tendency to decrease to the same ESE level as that of low LGO mentees. In other words, in an intense mentoring context (high mentor functions), mentees reported a similar level of ESE, regardless of their LGO levels. At first glance, one would be tempted to prevent high LGO novice entrepreneurs from being accompanied by a mentor, as it seems to lead to a reduction in their level of ESE. However, previous studies have demonstrated that some entrepreneurs are overly optimistic, and this has a negative effect on the survival of their business (Lowe and Ziedonis, 2006). Moreover, Hmieleski and Baron (2008) demonstrated that a high ESE has a negative effect on business performance when the entrepreneurs' optimism is high. In this perspective, mentoring could be useful for these entrepreneurs because it brings ESE to a level closer to the reality of the entrepreneurs' abilities, which could reduce errors committed due to overconfidence in their skills.

Finally, our findings suggest that the positive effect of mentoring on mentees' ESE may be limited to the duration of the mentoring relationship for low LGO novice entrepreneurs. In other words, as long as low LGO mentees are involved in a mentoring relationship, they will probably feel more self-confident. However, once the mentoring relationship ends, they may experience a decrease in their ESE because of their need for constant external reassurance and support. This suggests that LGO is an important personal variable to consider in researching entrepreneurship support outcomes. In this regard, Dweck *et al.* (2004) demonstrated that it is possible to develop specific training and support that effectively enhances the participants' LGO, which, in turn, has an important effect on their motivational processes, attention, cognition, and performance. Thus, an important practical implication of our findings is that mentors could learn how to counsel novice entrepreneurs with low levels of ESE and LGO, and help them not only improve their ESE level but also their LGO, thus securing an enduring increase in their ESE once the mentoring relationship ends.

Discussion

The present study has three main theoretical contributions. First, we demonstrate that the impact of mentors on mentees' ESE is moderated by the perceived similarity with the mentor, as previously assessed in entrepreneurial education contexts (Laviolette *et al.*, 2012; Lockwood and Kunda, 1997; Schunk, 1983). Prior research has stressed the positive effect of mentoring on mentees' ESE (Gravells, 2006; Kent *et al.*, 2003; St-Jean and Audet, 2012; Sullivan, 2000) and the fact that mentors act as role models (BarNir *et al.*, 2011). We introduce the notion of upward comparison with the mentor to explain the importance of mentees' perceived similarity with the mentor, based on social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954; Gibson, 2004).

Second, our study demonstrates the importance of mentees' LGO in entrepreneurial mentoring relationships, because of its relationship with mentees' ESE. Prior research based on goal-orientation theory documented the relationship between LGO and ESE in other contexts (Phillips and Gully, 1997). Our findings suggest that there is a strong relationship between LGO and the need for feedback (Tuckey *et al.*, 2002; VandeWalle, 2004; VandeWalle and Cummings, 1997), as the mean score for the level of mentees' LGO in our study is 6.24 (on 7). However, another explanation for this high level of LGO may be that entrepreneurship, being a career with many challenges and difficulties (Aspray and Cohoon, 2007; Grant, 2011), attracts individuals interested in learning and with a desire to improve

their abilities. This latter explanation is probably more plausible, as previous research on LGO in a mentoring context found a mean score of mentees' LGO of 4.35 (on 7) (Egan, 2005) and a study measuring the impact of LGO on entrepreneurial intentions found an LGO score of 5.198 (on 7) (De Clercq *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, prior research has shown that a high level of LGO combined with a high level of ESE is likely to lead to choosing entrepreneurship as a career choice (Culbertson *et al.*, 2011). In fact, a recent study indicated that LGO strengthens the relationship between ESE and entrepreneurial intention (De Clercq *et al.*, 2013). Thus, LGO may be an important mindset that attracts and retains individuals in an entrepreneurial career, which suggests new research directions.

Finally, the third contribution of the present study is that it provides evidence concerning the combined effects of mentor functions, mentees' LGO and perceived similarity with the mentor on mentees' ESE. We confirmed the fourth hypothesis relative to the positive impact of the mentor functions on the mentee's ESE when the mentor is perceived as highly similar and when the mentee's LGO is low. The research model explains 15.1 percent of the variance when considering main effects only (adj. R^2). Adding the interaction effects explains an additional 9.9 percent of the variance, for an R^2 final adjustment of 0.25. Findings confirm previous research relative to the positive correlation between the mentees' LGO, level of education, prior management experience, and ESE (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002; Phillips and Gully, 1997). We found that a low level of LGO combined with a high level of perceived similarity significantly contributed to reinforcing novice entrepreneurs' ESE in a mentoring context.

Our study has, however, several limitations. First, although LGO is highlighted as an important moderator to consider in the study of mentoring for entrepreneurs, we cannot confirm without a doubt that low/high LGO mentees have different motivations for entering a mentoring relationship. Our reasoning was guided by the theoretical framework of LGO and social comparison theory; however, further investigation of the reasons underlying the need for a mentor could bring additional confirmation of the underlying processes at play. Second, the present research assessed the impact of mentoring on mentees' ESE. However, not every entrepreneur has the desire to improve his/her ESE and novice entrepreneurs may seek mentoring for other cognitive or affective reasons. Thus, our final sample may include mentees who did not seek ESE development. Nevertheless, the reader should keep in mind that many other outcomes could be reached through mentoring and, as such, focusing on ESE development, despite highlighting specific processes at play, suggests a limited view of the potential effects of mentoring on the entrepreneurial process. The role of mentoring in improving opportunity identification, reducing loneliness and stress of novice entrepreneurs, or developing better managerial skills are also important research questions to be further explored. Third, we measured ESE development within a formal mentoring program. Given that mentors are trained and aware of the many aspects that could foster or hinder the effectiveness of mentoring, our findings cannot be extended to informal mentoring settings. Indeed, because informal mentors are generally well-known by their mentees before the beginning of the mentoring relationship, the former may be selected based on perceived similarity with the latter. Thus, our findings are most relevant for formal mentoring programs. Fourth, the study was not longitudinal, making it difficult to assess the mentoring effects on the development of mentees' ESE over time. Longitudinal research is thus necessary to better evaluate the contribution of personal and relational mentoring variables in terms of impact on mentees' ESE.

Conclusion

For the past decades, many mentoring programs have been launched in developed countries and evidence exists that they may trigger many outcomes (Wanberg *et al.*, 2003). Prior research

has also emphasized mentoring's contribution to novice entrepreneurs' personal development (Edwards and Muir, 2005; Kent *et al.*, 2003; St-Jean and Audet, 2012; Sullivan and Kolb, 1995) and business success in terms of startup launching, fundraising and business growth (McAdam and Marlow, 2007; Radu Lefebvre and Redien-Collot, 2013; Styles and Hegarty, 2008; Sullivan, 2000). These programs invest time and energy into identifying mentees and mentors potentially interested in developing mentoring relationships. However, little attention is being paid to the matching process of mentors and mentees in terms of perceived similarity and the training of mentors that could be offered.

The present research demonstrates that role-model identification needs to be secured by mentoring programs so as to ensure that novice entrepreneurs perceive their mentor as someone who is relevant, inspiring, and accessible. Mentoring programs could consider the similarity of mentors and mentees before making proposals concerning the composition of mentoring dyads. Also, mentors could be informed of the importance of perceived similarity in mentoring relationships. Moreover, the predominance of male mentors may become an issue as more women entrepreneurs enter the market. Research indicates that gender matching of mentors and mentees is especially important for women (Quimby and Santis, 2006). Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) predict more perceived similarity and identification in same-gender relationships. Another practical implication related to these findings is that more attention should be paid to the matching process of mentoring dyads in terms of learning motivations and learning orientation. Complementary mentoring relationships may thus develop, with the help of a program manager, who could assist mentors in the identification of mentees' learning needs so as to ensure more effective mentoring relationships with regard to their potential impact on mentees' ESE. Training should be provided to mentors in order to help them identify their mentees' needs and personal profile more accurately in order to adapt the rendering of mentoring functions while taking into account mentees' needs and motivations. Given that LGO can be enhanced through training, mentors may play a significant role in developing mentees' LGO and in fostering mentees' ESE by the same token.

References

- Allen, T.D. and Eby, L.T. (2003), "Relationship effectiveness for mentors: factors associated with learning and quality", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 469-486.
- Ames, C. (1992), "Classrooms: goals, structures, and student motivation", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 261-271.
- Ames, C. and Archer, J. (1988), "Achievement goals in the classroom: students' learning strategies and motivation processes", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 80 No. 3, pp. 260-267.
- Anna, A.L., Chandler, G.N., Jansen, E. and Mero, N.P. (2000), "Women business owners in traditional and non-traditional industries", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 279-303.
- Armstrong, J.S. and Overton, T.S. (1977), "Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 396-402.
- Aspray, W. and Cohoon, J.M. (2007), "Positive illusions, motivations, management style, stress and psychological traits: a review of research literature on women's entrepreneurship in the information technology field", Entrepreneurial Report Series No. 2, National Center for Women and Information Technology, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.
- Bandura, A. (1986), *Social Foundations of Thought and Action – A Social Cognitive Theory*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, p. 617.
- Bandura, A. (1997), *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, W.H. Freeman, New York, NY.
- BarNir, A., Watson, W.E. and Hutchins, H.M. (2011), "Mediation and moderated mediation in the relationship among role models, self-efficacy, entrepreneurial career intention, and gender", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 270-297.

- Barrett, R. (2006), "Small business learning through mentoring: evaluating a project", *Education+ Training*, Vol. 48 Nos 8/9, pp. 614-626.
- Bell, B.S. and Kozlowski, S.W.J. (2002), "Goal orientation and ability: interactive effects on self-efficacy, performance, and knowledge", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 3, pp. 497-505.
- Benton, I. and Sankaran, S. (2005), "Mentoring women in acquiring small business management skills – gaining the benefits and avoiding the pitfalls", *Australasian Journal of Business and Social Inquiry*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 2-13.
- Bouquillon, E.A., Sosik, J.J. and Lee, D. (2005), "'It's only a phase': examining trust, identification and mentoring functions received across the mentoring phases", *Mentoring & Tutoring*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 239-258.
- Burnette, J.L., O'Boyle, E.H., VanEpps, E.M., Pollack, J.M. and Finkel, E.J. (2013), "Mind-sets matter: a meta-analytic review of implicit theories and self-regulation", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 139 No. 3, pp. 655-701.
- Button, S.B., Mathieu, J.E. and Zajac, D.M. (1996), "Goal orientation in organizational research: a conceptual and empirical foundation", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 26-48.
- Byrne, D.E. (1971), *The Attraction Paradigm*, Academic Press, New York, NY.
- Christina, W., Purwoko, H. and Kusumowidagdo, A. (2015), "The role of entrepreneur in residence towards the students' entrepreneurial performance: a study of entrepreneurship learning process at Ciputra University, Indonesia", *Proceedings of the 2nd Global Conference on Business and Social Sciences, Bali, September 17-18*, available at: www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815054695
- Corcoran, K., Crusius, J. and Mussweiler, T. (2011), "Social comparison: motives, standards, and mechanisms", in Chadee, D. (Ed.), *Theories in Social Psychology*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 119-139.
- Crocitto, M.M., Sullivan, S.E. and Carraher, S.M. (2005), "Global mentoring as a means of career development and knowledge creation: a learning-based framework and agenda for future research", *Career Development International*, Vol. 10 Nos 6/7, pp. 522-535.
- Crompton, B.M. (2012), "The effect of business coaching and mentoring on small-to-medium enterprise performance and growth", PhD doctoral thesis, RMIT University, Melbourne.
- Cronbach, L. (1951), "Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests", *Psychometrika*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 297-334.
- Culbertson, S.S., Smith, M.R. and Leiva, P.I. (2011), "Enhancing entrepreneurship: the role of goal orientation and self-efficacy", *Journal of Career Assessment*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 115-129.
- D'Abate, C. and Eddy, E. (2008), "Mentoring as a learning tool: enhancing the effectiveness of an undergraduate business mentoring program", *Mentoring & Tutoring*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 363-378.
- Day, R. and Allen, T.D. (2004), "The relationship between career motivation and self-efficacy with protégé career success", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 72-91.
- De Clercq, D., Honig, B. and Martin, B. (2013), "The roles of learning orientation and passion for work in the formation of entrepreneurial intention", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 652-676.
- De Noble, A.F., Jung, D. and Ehrlich, S.B. (1999), "Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: the development of a measure and its relationship to entrepreneurial action", paper presented at the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference, Babson, MA.
- Delanoë, S. (2013), "From intention to start-up: the effect of professional support", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 383-398.
- Diener, C.I. and Dweck, C.S. (1978), "An analysis of learned helplessness: continuous changes in performance, strategy, and achievement cognitions following failure", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 451-462.

- Dupeyrat, C. and Mariné, C. (2005), "Implicit theories of intelligence, goal orientation, cognitive engagement, and achievement: a test of Dweck's model with returning to school adults", *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 43-59.
- Dweck, C. (2008), *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Ballantine Books, New York, NY.
- Dweck, C.S. (1986), "Motivational processes affection learning", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 41 No. 10, pp. 1040-1048.
- Dweck, C.S. and Leggett, E.L. (1988), "A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 95 No. 2, pp. 256-273.
- Dweck, C.S., Mangels, J.A. and Good, C. (2004), "Motivational effects on attention, cognition, and performance", in Dai, D.Y. and Sternberg, R.J. (Eds), *Motivation, Emotion, and Cognition: Integrative Perspectives on Intellectual Functioning and Development*, Vol. 2, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, pp. 41-55.
- Eby, L.T., Allen, T.D., Hoffman, B.J., Baranik, L.E., Sauer, J.B., Baldwin, S., Morrison, M.A., Kinkade, K.M., Maher, C.P. and Curtis, S. (2013), "An interdisciplinary meta-analysis of the potential antecedents, correlates, and consequences of protégé perceptions of mentoring", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 139 No. 2, pp. 441-476.
- Eby, L.T., Butts, M., Lockwood, A. and Shana, S.A. (2004), "Protégés' negative mentoring experiences: construct development and nomological validation", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 57 No. 2, pp. 411-447.
- Eby, L.T., McManus, S.E., Simon, S.A. and Russell, J.E.A. (2000), "The protege's perspective regarding negative mentoring experiences: the development of a Taxonomy", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 1-21.
- Edwards, L.-J. and Muir, E.J. (2005), "Promoting entrepreneurship at the University of Glamorgan through formal and informal learning", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 613-626.
- Egan, T.M. (2005), "The impact of learning goal orientation similarity on formal mentoring relationship outcomes", *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 489-504.
- Elam, A.B. (2008), *Gender and Entrepreneurship: A Multilevel Theory and Analysis*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Ensher, E.A. and Murphy, S.E. (1997), "Effects of race, gender, perceived similarity, and contact on mentor relationships", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 460-481.
- Ensher, E.A., Grant-Vallone, E.J. and Marelich, W.D. (2002), "Effects of perceived attitudinal and demographic similarity on Protégés' support and satisfaction gained from their mentoring relationships", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 32 No. 7, pp. 1407-1430.
- Festinger, L. (1954), "A theory of social comparison processes", *Human Relations*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 117-140.
- Filstad, C. (2004), "How newcomers use role models in organizational socialization", *Journal of Workplace Learning*, Vol. 16 No. 7, pp. 396-409.
- Gaskill, L. (2001), "Qualitative investigation into developmental relationships for small business apparel retailers: networks, mentors and role models", *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 1-19, available at: www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-3/gaskill.html
- George, M., Gordon, I. and Hamilton, E. (2010), "What is (the point of) an entrepreneur in residence? The Lancaster University experience, with some worldwide comparisons", *Industry and Higher Education*, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 495-503.
- Ghosh, R. (2014), "Antecedents of mentoring support: a meta-analysis of individual, relational, and structural or organizational factors", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 367-384.
- Ghosh, R. and Reio, T.G. (2013), "Career benefits associated with mentoring for mentors: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 83 No. 1, pp. 106-116.
- Gibson, D.E. (2003), "Developing the professional self-concept: role model construals in early, middle, and late career stages", *Organization Science*, Vol. 14 No. 5, pp. 591-610.

- Gibson, D.E. (2004), "Role models in career development: new directions for theory and research", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 134-156.
- Godshalk, V.M. and Sosik, J.J. (2003), "Aiming for career success: the role of learning goal orientation in mentoring relationships", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 417-437.
- Gordon, S.P. and Brobeck, S.R. (2010), "Coaching the mentor: facilitating reflection and change", *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 427-447.
- Grant, S. (2011), "On being entrepreneurial: the highs and lows of entrepreneurship", in Langan-Fox, J. and Cooper, C.L. (Eds), *Handbook of Stress in the Occupations*, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 359-384.
- Gravells, J. (2006), "Mentoring start-up entrepreneurs in the East Midlands – troubleshooters and trusted friends", *The International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 3-23.
- Haimovitz, K., Wormington, S.V. and Corpus, J.H. (2011), "Dangerous mindsets: how beliefs about intelligence predict motivational change", *Learning and Individual Differences*, Vol. 21 No. 6, pp. 747-752.
- Harackiewicz, J.M., Barron, K.E., Tauer, J.M., Carter, S.M. and Elliot, A.J. (2000), "Short-term and long-term consequences of achievement goals: predicting interest and performance over time", *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 92 No. 2, pp. 316-330.
- Hayes, E.F. (1998), "Mentoring and nurse practitioner student self-efficacy", *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 521-535.
- Hezlett, S.A. (2005), "Protégés' learning in mentoring relationships: a review of the literature and an exploratory case study", *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 505-526.
- Hmieleski, K.M. and Baron, R.A. (2008), "When does entrepreneurial self-efficacy enhance versus reduce firm performance?", *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 57-72.
- Johannisson, B. (1991), "University training for entrepreneurship: a Swedish approach", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 67-82.
- Kempster, S. and Cope, J. (2010), "Learning to lead in the entrepreneurial context", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 5-34.
- Kent, T., Dennis, C. and Tanton, S. (2003), "An evaluation of mentoring for SME retailers", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 31 Nos 8/9, pp. 440-448.
- Kim, S. (2007), "Learning goal orientation, formal mentoring, and leadership competence in HRD: a conceptual model", *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 181-194.
- Kram, K.E. (1985), *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*, Scott Foresman, Glenview, IL.
- Kram, K.E. and Hall, D.T. (1989), "Mentoring as an antidote to stress during corporate trauma", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 493-510.
- Kutzhanova, N., Lyons, T.S. and Lichtenstein, G.A. (2009), "Skill-based development of entrepreneurs and the role of personal and peer group coaching in enterprise development", *Economic Development Quarterly*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 193-210.
- Lankau, M.J. and Scandura, T.A. (2002), "An investigation of personal learning in mentoring relationships: content, antecedents, and consequences", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 45 No. 4, pp. 779-790.
- Lavolette, E.M., Radu Lefebvre, M. and Brunel, O. (2012), "The impact of story bound entrepreneurial role models on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 720-742.
- Lindell, M.K. and Whitney, D.J. (2001), "Accounting for common method variance in cross-sectional research designs", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 86 No. 1, pp. 114-121.
- Lockwood, P. and Kunda, Z. (1997), "Superstars and me: predicting the impact of role models on the self", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 73 No. 1, pp. 91-103.

- Lowe, R.A. and Ziedonis, A.A. (2006), "Overoptimism and the performance of entrepreneurial firms", *Management Science*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 173-186.
- McAdam, M. and Marlow, S. (2007), "Building futures or stealing secrets? Entrepreneurial cooperation and conflict within business incubators", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 361-382.
- McGee, J., Peterson, M., Mueller, S. and Sequeira, J. (2009), "Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: refining the measure", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 965-988.
- Marlow, S. and McAdam, M. (2012), "Analyzing the influence of gender upon high-technology venturing within the context of business incubation", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 655-676.
- Maurer, T.J. (2001), "Career-relevant learning and development, worker age, and beliefs about self-efficacy for development", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 123-140.
- Mitchell, M.E., Eby, L.T. and Ragins, B.R. (2015), "My mentor, my self: antecedents and outcomes of perceived similarity in mentoring relationships", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 89, pp. 1-9.
- Mueller, S.L. and Dato-On, M.C. (2008), "Gender-role orientation as a determinant of entrepreneurial self-efficacy", *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 3-20.
- Murrell, A.J. and Zagenczyk, T.J. (2006), "The gendered nature of role model status: an empirical study", *Career Development International*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 560-578.
- Ozgen, E. and Baron, R.A. (2007), "Social sources of information in opportunity recognition: effects of mentors, industry networks, and professional forums", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 174-192.
- Pellegrini, E.K. and Scandura, T.A. (2005), "Construct equivalence across groups: an unexplored issue in mentoring research", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 65 No. 2, pp. 323-335.
- Phillips, J.M. and Gully, S.M. (1997), "Role of goal orientation, ability, need for achievement, and locus of control in the self-efficacy and goal-setting process", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 82 No. 5, pp. 792-802.
- Pintrich, P.R. and Schunk, D.H. (1996), "The role of expectancy and self-efficacy beliefs", in Pintrich, P.R. and Schunk, D.H. (Eds), *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research & Applications*, Chapter 3, Merrill, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, available at: www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/PS.html
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903.
- Powers, L.E., Sowers, J.-A. and Stevens, T. (1995), "An exploratory, randomized study of the impact of mentoring on the self-efficacy and community-based knowledge of adolescents with severe physical challenges", *Journal of Rehabilitation*, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 33-42.
- Quimby, J.L. and Santis, A.M. (2006), "The influence of role models on women's career choices", *The Career Development Quarterly*, Vol. 54 No. 4, pp. 297-306.
- Radu Lefebvre, M. and Redien-Collot, R. (2013), "'How to do things with words': the discursive dimension of experiential learning in entrepreneurial mentoring dyads", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 370-393.
- Ragins, B.R., Cotton, J.L. and Miller, J.S. (2000), "Marginal mentoring: the effects of type of mentor, quality of relationship, and program design on work and career attitudes", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1177-1184.
- Robinson, S., Lockett, N., Nwankwo, S., Akunuri, J. and Madichie, N.O. (2010), "Supporting black businesses: narratives of support providers in London", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp. 561-580.
- Scherer, R.F., Adams, J.S., Carley, S.S. and Wiebe, F.A. (1989), "Role model performance effects on development of entrepreneurial career preference", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 53-71.

- Schunk, D.H. (1983), "Developing children's self-efficacy and skills: the roles of social comparative information and goal setting", *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 76-86.
- Simon, S.A. and Eby, L.T. (2003), "A typology of negative mentoring experiences: a multidimensional scaling study", *Human Relations*, Vol. 56 No. 9, pp. 1083-1109.
- Sluss, D.M. and Ashforth, B.E. (2007), "Relational identity and identification: defining ourselves through work relationships", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 9-32.
- Sosik, J.J. and Godshalk, V.M. (2000), "Leadership styles, mentoring functions received, and job-related stress: a conceptual model and preliminary study", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 365-390.
- Spector, P.E. (2006), "Method variance in organizational research – truth or urban legend?", *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 221-232.
- Spigel, B. (2015), "The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 49-72.
- St-Jean, E. (2011), "Mentor functions for novice entrepreneurs", *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 65-84.
- St-Jean, E. and Audet, J. (2012), "The role of mentoring in the learning development of the novice entrepreneur", *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 119-140.
- St-Jean, E. and Audet, J. (2013), "The effect of mentor intervention style in novice entrepreneur mentoring relationships", *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 96-119.
- Styles, J. and Hegarty, C. (2008), "Using SME intelligence in mentoring science and technology students", *International Journal of Technology Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 20-38.
- Sullivan, M. and Kolb, D. (1995), "Turning experience into learning", in Roland, C.C., Wagner, R.J. and Weigand, R.J. (Eds), *Do It... and Understand: The Bottom Line on Corporate Experiential Learning*, Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, IA, pp. 5-11.
- Sullivan, R. (2000), "Entrepreneurial learning and mentoring", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 160-175.
- Tajfel, H.E. (1978), *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Academic Press, Oxford.
- Terjesen, S. and Sullivan, S.E. (2011), "The role of developmental relationships in the transition to entrepreneurship: a qualitative study and agenda for future research", *Career Development International*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 482-506.
- Tuckey, M., Brewer, N. and Williamson, P. (2002), "The influence of motives and goal orientation on feedback seeking", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 195-216.
- Ucbasaran, D., Westhead, P. and Wright, M. (2008), "Opportunity identification and pursuit: does an entrepreneur's human capital matter?", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 153-173.
- VandeWalle, D. (2004), "A goal orientation model of feedback-seeking behavior", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 581-604.
- VandeWalle, D. and Cummings, L.L. (1997), "A test of the influence of goal orientation on the feedback-seeking process", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 82 No. 3, pp. 390-400.
- Wanberg, C.R., Welsh, E.T. and Hezlett, S.A. (2003), "Mentoring research: a review and dynamic process model", in Martocchio, J.J. and Ferris, G.R. (Eds), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, Vol. 22, Elsevier Science Ltd, Oxford, pp. 39-124.
- Waters, L., McCabe, M., Kiellerup, D. and Kiellerup, S. (2002), "The role of formal mentoring on business success and self-esteem in participants of a new business start-up program", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 107-121.

- Wheeler, S.C., Petty, R.E. and Bizer, G.Y. (2005), "Self-Schema matching and attitude change: situational and dispositional determinants of message elaboration", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 787-797.
- Wilson, F., Kickul, J., Marlino, D., Barbosa, S.D. and Griffiths, M.D. (2009), "An analysis of the role of gender and self-efficacy in developing female entrepreneurial interest and behavior", *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 105-119.
- Wilson, F., Kickul, J.R. and Marlino, D. (2007), "Gender, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial career intentions: implications for entrepreneurship education", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 387-407.
- Wolters, C.A., Yu, S.L. and Pintrich, P.R. (1996), "The relation between goal orientation and students' motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning", *Learning and Individual Differences*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 211-238.

Corresponding author

Etienne St-Jean can be contacted at: etienne.st-jean@uqtr.ca

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com