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PROTÉGÉS AMONG JAPANESE WORKERS**

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1980's, empirical studies have proven that mentors exert a great influence on the career development of their protégés. This has been confirmed by many empirical studies in Japan (e.g., Kumura 1996, Ono 1996 1998 1999a,b 2000 2002a, Sekiguchi 1998a,b, and Gotani 1998), some of which have argued that people who develop their careers sufficiently through mentoring often become mentors themselves. In Japan, researchers (e.g., Kumura 1996 and Ono 2002a) have found that the succession of mentor roles is carried out as a result of peoples' previous experiences as protégés. However, an empirical study of nurses by Ono (2002a), using a questionnaire and interview method, shows that what people learn from their mentors is not necessarily consistent with what they teach their own protégés. In other words, the succession of psychosocial functions takes place comparatively easily, but that of career functions is less consistent. This study also suggested that the age relationship and the relative positions of the individuals are important factors in mentoring. The research reported in this study was conducted in Japan with people working in highly specialized professions (e.g., system engineers, research designers, research analysts and producers of psychological tests and measurements). A questionnaire (n=423) was used to elicit information regarding the succession of the functions of mentoring and the succession of mentoring itself, posing questions such as: what kinds of mentoring, if any, respondents have had; whether or not the mentoring was useful for their career development; whether they have their own protégés, and so on. The results of the research supported and extended the previous research by Ono (2002a). The findings are followed by a discussion of the usefulness of the creation of tacit organizational rules and socialization as tools in the succession of competencies.

Keywords: Mentor, Mentoring, Succession of Mentor Role

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A number of research studies on mentors and mentoring in industrial settings have been conducted since the 1980's in the United States. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the benefits associated with mentoring relationships and adopting them as tools of human resource development (Zey 1990, Jeruchim & Shapiro 1992, Godshalk & Sosik 2000). In Japan, many empirical studies regarding mentors and mentoring, which often exert a great influence on an individual's career development, and the adaptation of mentoring relationships to human resource development in organizations have also been reported in recent years (Yamaguchi 1993, Shibata & Sekimoto 1993, Kumura 1996, Ono 1996 1998, Sekiguchi 1998a,b, and Gotani 1998).

Some of these studies investigated the possibility that those who have received mentoring (i.e., protégés) go on to become mentors themselves (Kram 1985, Ragins & Cotton 1991, Kumura 1996, Sekiguchi 1998a), and Kumura (1996) referred to this progression as a mentoring chain.

For example, Vance (1982) reported that 93% of nurses with 83% influence having more than one mentor(s) provide mentoring for their protégés. This implies that at least 77.2% of nurses have experience being both protégés and mentors. According to the survey by Kelly (2001), 92% of managers have received mentoring and 77% of those have gone on to act as mentors for their own protégés. Thus, at least 70.8% of the managers surveyed had experience as both protégés and mentors.

In addition, the survey by Kumura (1996) using a questionnaire with 38 items of mentoring scales shows that the higher the score an individual received for mentoring in the past, the more mentoring they provide for their own protégés, and that the higher the position of an individual and the longer they have been with an organization, the more mentoring they provide. This also supports the existence of "gradual development of mentoring associated with the stage of protégés' career development". Moreover, particularly for mentoring in career functions, even if an individual wishes to be a mentor, they are not capable of doing so effectively until they reach a certain age or a certain position (Kumura, 1996).

According to a series of surveys using the interview method by Ono (2001, 2002b), a number of individuals showed consideration for the career development of some of their junior colleagues (e.g. providing guidance, demonstrating by example, and encouraging

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them to go for training). Their answers included comments such as: “I am providing guidance for a junior because she has the same background as me and so I care for her”, “I am trying to inform my protégés of my view of nursing, because I have received the acceptance and confirmation functions. In addition, if a protégé is willing to improve her skills, I will provide material and let her go for training”, “I would like to develop the skills of the protégé, who is awkward but is positive with everything. While I myself have received emotional mentoring and role modeling from my mentor, I provide my protégés not only with role modeling but also with guidance”. However, this research did not show clearly if what people receive from their mentors is consistent with what they provide for their own protégés.

Some studies have analyzed mentoring from the point of view of the relationship between mentoring and the positions of mentors in organizations, and some have looked at the length of mentor-protégé relationships. Based on the research reported by Fagenson-Eland et al. (1997), more experienced mentors reported providing greater levels of career guidance, while those reporting a longer lasting current mentor-protégé relationship reported greater levels of both career guidance and role modeling.

Muchinsky (2000) indicated that mentors in late career years provide psychosocial supports and friendship, as well as instrumental career support. The study by Chao (1997) suggested that a mentoring relationship evolves through several stages over time, and that protégés in the Initiation phase receive lower levels of mentoring functions than other protégés. A study by Pollock (1995) also revealed that a protégé receives different levels of mentoring at each stage of a mentor-protégé relationship.

Mullen (1998) noted that current studies treat mentor characteristics and perceptions as independent variables. However, several studies describe mentors as usually having a sense of playing a valuable role in the organization by providing two functions, psychosocial support and career development support. More specifically, Lee et al. (2000) discussed successful mentors and suggested that some kinds of personality positively influence mentoring effectiveness.

Generally, the previous research discussed above indicates that the contents of the mentoring provided for protégés by mentors varies according to the stage of the protégés' career. Psychological aspects of the mentors themselves also exert an important influence on the succession of mentor role. These results imply that, although the succession of

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mentor role exists, what people learn from their mentors is not necessarily consistent with what they teach to their protégés. In other words, protégés learn that their mentor teaches something, but this does not mean they learn what their mentor teaches.

This raises several interesting questions, such as whether the experience of receiving mentoring leads an individual to become a mentor, hence that the succession of mentor role exists, or whether the psychological factors of mentoring and the outcome of a lasting improvement for their career development urge an individual to become a mentor. This study investigates the possibility of a succession of the mentor role, based on the hypothesis that the experience of protégés (i.e., the experience of receiving mentoring) leads an individual to become a mentor. The influence of mentor personality traits on mentoring is also discussed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate (1) the possibility that an individual who received mentoring will become a mentor, (2) the possibility that the mentoring a subject received fulfills the same functions as the mentoring he/she wants to provide. In addition, it also attempts to verify the following hypotheses deduced from the results of previous studies (Ono 1999b, 2002a).

Hypothesis 1: The experience of receiving mentoring enhances the possibility that an individual will find protégés and provide mentoring associated with the stages of his/her career development (i.e., a succession of the mentor role).

Hypothesis 2: When an individual becomes a mentor, the mentoring he/she provides is not necessarily consistent with the mentoring he/she received from his/her mentors.

Hypothesis 3: Whereas emotional functions and acceptance and confirmation functions involved in psychosocial functions are instructed and accepted easily at comparatively every level, the instruction and acceptance of career functions and managerial behavior functions depend on certain organizational levels and authority / power.

METHOD

Ono (1999b, 2002a, 2003) conducted previous surveys of nurses¹ using the questionnaire method, and the same questions were used in this study. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information concerning subjects' career satisfaction, mentoring experience, number of mentors and protégés, any appraisal by supervisors when individuals initiated their career, their relationships with mentors (the length, the conditions, and any changes in the conditions), the mentoring that the subjects want to provide for their own protégés, their attitudes towards their jobs and human relations. In asking about their most influential mentoring experiences, the question was open-ended.

Subjects

Respondents were highly specialized professionals in information service industries, including system engineers and programmers, producers and salesmen of exams, designers and practitioners of research on markets / polls, all of whom were employed in the top three companies in their respective fields. The questionnaire was distributed to 726 individuals, and 448 responses (25 of which were unusable) were returned, for a response rate of 58.3%. Usable responses consisted of 256 men and 167 women. The overall average age was 33.0 years, while that of men was 34.7 years and that of women was 30.5 years. Their average work experience was 11.2 years and 60.2% of men were married and 34.7% of women were married.

Procedures and Measures

Ono embarked on a lengthy series of research studies in 1995, mainly using questionnaires and complementary interviews. This study builds on this research. The scales were based on the field research regarding social supports by Ono (1994) and studies by Riley and Wrench (1985), Noe (1988), Dreher and Ash (1990), and Ragins and McFarin (1990). Sixty-item scales were developed by modifying them from the original 80-item scale based

¹ Studies showed that (1) an individual who had received mentoring was more likely to have his or her protégés, (2) there was strong possibility of a succession of mentor role including mentoring, though it might be partial, (c) the types of support respondents wanted to provide for their protégés were directly related to their age and their organizational levels.

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on a preliminary questionnaire and follow-up interviews with ten people. The research was conducted during early June and early July of 1998.

RESULTS

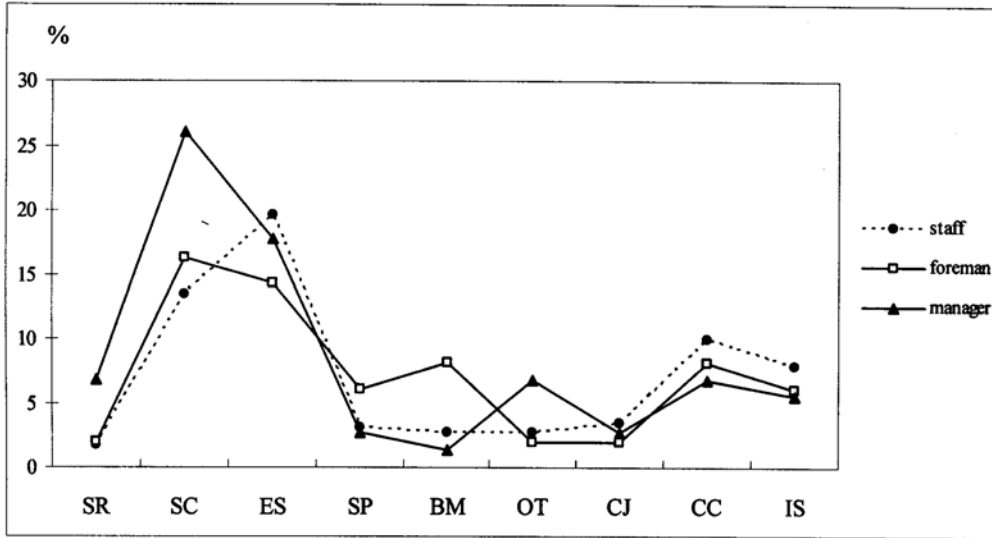
Who Are the Protégés?

Approximately 90% of the subjects had protégés, consisting of junior colleagues (53.2%), peers (27.2%), subordinates (23.4%), and spouses (20.1%). Their protégés were likely to be less experienced persons than themselves. At an office composed of young workers, however, it was not rare for individuals to regard people in the same organizational level as protégés. This is an important notion in understanding the network of peer mentors and career supports. It is note worthy that 5% of respondents reported their bosses as protégés; the types of support for bosses as protégés would be different from normal career support. This suggests Japanese people recognize the effectiveness of various types of support toward an individual's career development. In the earlier research on nurses (Ono 1999b, 2002a), the same result (5%) was shown.

Types of Mentoring for Protégés

Other than those who did not respond (labeled NA) (n=123), the most common response for the types of mentoring provided for protégés was “aid mentally” (26.7%), followed by “aid to have self-confidence” (22.0%), “conduct career guidance” (12.7%), and “assist protégés when they are busy” (10.0%) (Figure 1). Mentoring in emotional functions was thus clearly a very important activity.

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Note: SR = showing the rope, SC = aiding to have self-confidence, ES = providing emotional support, SP = supporting for promotion, BM = demonstrating good business manners, OT = providing opportunities for training, CJ = providing challenging jobs, CC = providing career counseling, IS = providing instrumental support

Figure 1. Mentoring Provided by Different Levels of Mentors

Comparison Between the Frequency of Receiving Mentoring and the Existence of Protégés

	Have protégés n=379	No protégés n=43	Difference of means and significant level
Total amount of receipt of mentoring	106.01	89.1	17.0 *
Career Functions (16 items)	21.25	17.78	3.47 *
Emotional Functions (11 items)	18.46	15.28	3.18 *
Managerial behavior functions (8 items)	16.56	14.74	1.82 *
AC Functions (7 items)	15.08	13.05	2.03 *

Note: *: $p < .05$, AC functions = acceptance and confirmation functions

Table 1. A Comparison of the Frequencies of Having Received Mentoring and Whether or Not the Subjects Had Protégés

Table 1 shows the difference of the frequencies of receiving mentoring between those who have their own protégés and those who have none. The difference of total responses for the 60 items was 17.0 (.283 per item). Whereas the average of the difference for one item was

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approximately .20 in career functions and managerial behavior functions, indicating relatively small differences, the average of emotional functions and acceptance and confirmation functions was nearly .30. Items in all functions show a significant difference, indicating there is a relationship between the experience of receiving mentoring and the consciousness of mentoring others. The possibility of a succession in the mentor role was examined by separating the frequencies of receiving mentoring into high frequency (HF), medium frequency (MF) and low frequency (LF) groups for each of the functions of mentoring, along with the rate of those who reported “no protégés”. Emotional functions and acceptance and confirmation functions show a significant difference ($p < .05$) between the HF group and the LF group. The results as a whole showed that those who received mentoring were more likely to obtain protégés.

Mentoring Received From Each Subjects’ Most Important Mentor and Provided for Protégés

Concerning the types of the support they had received from their most important mentors, individuals filled out open-ended questions. We divided these into 25 categories: 6 career functions, 5 emotional functions, 11 managerial behavior functions, 3 acceptance and confirmation functions, and 2 others which belong to both career functions and managerial behavior functions. As is shown in table 2, mentoring of managerial behavior functions were the most common type experienced.

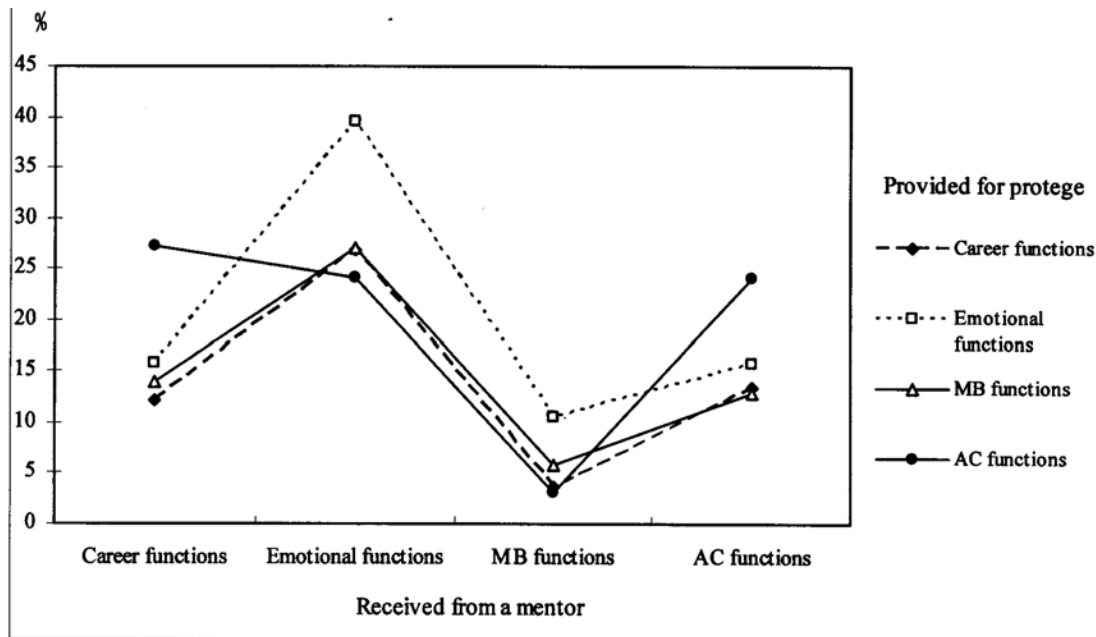
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	Career functions	Emotional functions	MB functions	AC functions	Total
Staff	59 31.2%	27 14.3%	176 93.1%	23 12.2%	291 100.0%
Foreman	8 5.3%	3 2.0%	34 22.5%	2 1.3%	49 100.0%
Manager	12 21.4%	6 10.7%	40 71.4%	6 10.7%	73 100.0%
N.A.	3 11.1%	2 7.4%	8 29.6%	2 7.4%	10 100.0%
Total	82 19.4%	38 9.0%	258 61.0%	33 7.8%	423 100.0%

Note: MB functions = managerial behavior functions, AC functions = acceptance and confirmation functions

Table 2. Mentoring Provided From the Subject's Most Influential Mentor by Different Levels of Mentors

The items receiving more than 30 responses were “mentors provided knowledge, skills and the way to work” (n=71, 16.7%), “mentors demonstrated modeling such as attitudes toward work” (n=51, 12.1%), “mentors provided guidance” (n=36, 8.6%), and “mentors demonstrated the modeling of how to live” (n=34, 8.0%). Figure 2 shows the relationship between the mentoring provided by their most influential mentors.



Note: MB functions = managerial behavior functions, AC functions = acceptance and confirmation functions,

Figure 2. Functions of Mentoring Experienced From the Subject's Most Influential Mentor and Subsequently Provided for Protégés

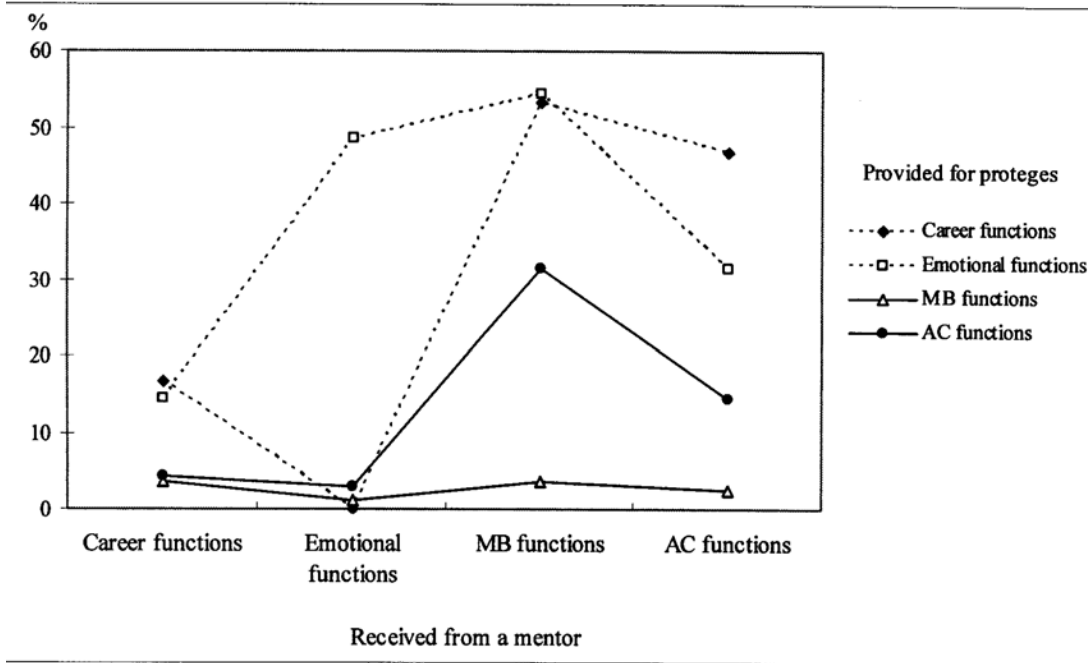
Individuals who reported “mentors provided knowledge, skills and the way to work”, also answered, “I aid my protégés mentally” (18.9%), “I aid protégés to have self-confidence” (15.6%), and “I provide career guidance” (9.0%). These responses have no direct correlation.

Subjects who reported “mentors demonstrated the modeling of attitudes toward work” or “mentors demonstrated how to live”, also tended to report “I aid mentally” or “I aid to have self-confidence”. Again, these items are not directly related.

However, subjects who reported “mentors counseled” also answered “I provide counseling for protégés” (16.7%), “I aid mentally” (13.9%) and “I aid to have self-confidence” (13.9%), and these items did seem to have a correlation.

After removing the subjects who replied NA (n=117), an analysis of the relationship between the most effective mentoring in individuals' careers and their mentoring for protégés, revealed that 11.4% of respondents were consistent. Comparing with each function, 16.9% were consistent overall, and for emotional functions, 48.6% (35-17) of responses were consistent. Of acceptance and confirmation functions, career functions, and managerial behavior functions, 14.3%, 16.7%, and 3.6% were consistent. Thus, psychosocial functions are comparatively easily provided and mentoring per se easily succeeds.

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Note: See the notes of Figure 2 for abbreviation

Figure 3. Mentoring From the Most Influential Mentors

Comparison Between Having Received Mentoring and the Idea of Mentoring Others

The relationship between the frequencies of receiving mentoring and those who reported “don’t know” about the types of mentoring they provided for their protégés was examined. For every function, there were significant differences between the LF group and the HF group ($p < .01$). The more frequently an individual had received mentoring, the less likely he or was to report having “don’t know” of how to mentor protégés. Thus, the proportion of those who reported “don’t know” had a strong relationship with the likelihood that they had received mentoring in the past. Individuals who had received mentoring were more likely to become mentors and generally had a clear image of how to mentor protégés. In other words, this analysis showed strong evidence supporting the succession of mentor roles.

The Relationship Between Mentors and the Selection of Protégés

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When discussing a the succession of the mentor role, it is important to clarify who the mentors are. In other words, the mentoring received from mentors and the ways to pass it on may exert a great influence on protégés when they become mentors themselves and also when they choose their protégés. Thus, the relationship between the mentors who had been the most influential and the protégés who individuals want to support was examined. Both answers allowed subjects to choose more than one response.

Those who reported their direct supervisors as mentors were also likely to report junior colleagues and subordinates as protégés, and those who reported the bosses of their direct supervisors as mentors were very likely to report subordinates as protégés. Those who reported other bosses as mentors were likely to choose junior colleagues in the office. However, those who reported the supervisors they had when they initiated their career as mentors were more prone to choose subordinates but less likely to choose junior persons in the office compared with others. In addition, of those who chose a family member as a mentor, many reported people not related to the work (121.4% in total), including spouses (57.1%) and children (42.9%). This percentage is actually higher than that of those at the work place (114.3%).

These results show that who an individual regards as a mentor exerted a great influence on the selection of protégés ($\chi^2=232.63$, $n=423$, $p<.05$). In short, the relationship between a mentor and the individual is the same as the relationship between that individual and his or her protégé. This also implies the possibility of a succession of the mentor role.

Factors Exerting an Influence on a Succession of the Mentor Role

Previous studies (Ono 1999b, 2002a) suggested the possibility that the age of individuals and their organizational positions at work exert an influence on the mentoring provided for protégés. This study analyzed the prior receipt of mentoring as a variable exerting an influence on the existence of protégés, with independent variables of career satisfaction, job satisfaction, positions and psychological attitude (self-development oriented and human-relation oriented), using multiple regression analysis and quantification method of II (the second type).

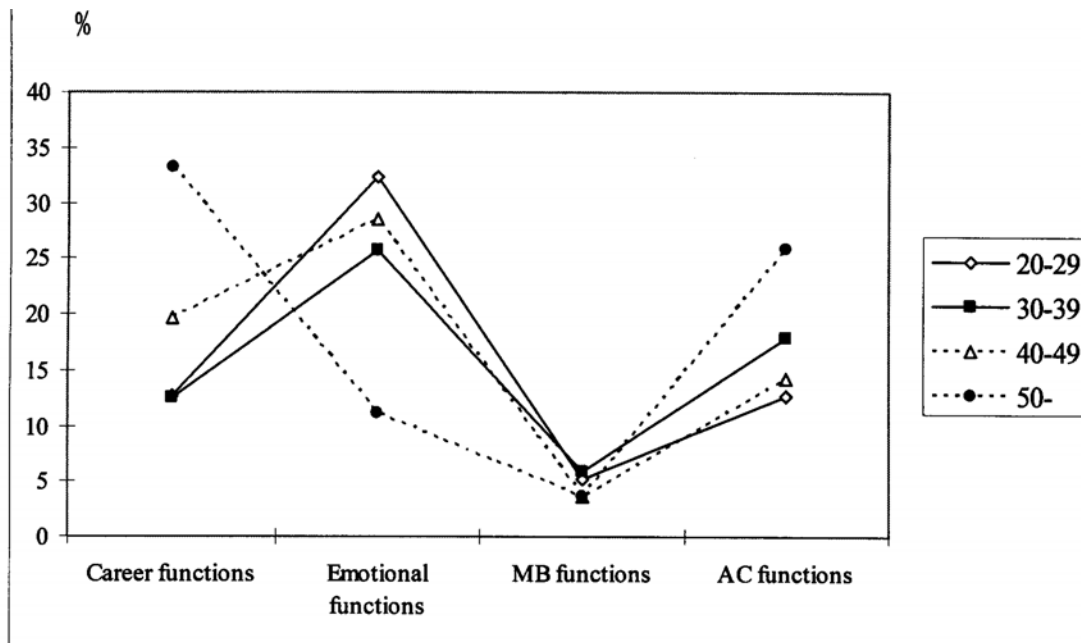
Although a significant coefficient of determination was not found in the multiple regression analysis, using the quantification method of II (the second type) the hit rate for discrimination was 74.3%. In this method, organizational levels, job satisfaction and the

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amount of receiving mentoring were of a high degree in order. This proves the receipt of mentoring is influential to a great extent.

We then conducted multiple regression analyses of the existence of protégés as dependent variables, with the sum total of receiving mentoring, career satisfaction, job satisfaction, positions, and for each of the psychological attitudes (self-development oriented and human-relation oriented) as independent variables.

In every case, the coefficient of determination was less than 0.1. Although this is not high, in the group of highly human-relation oriented attitudes the F score was shown to have a significant difference ($p < .05$). Organizational position and the receipt of mentoring suggest a significant standardized partial regression coefficient. In the group of less human-relation oriented subjects, the variable ratio was not significantly different. In the group of less self-development oriented subjects, a significant difference was shown for a 1% standard of variable ratio and a standardized partial regression coefficient was also shown for the receipt of mentoring and organizational levels in order. These results imply that psychological attitudes exert an influence on the possession of mentors.



Note: See the notes of Figure 2 for abbreviation

Figure 4. Functions of Mentoring for Protégés by Age

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The finding that organizational levels exerted the greatest influence on the possession of mentors suggests that the higher position an individual attains, the more he/she is likely to become a mentor, because individuals' organizational levels have a strong correlation with their age. This is especially true in Japanese companies, which often have well-established seniority systems. The result also supported Levinson's field study (1978) that found that individuals are more likely to become mentors when they reach middle age and Kumura's conclusion (1996) that gradual development of mentoring is related to the phases of protégés' career development.

Mentor-protégé relationships are known to depend on both their personalities and their psychological attitudes. In earlier work, Ono (2002c) revealed the existence of this relationship based on his field studies of many different groups of subjects.

The result of this study, however, did not support the finding that the psychological attitudes of individuals exert a great influence on the mentoring they provide and the existence of protégés. This may be a limitation of this study.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This study compared the frequencies of receiving mentoring and the existence of protégés using a questionnaire for people working in highly specialized professions in Japan in order to investigate the possibility of a succession of the mentor role. As regards the amount of mentoring received, there was strong possibility that individuals who had received little or no frequencies of mentoring were unlikely to have protégés. The succession of mentor role appears to take place among Japanese workers in highly specialized professions in the same way as it does for Japanese nurses (Ono 1999b, 2002a). Comparing whom an individual regards as a mentor with whom he or she want to have as a protégé, subjects generally reported related items for mentor-protégé relationships, such as boss-subordinate, senior colleague-junior colleague, peer-peer, or family member-family member. This suggests their previous possibility that the experience as a protégé exerts a great influence on an individual when he or she becomes a mentor.

However, the types of mentoring subjects received and the mentoring they go on to provide to their protégés are not necessarily consistent. For example, an individual may have

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received acceptance and confirmation functions but want to provide emotional functions. In many cases they were directly or partly related. The same tendency could be seen in the results obtained in the previous research on nurses, and this may be a technical matter related to the structure of the questionnaire.

The reason why the types of mentoring are not directly passed on may be limited by the age and organizational levels of the individuals who provide mentoring or who receive mentoring. In addition, the length of mentor-protégé relationships largely differentiates the types of mentoring. The mentoring provided is also related to the stage of the protégé's career development. The findings of this study reveal that the age relationship and the relative positions of the individuals make a difference for the types of mentoring provided and on what basis the protégés are selected (see Figure 4).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As shown above, even when there is a succession of mentor role, the types of mentoring are not necessarily consistent. The previous study (Ono 1999b, 2002a) suggests the substance of mentoring is different according to the stage of a protégé's career development. Dalton et al. (1977) found that individuals are more likely to become mentors and managers at the same time but even if they have not received any mentoring in managerial behavioral functions, they think they should provide mentoring in managerial behavioral functions for their protégés. This suggests that whether the types of mentoring are consistent does not necessarily prove or disprove that there is a succession of mentor role.

However, the modeling of role behavior per se was shown to be passed on. At Japanese workplaces, especially in offices consisting of white-collar workers whose job descriptions are not clearly specified and full of habitual practices and tacit rules, an individual cannot successfully pursue their careers without knowing "the ropes". Therefore, support for career development based on fairly elaborate plans is essential in addition to the formal training, development and superficial OJT normally provided. The improved performance of those whose career is developed by mentoring inevitably leads to the career development of inexperienced people (i.e., subordinates and junior colleagues) who are protégés. The mentors who are supposed to improve protégés' careers (i.e., traditional mentors) increasingly play an important role for those in the lower organizational levels of their careers who have fewer opportunities for training and development at the same time

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as the opportunities for formal training and OJT are reduced because of performance-based appraisals.

On the other hand, this study hypothesized that not only the characteristics of individuals but also the experience of having received mentoring, giving protégés an opportunity to learn role behavior through mentors' modeling, would exert a great influence on individuals when they become mentors. In this sense, human resource management needs to create organizational climates willing to aid people to act as effective mentors. This could consist of training for mentors such as (1) teaching the merits of having protégés, (2) teaching the best way to communicate with and counsel protégés, and (3) helping mentors recognize that they are mentors, and also helping protégés recognize that they are protégés. Some large Japanese hospitals already include this in their introductory training for new nurses. In addition, creating an atmosphere that encourages mentors to pay attention to the career development of their protégés is needed. This is especially important when both mentors and protégés are in the same office for several years, as mentor-protégé relationships are supposed to continue for a long period.

Generally systematic human resource development practices enhance the development of the competencies of the human resources in their organizations and the notion that mentors aid protégés' career development, enabling them to reach a higher level, should be shared with every organization. Many studies have found that the more people try to reach higher levels, the more organizational effectiveness increases. In other words, the more mentors an organization has, the more easily people are encouraged to develop their careers, which ultimately leads to organizational effectiveness. Producing good mentors should be essential for organizations. This study found that a succession of the mentor role plays an important role in developing future mentors. Hence, from the aspect of human resource development in organizations, the notion of mentors should receive as much attention as the encouragement of individuals' career development.

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