Moderating mentoring relationships and career resilience: Role of conscientiousness personality disposition

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To cite this article: Ridhi Arora & Santosh Rangnekar (2016) Moderating mentoring relationships and career resilience: Role of conscientiousness personality disposition, Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health, 31:1, 19-36

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2015.1074052

Published online: 13 Jan 2016.
Moderating mentoring relationships and career resilience: Role of conscientiousness personality disposition

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ABSTRACT
Past research has shown that a protégé’s personality and workplace mentoring relationships play a crucial role in enhancing employees’ career outcomes. This study extends this by empirically examining the moderating effects of the Big Five personality trait of conscientiousness on mentoring and career resilience relationship in the Indian context. The data were collected from 254 participants employed in public and private sector organizations in North India. Consistent with expectations, the authors found that the relationship between both categories of mentoring (psychosocial and career mentoring) and career resilience is stronger for the managers who score high on conscientiousness personality in contrast to those with low scores on this factor. The implications and future research directions are discussed in the article.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 3 October 2014
Accepted 29 April 2015

KEYWORDS
Career resilience; careers; conscientiousness; mentoring; personality

Introduction
Today thought leaders across the world have characterized the prevailing scenario as VUCA environment, the one characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and agility (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). To be successful, flexible, and agile in this environment, organizations need to become more resilient to sustain continuous learning (Horney, Pasmore, & O’Shea, 2010; Yılmaz-Börekçi, Say, & Rofcanin, 2014). In this context, developmental relationships in the form of mentoring serve as a powerful tool for building a career-resilient workforce (Hannon, 2012). In addition, some of the studies also provide a strong support for the decisive role of protégé’s personality traits in governing workplace mentoring relationships (Turban & Lee, 2007). Yet there is a scarcity of scholarly work on the role of job-relevant dispositional factors in influencing mentoring and career resilience relationship. The present study thus, attempts to fill this void by investigating the moderating role of the “conscientiousness” personality disposition on mentoring and career-resilience linkage. We specifically chose the conscientiousness personality disposition of all the Big Five traits due to its strong implications in influencing the career...
attainment of individuals (Ramaswami, 2009). Also conscientiousness is the trait most desired by mentors in protégés for mentoring (Lee, Dougherty, & Turban, 2000). As the conscientiousness personality trait governs cooperation and achievement-orientation tendencies in an individual (Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 2010), such people are more likely to exhibit better performance and citizenship behaviors (Organ & Ryan, 1995) which makes them quite attractive to mentors as potential mentoring partners (Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Polychroniou, & Kostopoulos, 2014).

### Need of the study in the Indian context

There exists extensive evidence on the role of personality and mentoring relationships on career outcomes in the Western economies belonging to the cultural clusters of the Anglo-Saxon environment (Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 2010). Although a lot has been examined in the previous studies on career outcomes such as career success, career satisfaction, and career commitment (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Ragins & Kram, 2007), however, there has been limited research on career resilience, which represents one of the most significant challenges for organizations today. The present study thus aims to shed light on this by investigating career resilience in the non-Western business setting as provided in the Indian business environment. This investigation in the Indian organizational context is important due to the varied perceptions and varied cultural differences between the Indian culture and the Anglo-Saxon culture. Being a high power-distant economy, there is respect for authority in India, and supervisors/bosses are viewed as paternalistic figures to guide and support the employees in contrast to Western economies that are low in power distance (Hofstede, 2007; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008; Varma, Srinivas, & Stroh, 2005). Further, due to India’s higher ranking of 31 on the cultural dimension of “uncertainty-avoidance,” the people of India exhibit high levels of tolerance to adjust in every kind of situation. Another peculiar characteristic of the Indian culture is that being a collectivist economy, the orientation of the people is geared up toward maintaining harmonious relationships. This is in contrast to Western countries (United States, Australia, and Spain) where people are individualistic and society is loosely knit, thus everyone is expected to take care of themselves (Hofstede, 2007). In the light of these differences, an investigation of the model reflecting conscientiousness and mentoring interaction on career resilience in the Indian business environment will further advance the understanding on mentoring and resilience literature.

### Theory and hypotheses

The theoretical framework of this study can be drawn using the theories of attachment orientation and adult development (Rhodes, Spencer, Keller,
Liang, & Noam, 2006). According to the theory of attachment orientation, the mentors who offer their genuine care and companionship to the protégés are perceived as parental figures. This kind of nurturing and friendly support of the mentor helps protégés in changing their negative representations of themselves and also boosts their ability to face all the challenges effectively. This further contributes toward enhancing the protégés’ general well-being and social competence (Goldner & Scharf, 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006). In addition to these theories, advocates of the social cognitive theory and interactional model approaches also provide evidence about the significance of person-by-situation interaction in the personality literature (Endler, 1977; Mischel, 1990). Because traits provide the predispositional basis for understanding an individual’s behavior in a variety of situations; henceforth, their interaction with situational characteristics generate stable and discriminative patterns of behavior (Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1994). Based on these theories, this study presents a major goal of further providing evidence to this concept through empirically testing the interaction effects of conscientiousness and mentoring relationships on career resilience.

**Mentoring**

The topic of mentoring has gained a significant attention in recent years from contemporary business, organizations, and psychologist-managers (McDowall-Long, 2004). Numerous studies in the past have elucidated the benefits associated with mentoring such as leadership skills development, social recognition, career development, increased job satisfaction, and increased salaries and promotions (Haynes & Ghosh, 2008). Mentoring represents an intense and sustained interpersonal exchange between a senior experience person (mentor) and a junior experienced person (protégé) in which mentor provides direction, support, and feedback to the protégé to stimulate the career planning and overall personal development (Russell & Adams, 1997; Topa, Guglielmi, & Depolo, 2013). Mentoring can also be viewed as a potential resource for stimulating the employee’s career advancement (Okurame & Fabunami, 2014). Mentoring support is provided to the protégés in two forms: psychosocial mentoring and career mentoring (Topa et al., 2013). These two functions form a related but distinct category of mentoring functions (Turban & Lee, 2007). Psychosocial functions enhance the protégé’s sense of competence and professional identity and include activities such as counseling, role modeling, friendship, and unconditional acceptance and confirmation (Ragins & Kram, 2007; Turban & Lee, 2007). Career functions stimulate protégé’s development of organizational and professional knowledge (Fleig-Palmer & Schoorman, 2011; Hu, Wang, Yang, & Wu, 2013) and include activities such as coaching, exposure and visibility, protection, challenging work assignments, and sponsorship (Ragins & Kram, 2007).
Career resilience

The increasing globalization and changing career trends has resulted in the enhanced focus of organizations toward “building a career resilient workforce” (Liu, 2003, p. 7). The key meaning of resilience can be understood from Bickel’s (2009) definition as “the capacity to remain hardy and maintain your integrity even in the face of massive change without loss of energy to resentments or nostalgia” (p. 4). These resilient qualities serve as the “developmental assets” or “protective factors” that enhance locus of control and subjective well-being of an individual to survive the adverse times (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012, p. 339). Career resilience thus represents the extent to which people resist career barriers or disruptions affecting their work; this also consists of self-confidence, need for achievement, and a willingness to take the risk and the ability to act independently and cooperatively (London & Mone, 1987). More specifically, this was defined as “the ability to adapt to change, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive” (London, 1997, p. 34). On similar lines, further studies also defined career resilience as the willingness of a person to remain persistent during the times of adversities (Carson & Bedeian, 1994). According to Collard, Epperheimer, and Saign (1996), career resilience is “the result or the outcome of being self-reliant” (p. 34) that also indicates an individual’s self-awareness and ability to effectively deal with change (Liu, 2003). People with high levels of career resilience display a “greater degree of flexibility, adaptability and competence despite adverse career situations” (Fourie & Van Vuuren, 1998, p. 55). As a consequence, such people are expected to cling to not only one job, one company, or one career path, but also in remaining devoted to continuous learning (Liu, 2003). Besides this, individuals high on career resilience are risk takers who always derive a sense of accomplishment from whatever they do (Zoogah, 2013). On similar lines, Van Rijn, Yang, and Sanders (2013) also mentioned career resilience as the significant element of career motivation that enhances the engagement of individuals in the informal workplace learning process.

Conscientiousness

Personality research in the past decade has been most popularly recognized in terms of five broader personality traits (The Big Five)—extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. Among these Big Five personality dispositions, conscientiousness has been identified as the most consistent predictor across all situations (Barrick, 2005). There exists a substantial evidence for conscientiousness personality factor as one of the most widely examined trait among all the Big Five personality dimensions (Wolff & Kim, 2012). Traits that represent conscientiousness personality include an individual being planful, organized, and effective in goal setting. Individuals who are highly conscientious are dependable, hard working,
and achievement striving (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1993). On the other hand, those individuals who are low on this personality trait have a tendency to be lazy, careless, disorganized, and are found to be impetuous (Gellatly, 1996).

**Moderating role of conscientiousness**

Past studies provide strong support for the potential influence of the conscientiousness personality trait on perceived mentoring relationships (Bozionelos et al., 2014; Turban & Lee, 2007). Conscientiousness personality encompasses various traits such as industriousness, reliability, perseverance, self-disciplined, sense of duty, achievement motivation, and adherence to moral principles (Bozionelos et al., 2014). Being dutiful and achievement striving, they have aspirations to be consistent and successful at their professional front. In addition, conscientiousness is also considered as the strongest correlate of job performance and organizational citizenship behavior that further reflects an individual’s cooperative nature and willingness to “go the extra mile” (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 2010; Organ & Ryan, 1995). Furthermore, their strong orientation toward self-improvement (Schuler & Prochaska, 2000) also makes them individuals who seek greater attention to mentors’ advice and role behaviors (Bozionelos et al., 2014). Thus, we expect that individuals who are highly conscientious are more likely to approach mentors as they can visualize the significance of mentoring relationships for developing themselves (Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 2010). Moreover, highly conscientious individuals are better able to control their negative emotions despite the negative experiences (Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barrick, 2004) in contrast to those scoring less on conscientiousness. Also, conscientious individuals refrain themselves from engaging in retaliatory counterproductive behaviors (Uppal, Mishra, & Vohra, 2014) that further reduces their probability in getting involved into dysfunctional mentoring relationships (Scandura, 1998). Mentors also express their liking and preference for the protégés who are conscientious, dependable, and are enthusiastic in pursuing various tasks (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000). Based on this reasoning, we thus hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Conscientiousness personality disposition will moderate the relationship between psychosocial mentoring (PM) and career resilience (CR) in such a way that the relationship will be stronger for the protégés who are higher on conscientiousness personality factor than for those who are low on conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 2: Conscientiousness personality disposition will moderate the relationship between career mentoring (CM) and career resilience (CR) in such a way that the relationship will be stronger for the protégés who are higher on conscientiousness personality factor than for those who are lower on conscientiousness.
Method

Sample and data collection

The sample consisted of 254 Indian managers employed in public (61.2%) and private sector (38.8%) organizations in North India. These organizations were not having any formal mentoring scheme at the time of the study. Respondent managers thus reported having been engaged in informal mentoring relationships. Of the 254 respondents (85.4%) were males and (14.6%) were females. The sample was well educated with 45.3% of the participants held postgraduate degrees. In terms of hierarchical position, 26.4% occupied junior-level position, 60.6% occupied middle-level position and 13% occupied senior-level position. Respondent managers were from various organizational functions such as marketing, finance, accounting, research and development, manufacturing, logistics, human resource management, information technology and systems, strategy, and sales.

Data were collected through adoption of a cross-sectional survey–based research design. Specifically, a convenience sampling method was used to get ease of reaching potential respondents of the study. Six organizations were targeted and permission for data collection was obtained from the HR department of the organizations through telephone and e-mail conversation. Personal visits were then conducted by the researchers in these organizations during the office hours, and managers from different departments were contacted with the support of staff members. Overall, the participation was kept on a voluntary basis. A cover letter that accompanied the survey explained purpose of the study to the participants. Respondents were promised about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Also, the survey was partitioned with separate sections on demographics, personality, mentoring, and career resilience. Of the 370 surveys that were distributed among the participants, 300 completed surveys were returned. Further, out of these 300 surveys, 46 surveys were disregarded due to the presence of missing data, and the remaining 254 surveys subsequently constituted the data of this study. Thus, an overall response rate of 84.6% was obtained.

Instruments

Having a mentor

Participants were asked to respond whether they currently had a mentor, coded No (1) and Yes (2) (Bozionelos & Wang, 2006). For this an established definition was provided to the participants as:

A mentor is generally defined as a higher ranking, influential individual in your work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and who is committed to provide upward mobility and support to your career. Your mentor
Mentoring relationships were measured in terms of two broader categories of career-related mentoring and psychosocial mentoring using Noe’s (1988) Mentoring Functions Scale that has been extensively used in past research studies (Brown, Zablah, & Bellenger, 2008). The items of the scale were modified in context to organizational settings.

Responses to psychosocial mentoring were captured using 14 items on a 5-point response format (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), for instance, “I agree with my mentor’s attitudes and values regarding my work,” and “My mentor has encouraged me to prepare for advancement.” The alpha reliability was found as .92.

Similarly, responses to career mentoring were captured using seven items on a 5-point response format (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), for instance, “My mentor reduced unnecessary risks that could threaten the possibility of me remaining in the organization or receiving a promotion,” and “My mentor gave me assignments or tasks that prepared me for a leadership role.” The alpha reliability was reported as .91.

Career resilience was assessed using four items as adopted from Career Commitment Measure (CCM) (Carson & Bedeian, 1994). Responses of the participants were recorded on a 5-point response format (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Sample items included, “The discomforts associated with my line of work/career field sometimes seem too great,” “My mentor helped me finish assignments/tasks or meet deadlines that otherwise would have been difficult to complete.” The alpha reliability was found as .71.

Conscientiousness personality disposition was assessed using 10 items of the Goldberg’s (1992) Big Five Markers, freely available to be used from International Personality Item Pool. Responses of the participants were recorded on a 5-point response format (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Sample items included, “I am always prepared,” and “I follow a schedule.” The alpha reliability was reported as .73.

Control variables controlled for demographic variables of age, gender, hierarchical level, educational level, and organization sector to control their probable effects on career resilience (dependent variable). Single items assessed age (in years) coded (21–25: 1, 26–30: 2, 31–35: 3, 36–40: 4, 41–45: 5, above 45 years: 6); gender coded as (1: male; 2: female); hierarchical level coded as (junior level: 1, middle level: 2 and senior level: 3); educational level coded (diploma holder: 1, graduates: 2, postgraduate: 3, higher than postgraduate: 4), and the organization sector coded as (1: public sector, 2: private sector).

**Result**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the constructs under study. The alpha reliability of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>−.253**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization sector</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>.220**</td>
<td>−.154*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>−.358**</td>
<td>.165**</td>
<td>−.146*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical level</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>.363**</td>
<td>−.074</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.975</td>
<td>.267**</td>
<td>−.079</td>
<td>.180**</td>
<td>−.080</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>[0.73]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial mentoring (PM)</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.990</td>
<td>.184**</td>
<td>−.144</td>
<td>.144*</td>
<td>−.080</td>
<td>−.021</td>
<td>.653**</td>
<td>[0.92]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career mentoring (CM)</td>
<td>−.011</td>
<td>.977</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>−.017</td>
<td>.143*</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.508**</td>
<td>.573**</td>
<td>[0.91]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career resilience (CR)</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>−.091</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.233**</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.148*</td>
<td>[0.71]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 254; Cronbach’s alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses.

*p < .05, **p < .01.
variables is shown diagonally in the correlation matrix and was found to be above .70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). In addition, test of dimensionality and common method bias assessment was also conducted as preliminary analyses as explained below:

**Analyses**

**Preliminary analyses**

**Test of dimensionality.** Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to confirm whether the four study variables (psychosocial mentoring, career mentoring, career resilience, and conscientiousness personality factor) represent four distinct constructs in the Indian context. As per recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), relative and absolute fit indices were taken into account to evaluate the model fit of the hypothesized model in comparison to alternative models: the one-factor model (with all the constructs combined as one), the two-factor model (career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring combined as one factor and career resilience and conscientiousness were combined to form second factor) and the three-factor model (two mentoring forms combined as one factor and career resilience and conscientiousness as two factors) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Usually, models with root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value below .06 and other fit indices with values above .90 are considered as good fitting models (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

**Common method bias assessment.** As the study was based on protégé’ self-reported data, we checked for the presence of common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) using Harman’s single-factor test. Further, following the procedural guideline of Podsakoff and Organ (1986), all the study variables were subjected to unrotated factor analysis. A single factor was obtained that explained only 15% of the variance. This confirmed that the CMB was not a major threat to this study.

**Analytical technique for moderation hypotheses testing**

For the testing of each of the moderation hypotheses, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, moderated hierarchical regression analyses were used in alignment with earlier studies on moderation (Dawley, Andrews, & Bucklew, 2010). Before proceeding to regression analysis, predictor variables and moderator variable were mean centered. Then we created interaction terms as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). Further, using Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach, sequential steps of moderated hierarchical regression analysis were followed in which control variables were entered in Step 1, main effects and moderator variable were entered in Step 2 and Step 3 of analysis respectively. And the last step was completed with the entry of the interaction term in Step 4 of analysis.
Results

Preliminary analysis results

CFA test depicted that the hypothesized four-factor model represented better fit with $\Delta \chi^2 = 838.989$ ($df = 535$), $p < .05$; the RMSEA = .04, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .96, the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) = .95, and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = .96. The hypothesized model thus, demonstrated the most acceptable fit in comparison to other alternative models (see Table 2). Hence, CFA approach confirmed the distinctiveness of the constructs undertaken. Furthermore, CMB assessment also depicted the emergence of a single factor that explained 10% of the variance only. This showed that CMB did not represent a major threat to our data.

Moderated hierarchical regression results

For the testing of Hypothesis 1, in the first step control variables were entered in block 1; then in the second step the main effect *psychosocial mentoring* (PM) was entered in block 2; in the third step moderator variable *conscientiousness* was entered in block 3, and in the fourth step, the interaction term (PM × Conscientiousness) was introduced to analyze the moderating effect of conscientiousness on career resilience (CR). As shown in Table 3, the interaction term (PM × Conscientiousness) was found to be significant predictors of career resilience ($\beta = .140$, $\Delta R^2 = .018$, $p < .05$). Further, using unstandardized regression coefficients, a plot was obtained for two levels of psychosocial mentoring (the main effect) at 1 SD below and 1 SD above the mean of conscientiousness (see Figure 1). From the Figure 1, it can be seen that the relationship between psychosocial mentoring and career resilience was stronger for the protégés who were high on conscientiousness than for those who scored low on this factor.

Likewise, for the testing of Hypothesis 2, in the first step we entered control variables in block 1. In the second step, CM as the main effect was entered in block 2. Then the moderator variable *conscientiousness* was entered in the third step in block 3. And the final step was completed with the entry of the interaction term (CM × Conscientiousness) in block 4 to be regressed against CR. As shown in Table 4, the interaction effect (CM × Conscientiousness)

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit indices of the models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$\Delta \chi^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta df$</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four-factor model$^a$</td>
<td>838.989</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-factor model</td>
<td>967.398</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>128.409</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.871</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-factor model</td>
<td>1010.27</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>171.281</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-factor model</td>
<td>1505.74</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>666.751</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; IFI = incremental fit index.

$^a$Hypothesized model.
Table 3. Moderating role of conscientiousness personality disposition on psychosocial mentoring–career resilience relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Career Resilience (CR) β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>−.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical level</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization sector</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>−.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM × Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.160*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. PM = Psychosocial mentoring. N = 254; tabled values are standardized beta weights. *p < .05, **p < .01.

Figure 1. Moderating effect of conscientiousness on Psychosocial Mentoring–Career Resilience (PM-CR) relationship.

Table 4. Moderating role of conscientiousness personality disposition on career mentoring–career resilience relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Career Resilience (CR) β</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>.077</td>
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<td>.041</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization sector</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>.235**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>−.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM × Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.140*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>.030</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. CM = career mentoring. N = 254; tabled values are standardized beta weights. *p < .05, **p < .01.
was found as significant predictors of CR ($\beta = .16$, $\Delta R^2 = .024$, $p < .05$) among Indian managers. Further, a plot was obtained using the unstandardized regression coefficients for two levels of career mentoring (the main effect) at 1 SD below and 1 SD above the mean of conscientiousness (see Figure 2). This further confirmed about the moderate influence of conscientiousness on CM and CR relationship.

**Discussion**

The focal point of the present research was to investigate the moderating role of conscientiousness on mentoring and career resilience relationship. Our research shows that conscientiousness moderates PM-CR as well as CM-CR linkage, with the relationship being stronger for managers with high levels of conscientiousness. This highlights that in the Indian business environment, managers who are reliable, hardworking, and self-disciplined are more likely to actively participate in mentoring programs to boost their career resilience (Bakker, Demerouti, & Ten Brummelhuis, 2012). On the other hand, less conscientious managers due to their tendency to direct their own behaviors may not show greater interest for active learning. Consequently, such people less likely reap the benefits of mentor’s support in strengthening their career resilience. These findings highlight that for nurturing a career-resilient workforce, it is important that managers’ personality profile is characterized by high levels of conscientiousness. Moreover, as conscientiousness fosters the right conditions for strengthening mentoring- career resilience relationships. Therefore, organizations should strategize sessions on personality awareness for senior and junior organizational members to guide them in learning about their key strengths and weakness to enhance their career resilience. Additionally, organizational psychologists may also deploy theme-wise psychological tests to enhance the interpersonal development of the protégés. Such type of psychological testing may also be introduced in the appraisal stage to help individuals identify their specific personality traits (Bozionelos & Bozionelos,
Further, initiatives should be taken by organizations to mandate the process of mentoring into the organizational system. In this regard, orientation and training should be provided to prospective mentors of the organization to make them aware about their appropriate roles and obligations. Besides this, the orientation of the young managers should also be conducted to prepare them for participating in workplace mentoring programs.

Additionally, the results of the study carry potential applicability for South-Asian countries like China, Malaysia, and Singapore that emphasize the core values of relationship building and respect for senior authority being high on the Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions of power distance and collectivism. Because mentoring as a phenomenal approach is directed by the way the individuals bring their values in fostering relationships; collectivist and harmony-based orientation of the individuals’ further guide them to be obedient and work in agreement with their mentors/superiors (Osula & Irvin, 2009). Contrary to this, we expect somewhat different findings in the context of the Western countries like the United States, Denmark, and New Zealand that stand low on power distance. Being low in power distance, people of these countries regard each other as equals and give lesser importance to organizational structures. Although protégés from these cultures are more likely to prefer loose supervision style; mentors may view their protégés as a potential threat due to less power disparity between both the members. Besides this, individualistic societies like the United States emphasize less on the long-term psychological contract, which also leads to fewer and short-term mentoring relationships (Garvey, Stokes, & Megginson, 2014; Osula & Irvin, 2009). This discussion guides us to conclude that though high power distance cultures advocate “dependence” in relationships; low-power distance cultures like the United States promote “interdependence.” Because the need of mentor’s support and direction is more strongly recognized by the South-Asian countries in contrast to the Western countries. An understanding of these cross-cultural differences become altogether more important especially when global corporations belonging to low power-distance and individualistic societies operate from their offices in high power-distance and collectivist nations. In this scenario, while mentors are expected to aid their protégés with nurturing support; protégés also have to comply with the directions provided by mentors to stay resilient in their line of work.

Limitations and future research directions

It should be noted that this study has some limitations. As this study utilized a cross-sectional survey-based design, therefore, caution must be taken while making any inferences about causality. Future studies are recommended using longitudinal research designs for studying the dynamics of interrelationships between personality factors and mentoring relationships. Next, this study
utilized heterogeneous samples; henceforth, our findings cannot be generalized to any specific industrial sector. Additional research is needed for sector-wise analysis to test for a similar kind of relationship. Another limitation arises due to the use of the mentoring scale that represents protégés own perceptions that might not be perceived correct (Welsh, Bhave, & Kim, 2012). Nevertheless, some of the studies support that protégés perceptions are more accurate than mentors’ perceptions specifically for psychosocial mentoring roles (Waters, McCabe, Kiellerup, & Kiellerup, 2002). Furthermore, even though CMB did not indicate any potential threat in this study, we encourage future studies to collect data from both parties of mentoring to minimize the probable occurrence of mono-source method variance. Lastly, our final recommendation for the academicians and scholars is to test the explored linkages in different contexts, varied backgrounds, varied occupational groups, and social communities given the fact that though mentoring appears to be a social exchange phenomenon similar for all cultures, however, the way it is perceived for career outcomes like career resilience is likely to differ across cultures (Bozionelos & Wang, 2006).

Conclusion

There has been a scarcity of scholarly work on the role of personality and mentoring in governing career resilience of the individuals. The current study is, thus, unique to discuss the key role of conscientiousness in linking mentoring and career resilience. We specifically chose conscientiousness because firstly it serves as a potential psychological resource in individuals, and secondly, because of its key facets that govern ambitious tendencies among individuals. Our results show that in the Indian context, conscientiousness moderates the relationship between mentoring relationships (psychosocial and career mentoring) and career resilience, with relationships being stronger among managers with high levels of conscientiousness in contrast to managers with low scores on conscientiousness. This highlights that how important it is for protégés to be highly conscientious to reap the true benefits of mentorship support for enhancing their career resilience. Further, our study findings also give a strong message to mentors for encouraging their protégés in goal setting as well as in staying persistent during the adverse times. Additionally, mentors should guide their protégés to be thoughtful, organized, and control their impulses in the face of challenges. Even for those managers who are low on conscientiousness, organizations should establish such policy guidelines that stimulate employees to plan and communicate their target plans well advanced in time. Such guidelines could also be mandated by linking individual goal-setting activity with the appraisal system of the organizations. The organizations could also benefit through conducting professional development workshops to help employees in setting their minds to be conscientious.
For example, employees may be guided to stay focused on being organized and punctual by setting reminders and engaging in daily planning activities. Such type of interventions when facilitated with the support of mentors not only equips opportunities to protégés to work upon themselves but also fosters their career development.

Acknowledgement

The authors thank the editors and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments that significantly improved this article.

References


