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Goal-Setting in the Career Management Process: An Identity Theory Perspective

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A common and important feature within models of career management is the career goal, yet relatively little is known about the factors influencing career goals and when and how career goal setting occurs. Drawing from Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions we propose and test a model wherein mentoring experiences of early career professionals relate to short- and long-term career goals through professional identification. Using survey data collected at three points in time from 312 early career professionals, we find that psychosocial mentoring, but not career mentoring, positively relates to professional identification. For short-term goal outcomes, professional identification positively relates to extrinsic goals, intrinsic goals, and goals that are high quality (i.e., specific, difficult, to which one is committed). For long-term goal outcomes, professional identification positively relates to extrinsic and intrinsic goals, but not to goal quality. Instead, in the long-term goal model, psychosocial mentoring is directly related to goal quality. The theoretical and practical implications of this study for professional identification, career goals, and how mentors can facilitate career goals are discussed.

Keywords: careers, goal-setting, mentoring, professional identification

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Employees are more actively involved in and responsible for the management of their careers now than they have been in the past. According to the boundaryless and protean careers perspectives, the responsibility for charting and navigating one's career is placed firmly in the hands of the individual as opposed to his or her employing organization (e.g., Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). Individual career planning and management processes are outlined in various career management models including the widely cited frameworks of Greenhaus (1987); London (1983), and Gould (1979). A common and important feature within each model is the *career goal*, defined as any desired career outcome, such as promotion, salary increase, or skill acquisition which individuals wish to attain (Greenhaus, 1987; Seibert, Kraimer, Holtom, & Pierotti, 2013). Specifically, in Greenhaus's (1987) model of career management, goal setting facilitates the development and implementation of a career strategy, which produces progress toward stated goals. In London's (1983) theory of career motivation, career insight is defined as the clarity of an individual's career goals, and setting and trying to accomplish career goals is part of career motivation. Finally, Gould's (1979) model of career planning suggests that planning career goals leads to enactment and attainment of career goals.

However, as Greenhaus, Callanan, and Godshalk (2010) note "although many writers on career management discuss the virtues of goal setting, there is little research in the area of career goals" (p. 54). That is, within the various career management models and related research, most work begins with the assumption individuals already have career goals—the literature then focuses on career strategies to achieve said goals. In the few studies that have examined individual or personal career goals, they are positioned as antecedents of work attitudes such as job satisfaction and well-being (e.g., Brunstein, 1993; Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grässmann, 1998; Maier & Brunstein, 2001; Roberson, 1989, 1990), or career goals are addressed in a tangential fashion (e.g., assessing distance from career goals, goal importance, goal progress; Abele & Spurk, 2009; Dik, Sargent, & Steger, 2008; Maier & Brunstein, 2001; Noe, 1996; Noe, Noe, & Bachhuber, 1990). Overall, research and theory have not addressed factors influencing the *creation* of career goals and when and how career goal setting occurs (Seo, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004).

It is important to understand the factors that influence career goals for three main reasons. First, in the era of the boundaryless or protean careers, employees cannot count on organizationally imposed career goals to manage their careers, so understanding factors that influence goal setting and the content of career goals

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can provide insight into themes within this new career management process. In particular, understanding the content of career goals offers a unique lens into how individuals conceptualize their future work selves (e.g., Markus, 1983; Markus & Nurius, 1986) and subsequently manage their careers. Second, because career management models assume that career goals, like other work goals, will direct an individual's attention, time, and energy, career goals provide a crucial organizing standard that guide career-related decisions by motivating or limiting choices about how to achieve desired career outcomes (King, 2004). For example, goals can determine an employee's search for feedback and information seeking as different types of goals change the kind of information in the environment that the individual perceives and attends to (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Therefore, understanding the creation and content of career goals can provide important information for those early in their careers in establishing a career trajectory. Third, goals and goal attainment are important characteristics in theories of job-related attitudes; goals are expected to positively relate to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational identification to the extent that the job promotes the attainment of valued goals (Allen & Meyer, 1997; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Locke, 1976; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Thus, information about the formation and content of individual goals can be valuable in managing job-related affect. In sum, without knowing the factors that may influence an individual's career goals, our understanding of the outcomes of those goals on the career management process is incomplete.

The present study uses an identity theory lens to examine the creation of personal, career related goals in early career professionals. Based on self-verification theory and Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions (reviewed below), we examine a mediated model in which mentoring experiences relate to different types of career goals, through professional identification. Based on the findings from a qualitative pilot study, we examine career goals in terms of goal content, either intrinsic or extrinsic, and goal quality, the extent to which one's goal is difficult and specific and one is committed to it. We test the mediated model using a sample of graduate students preparing for professional careers.

This study contributes to the literature on identity formation and career management by examining the development of professional identification and career goals during the role transition process. Understanding how identification relates to the career goals early career professionals set for themselves can be used as a basis for understanding career aspirations and trajectories for professional workers. This study also contributes to goal setting theory by examining the content and characteristics of goals in the career context. Career goal setting is often done absent formal goal setting mechanisms, and this context has received sparse attention in the both goal setting and careers literatures. We expand this research by assessing both the content and quality of personal career goals. A final contribution of the study is to the mentoring and developmental relationships literature. Responding to calls to explicitly define when and why mentoring is associated with particular facets of socialization (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017), we recognize that career mentoring is similar to serial tactics and psychosocial mentoring is similar to investiture tactics. We also identify a possible explanation, specific content and quality of career goals, for why mentoring positively relates to protégée career outcomes.

An Identity Theory Perspective of Career Goals

From the perspective of boundaryless (e.g., Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and protean (e.g., Mirvis & Hall, 1996) careers, employees, rather than the organization, are responsible for charting their own career trajectories. However, the possible trajectories for individuals' careers are practically unlimited, with no single template setting the standard for a particular career path. In place of an organization providing some type of structure for career advancement, workers, instead, may rely on identification with career-related groups to help define and create career goals within the career management process. Identification with a relevant group can replace institutionalized career structures and provide a compass for an individual beyond the walls of an employing organization (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004).

One theoretical perspective that is particularly relevant to understanding how professionals develop career goals is Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions and related identification process. Ashforth's (2001) model incorporates ideas from both social identification theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and identity theory (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Based on identity theory, he defines *role identities* as socially constructed definitions of who a role occupant is; such role identities have the purpose of anchoring self-conceptions in social domains. Drawing from social identification theory, Ashforth (2001) then defines *role identification* as a specific form of social identification which occurs if and when an individual comes to define him/herself in terms of the role identity. The higher the level of role identification, the more likely that one will internalize the role identity as a partial definition of self, and the more likely one will be to faithfully enact that identity (Ashforth, 2001). Both of these identity processes are relevant to goal setting because enacting the role identity can be done by participating in behavior that "reflects a meld of institutionalized expectations and idiosyncratic refinements" (Ashforth, 2001; p. 222). One way to enact an identity, then, is to set personal goals that are informed by and consistent with others in the referent group.

In the current study, we examine the role of mentors from the referent group (i.e., the profession) and identification with that group (i.e., professional identification) to career goal-setting among early career professionals. Professional identification refers to the extent that a professional employee experiences a perceived oneness or bond with his or her profession (Hekman, Bigley, Steensma, & Hereford, 2009a). Professional workers, such as nurses, doctors, lawyers, and academics, are an ideal population to study because they are defined less by where they work and more by what they do (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). The career goals of professionals tend to be based on personal expectations and examination of what is of fundamental import in one's life, such as professional norms and values, rather than organizationally assigned initiatives (Seo et al., 2004). Further, Cantor and Zirkel (1990) stated that individuals devote considerable energy to the creation of meaningful goals mostly during transitional stages of life. For professionals, graduate school is a key transitional stage into professional life because it provides systematic training and socialization into that role (Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Baker & Pifer, 2011; Howskins & Ewens, 1999; Price, 2009). This

presents a unique application of Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions as it relates to professional identification and career goal setting as the first stage of the career management process.

In Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions, he expands on the importance of transitional phases in goal setting by describing the transition process as the assimilation of professional goals and individual goals. During this transitional stage, mentors are likely to play a key role in the development of professional identification and possible career goals. This is because receipt of mentoring may help newcomers satisfy two key psychological motives. Specifically, Ashforth (2001) proposes that role entry arouses psychological motives, including the need for *control* and the need for *belonging*, which a newcomer will seek to fulfill in the context of the role. The need for control is defined as a need to "master and to exercise influence over subjectively important domains" (Ashforth, 2001, p. 67) and is associated with behaviors such as information seeking, feedback seeking, proactive behavior, and self-management. The need for belonging is the desire for attachment with others or a sense of belonging with a larger group and leads members to assume they share certain goals, values, and commitment to the collective.[1] According to Ashforth (2001), the more that those two motives are met, the more likely a newcomer is to internalize the role, and the greater the identification with the role. In turn, identification leads the newcomer to faithfully enact the role identity, which results, in the current model, in establishing identity related goals. We test these core propositions from Ashforth's (2001) role transitions theory by testing a model in which career and psychosocial mentoring are hypothesized to be positively related to professional identification, which, in turn is related to the content (extrinsic and intrinsic) and quality (goal difficulty, specificity, and commitment) of personal career goals among graduate school students (see Figure 1).

Mentoring and Professional Identification

Mentoring has a variety of different connotations, sometimes referring to dyadic relationships, or the "classic" mentor relationship between senior (mentor) and junior (protégé) colleagues (e.g., Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Mitchell, Eby, & Ragins, 2015), and at other times referring to a web of developmental work relationships including informal mentors, role models, and coaches (e.g., Kram, 1988; Kram & Isabella, 1985). In the current study, we allow for multiple mentors, thus, our definition of mentoring is consistent with the broader web of developmental relationships, which Kram (1988) describes as "the range of possible adult working relationships that can provide developmental functions for career development" (p. 4). It has long been recognized that organizational insiders, or mentors, are an important aspect of the newcomer socialization process (e.g., Austin, 2002; Bauer & Green, 1998; Ellis, Nifadkar, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2017; Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Socialization dynamics include multiple processes that define how individuals learn the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume a particular role such as orientation, training, apprenticeship programs, mentoring, and general on-the-job learning (Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) argue that organizations implement a variety of bipoloar tactics to integrate new employees. We specifically integrate the two tactics of serial and investiture socialization into our discussion of mentoring because they concern the social or interpersonal aspects of the socialization process (Jones, 1986) and thus are most relevant to the role of mentors. Below we explain how serial socialization relates to Ashforth's (2001) motive for control while investiture socialization relates to Ashforth's (2001) motive for belonging.

First, the serial (vs. disjunctive) tactic involves learning the new job from a role model such as a mentor, supervisor, or more experienced peer (vs. having no prior role incumbents to learn from). Serial modes of socialization provide newcomers with built-in guidelines to organize and make sense of their organizational situation (Van Maanen, 1978). As such, the serial tactic corresponds to Ashforth's (2001) motive for control for new role entrants in that serial socialization by mentors helps early career professionals master and exercise influence over their new roles. Second, the investiture (vs. divestiture) tactic is the degree to which newcomers receive positive (vs. negative) social support from experienced members. Positive support affirms a newcomer's identity, capabilities, and attributes and results in more concrete role orientations (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and perceptions of fit (e.g., Cable & Parsons, 2001). This socialization tactic corresponds to Ashforth's (2001) motive for belonging in that investiture socialization by mentors provides positive social support, friendship, and opportunities to build significant interpersonal relationships in their new roles. In sum, through serial and investiture tactics, experienced members of the profession (i.e., mentors) may facilitate early career professionals' adjustment by giving the newcomers needed advice and instructing them in how to do their new jobs and by making them feel like they belong in the profession (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

Relatedly, Kram (1985) outlined two primary mentor functions provided by developmental relationships—career development support and psychosocial support—both of which can contribute to an individual's growth and advancement (Kram, 1988). Both career and psychosocial mentoring have been positively associated with important career outcomes such as promotions (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999), income (Dreher & Ash, 1990), intrinsic job satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992), and career commitment (Allen et al., 2004). We propose that both career and psychosocial mentoring received in developmental relationships will relate to graduate students' professional identification.

Career mentoring. Career development support, or career mentoring, enhances protégé advancement in an organization or in their career and includes functions such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and providing challenging assignments. This type of mentoring is representative of a serial socialization tactic wherein mentors, acting as experienced members of the profession, provide newcomers with clear guidelines and structure that helps them to organize and make sense of their

[1] Ashforth (2001) notes that the need for control is conceptually similar to the need for autonomy (McClelland, 1985) and the need for belonging is similar to the need for affiliation (McClelland, 1985). However, McClelland's needs are most often characterized as individual differences—individuals have consistently high or low desires for each—whereas Ashforth's (2001) psychological motives for control and belonging are variable and role specific, therefore warranting different terminology to distinguish the motives from the individual differences.

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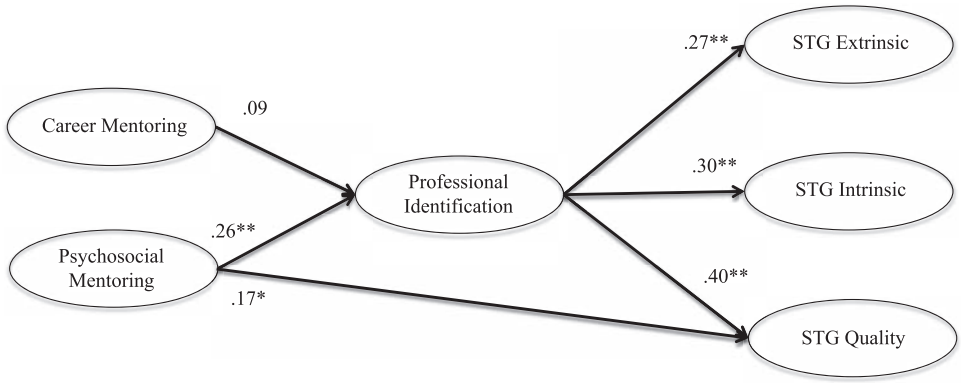


Figure 1. Partially mediated model of mentoring to short-term career goals through professional identification. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

new role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In addition, Kram (1985) described helping the protégé develop a sense of professional competence and achieving long-term career goals as a primary career mentor function.

Identity in a new role is often tied to concerns about competence (Kram, 1985). Ashforth (2001) proposes that one of the psychological needs that newcomers seek to satisfy when entering a new role is a need for control. As mentioned previously, the need for control is defined as a need for agency and mastery in one's role and includes concepts related to competence, autonomy, self-determination, and power. The premise of this motive is that when one has control over one's role, this creates a sense of involvement and responsibility and allows one to more fully internalize the new role identity. Ashforth (2001) notes that this motive answers the question of "how"—how do I enact the new role?

Efforts to clarify one's identity in terms of how to perform competently are facilitated by career mentoring. Newcomers to a role fulfill the need for control by obtaining information and feedback about role requisite knowledge, expectations, and values from more experienced members. In the process of mastering the role (i.e., feeling control), the newcomer learns and develops skills and knowledge on how to behave in role-appropriate ways. Career mentoring exemplifies control in that an experienced colleague, through coaching, is providing information, feedback, and support to help the newcomer better understand the values, expectations, and appropriate behaviors of the graduate program and profession more broadly. Through exposure to challenging assignments, career mentoring provides a newcomer with experiences that help him or her develop professional knowledge and skills (i.e., increase professional competencies). Satisfying this control motive is also consistent with themes from social identification theory as a mentor can help a newcomer shape him or herself in ways consistent with in-group classification (Tajfel, 1978). A sense of control over a role identity engendered by coaching from a mentor enables one to own the identity and to more fully adopt it as an authentic expression of the self. As such, fulfilling this motive answers the question of "how" the newcomer can engage with the new role and experience the power and success of one's mentors as one's own.

Hypothesis 1: Career mentoring positively predicts professional identification.

Psychosocial mentoring. Psychosocial mentoring addresses interpersonal aspects of the relationship between mentor and protégé and includes functions such as serving as a role model and providing counseling, friendship, and advice (Kram, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring is consistent with investiture socialization tactics wherein experienced organizational members act as role models for new recruits and provide positive social support (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Whereas career mentoring is expected to fulfill motives for control, psychosocial mentoring is expected to fulfill motives for belonging. The motive for belonging is defined broadly as a desire for attachment with others in a new role as well as the desire to be a part of a community that shares common interests (Ashforth, 2001; Bowlby, 1988; Brewer, 1993). This motive answers the question of "who"—who shares this identity with me?

When transitioning into a new role, the belonging motive is tied to positive value judgments about one's self relative to a target social group. Drawing from sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), Ashforth (2001) proposes that social inclusion and a sense of belonging enhance self-esteem, leading to identity construction consistent with the referent group (e.g., Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). This corresponds with social identity theory wherein perceived group membership arises out of a social comparison process where individuals differentiate between in-group members similar to the self and out-group members who are different from the self as a way to enhance self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring is expected to positively relate to professional identification because psychosocial mentoring fosters attachment, or belonging, with senior colleagues in the profession, which develops the newcomer's self-concept (Kram, 1985). Psychosocial mentoring can build self-esteem and interpersonal belonging in several ways. Through serving as a role model, the mentor sets a desirable example that the newcomer identifies with as representative of the profession. Accompanied with acceptance and confirmation from the mentor, the newcomer sees an idealized self in the mentor that allows one to have a positive appraisal of one's own value and viability as a member of the group to which one aspires to belong. The more psychosocial mentoring one receives (i.e., acceptance and confirmation, friendship, and counseling), the more likely that individual will understand and feel similar to others in the profession, which

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increases feelings of self-esteem and in-group belonging. As such, fulfilling the belonging motive answers the question of "who" the newcomer shares an identity with and represents a positive evaluation of the future self (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Therefore, higher levels of psychosocial mentoring will relate to higher levels of professional identification.

Hypothesis 2: Psychosocial mentoring positively predicts professional identification.

Professional Identification and Career Goals

For goal outcome variables, we focus on goal content (i.e., extrinsic and intrinsic) and goal quality based on the findings from the pilot study (available as an online supplemental materials) and as a reflection of social identification theory and the broader goal setting literature. We also further differentiate between short- and long-term goals based on goal setting theory. Latham and Seijts (1999) along with Bandura and Schunk (1981) argue that a key motivational component in goal setting relies on setting both short-term (i.e., proximal) and long-term (i.e., distal) goals. Short-term goals, sometimes referred to as subgoals, allow individuals to reframe complex long-term goals into smaller, more attainable steps that increase the chance for feedback and strategy adjustment in pursuit of long-term goals (Latham & Seijts, 1999; Seijts & Latham, 2001). Research shows that when learning and motivation, as opposed to just motivation, are required for goal attainment, then both short- and long-term goals are necessary for goal attainment (Bandura & Simon, 1977; Morgan, 1985; Stock & Cervone, 1990). Although we believe that both short- and long-term goals are important outcomes of the mentoring process, there is no theoretical rationale supporting differential relationships between professional identification and short- versus long-term goals. Therefore, although we test the proposed model separately for short- and long-term goals, we develop our hypotheses referring simply to "goals."

Goal content can be broadly categorized into extrinsic/intrinsic categories (Deci & Ryan, 2000). *Extrinsic goals* are defined as the extent to which the individual's career goals include "extrinsically motivating attributes such as visible success, status and influence within the organization or society, and high financial rewards" (Seibert et al., 2013, p. 171). Extrinsic goals have an outward orientation (Williams, Hedberg, Cox, & Deci, 2000) that reveal a concern with external signs of self-worth and interpersonal comparison with others (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). *Intrinsic goals* are defined as goals that include intrinsically motivating features such as "continually gaining new skills and knowledge, having interesting and challenging work, and having the opportunity to do work that impacts society" (Seibert et al., 2013, p. 171). Intrinsic goals are consistent with actualizing and growth tendencies and are expected to satisfy basic and inherent psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and growth (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Such goals are expected to be inherently satisfying or valuable to an individual and are not reliant on the contingent evaluation of others (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

Importantly, Deci and Ryan (2000) note that the content (extrinsic vs. intrinsic) of goals is distinct from the motives for goals, which are related to the reasons *why* people are pursuing the particular goal. The authors argue that motivations for pursuing a goal can range from being self-determined with little to no external pressure, to completely controlled by external pressures. Further, intrinsic or extrinsic goal content is not necessarily related to a particular goal motive (self-determined vs. controlled). For example, it is possible that early career academics may set an extrinsic goal to get a job at a prestigious university because they personally value the resources and opportunities associated with prestigious universities (self-determined motive) or because they feel pressure from graduate advisors to pursue a research career at a prestigious university (controlled motive). Consistent with previous work (e.g., Seibert et al., 2013), we focus only on the content of the goal itself, rather than the potential motivation behind the goal, treating intrinsic and extrinsic career goals as distinct, theoretically orthogonal constructs.

Goal content-extrinsic. The content of extrinsic goals includes status and financial outcomes, those that primarily entail social recognition or approval of others or material rewards (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Seibert et al., 2013). The high public status of the professions is unquestioned in nearly all data on occupational prestige (Abbott, 1981, 2014; Featherman & Hauser, 1976; Nakao & Treas, 1994). The main argument is that wealth and status are universally and highly valued in any society, so powerful occupations are highly regarded by all individuals (Treiman, 2013). Studies have found that business and law students identified with their chosen profession because the profession represented the ability to have the salary and lifestyle associated with higher earnings (Schleef, 2000). Other studies have shown that students entering business and law professions identified with their chosen occupation, not because they had high perceived self-aptitude, but because the profession represented the ability to have the prestige (Azizzadeh et al., 2003; Schleef, 2000) and social status (Granfield, 1992) associated with the profession. Thus, external markers such as income and status are a crucial basis for authenticating professional membership.

Self-verification theory can explain why those who identify more with the profession are more likely to set goals with extrinsic content. According to self-verification theory, people desire verification of their core self-views (Swann, 1983; Swann & Read, 1981). Motivated by desires for consistency and stability, individuals strive to maintain consistent self-views and chronically reinforce them through a variety of social processes. Specifically, individuals prefer others to see them as they see themselves (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992) and seek out interactions with others that reinforce their self-concept. The extent to which people see professional identity as a significant part of their self-conception is reflected by how much they identify with the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). If early career professionals have high levels of identification with the profession, they regard this profession-based self-view as an indispensable part of their self. To verify their self-view as professional group members, early career professionals may set extrinsic goals consistent with characteristics of the profession, such as extrinsic signs of status and wealth. External goals represent "identity cues" that are highly identifiable signs and symbols of the profession (e.g., Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). By setting goals that represent acquisition of signs and symbols of who they are as professional members, extrinsic goals allow early career professionals to verify their own sense of self.

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Hypothesis 3: Professional identification positively predicts extrinsic goals.

Goal content-intrinsic. Individuals with intrinsic career goals seek opportunities to learn and grow, they aspire to gain knowledge through challenging work. Kasser and Ryan (1996) conclude that a defining characteristic of intrinsic goals is that they are inherently valuable or satisfying, rather than being dependent on the contingent evaluations of others.

Many professions have stated purposes that align with intrinsic ideals. For example, medical schools emphasize the importance of helping those in need, business schools emphasize the goal of improving workers' lives and the economy, and education schools emphasize the goal of improving society. These ideals are widely endorsed by society and likely play some role for professionals in entering their chosen programs. Studies of law students indicate that some students enter law school for altruistic reasons, such as wanting to help people and improve society through social justice (Granfield, 1992; Schleef, 2000). Further, most professional fields offer intellectually stimulating work based on years of advanced education, suggesting that professionals find some degree of challenging work personally fulfilling. Even if professional students do not have intrinsic motivations prior to entering the profession, to the extent that they internalize professional standards and norms through identification with the role, they will develop intrinsic goals that reflect professional standards of conduct as part of the self-verification process. Through adopting the perspective that altruistic and intrinsic goals are important for professionals, early career professionals are able to see themselves as others see them (Swann, 1983). High levels of professional identification will then positively relate to individual intrinsic goals because the professional role presents an opportunity to do meaningful and challenging work that also has the potential to have a positive impact on others.

Hypothesis 4: Professional identification positively predicts intrinsic goals.

Goal quality. Goal quality is represented by goals that align with the primary tenets of goal setting theory, that is, career goals that are difficult, specific, and to which individuals are committed. Specific and difficult goals and goal commitment are the primary features of effective goals within goal setting theory; such goals are better at directing energy and attention necessary for goal attainment (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). Early career professionals who identify with the profession are likely to set high quality goals as part of the self-verification process which, at its core, is based on uncertainty reduction. Individuals like to feel that their social world is "knowable and controllable" (Swann, 1983, p. 34) and are motivated to see to it that neither their self-conceptions nor the appraisals of others in relation to their self change in any drastic way. When early career professionals identify with the profession, they are likely to have a clear idea of what constitutes success for professional members and are likely to model their career goals after clear indications of success as a way to verify their status as a professional member. High quality goals are clear and specific and thus reduce uncertainty associated with variation in self-concepts related to the professional identity.

In terms of goal difficulty, individuals high in professional identification should set goals that reflect the high standards that are prototypical of professional communities, thus those goals are likely to be difficult to attain. Difficult goals are also those which may be most visible to others (e.g., publications in high status journal) and, as such, have the potential to act as identity cues which can communicate the identity to others and support self-verification processes. Finally, goal commitment is created because social identification theory suggests that if one identifies with the profession then he or she will be more committed to actions that maintain belonging to the group and verify identity as a group member. As a result, high levels of professional identification should lead to commitment to goals shaped by the profession.

Hypothesis 5: Professional identification positively predicts goal quality.

Both career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring are expected to be positively related to extrinsic and intrinsic goal content and goal quality through professional identification. Professional identification is a key mediating variable between mentoring and career goals because it reflects the degree to which the professional role is subjectively important to role occupants (Ashforth, 2001) and reflects views that a primary mentor function is to help the protégé develop a sense of professional competence and achieve career goals (Kram, 1985). Mentoring experiences provide the foundation for professional expectations (e.g., goals; Noe et al., 1990), but the extent to which those expectations are translated into personal goals depends on whether professional standards are internalized through professional identification. In other words, the more one internalizes mentoring ideals through professional identification, the more likely he or she is to have intrinsic and extrinsic goals (consistent with professional standards) and goals of high quality. Goals are the future enactment of professional identities (Ashforth, 2001) developed from mentoring experiences (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001).

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between (a) career mentoring and (b) psychosocial mentoring and goal outcomes (i.e., intrinsic goals, extrinsic goals, goal quality) is mediated by professional identification.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Survey data was collected from graduate students in professional programs in the United States as recorded in the University of Iowa's IRB# 201507760: Career Goals and Professional Identification: Goal Setting in the Role Transition Process. Schools were contacted based on their conference division in order to target universities with large and diverse graduate programs; universities from the Big 10, Big 12, Pac 12, and SEC were included in our initial contact efforts. Links to the online survey were distributed through e-mail. There were three surveys in total, each separated by approximately 4 weeks. The purpose of collecting data over three surveys was to reduce systematic errors related to common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Invitations to complete the first online survey were distributed in two ways. First, we identified graduate program coordinators from university websites and emailed asking them to forward

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the link to the first online survey to their graduate students. In total, we e-mailed 388 graduate coordinators. Second, when e-mail addresses for students were available on university websites, we e-mailed the students directly with a link to the first online survey; we directly e-mailed 3,635 students.

Survey 1 contained measures for career and psychosocial mentoring, potential control variables, and demographics. Survey 2, sent 4 weeks later, contained measures of professional identification, open-ended questions for short-term goals and scale items for short-term goal content (i.e., extrinsic and intrinsic) and goal quality (i.e., specific, difficult, commitment). Short-term goals were defined as "occupational goals that you hope to achieve soon after graduation." Survey 3, sent another 4 weeks later, contained open-ended questions for long-term goals and scale items for long-term goal content (i.e., extrinsic and status) and goal quality (i.e., specific, difficult, commitment). Long-term goals were defined as "occupational goals that you hope to achieve one day in your career."

In total, 704 graduate students responded to Survey 1; however, a significant number only filled out part of the survey. After eliminating respondents who did not provide an e-mail address (which was necessary to send the follow-up surveys) and those with missing data on a majority of study variables, the final sample size was 480 respondents to Survey 1. Because graduate coordinators forwarded the survey link to an unknown number of graduate students, it is not possible to calculate a response rate. Invitations to complete the second and third surveys were distributed directly to the 480 graduate students who responded to Survey 1. In total, 343 students responded to Survey 2 (71.4% response rate of Survey 1 respondents) and 331 students responded to Survey 3 (68.9% response rate of Survey 1 respondents). After removing participants with missing data on focal variables, the final sample size was 312 for testing the model using short-term goals (short-term goal [STG] model) and 243 for testing the model using long-term goals (long-term goal [LTG] model).

Respondents were enrolled in programs from 28 different universities. Approximately one quarter (23.6%) of respondents were enrolled in Master's programs (e.g., MA, MS, MLS), while the remaining three quarters (76.4%) of respondents were enrolled in PhD programs or equivalent (e.g., PhD, Ed.S, MD/PhD). The respondents represented a large variety of program fields: The 17 fields were subsequently categorized into "hard" and "social" sciences. Hard sciences included about half of respondents (53.2%) from the following fields: engineering/computer science, health/medicine, biological and physical sciences, agricultural or animal sciences, architecture, mathematics, chemistry, and astronomy. Social sciences (46.8%) included respondents from the following fields: arts/humanities, business, communication, education, government, law/public policy/criminal justice, psychology/social science, and library science. Programs ranged from 1 to 8 years, the mean program length was 4.45 years. Respondents had been enrolled in their programs from .23 to 8 years and the mean time in the program was 2.08 years.[2] A majority of respondents (86.7%) were on track to finish on time. Students had a variety of financial support including teaching assistantships (49.5%), research assistantships (53.8%), and/or grants (19.8%).

The age of respondents ranged from 21 to 63 years, with a mean age of 28.14 years; 54.6% of respondents were female; 6.4% indicated they were of Hispanic origin. A majority of the sample was Caucasian (75.2%), and the remaining respondents identified as Asian (16.2%), African American (2.9%), Indian (2.4%), and other (3.3%). About one quarter (24.6%) of respondents were international students. Approximately half of the respondents were married or living with a committed partner (57%) and the majority did not have children (88.9%).

Measures

All measures were self-reported and items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) unless otherwise noted.

Mentoring. Both career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring scales were from the shortened version of Dreher and Ash (1990) reported in Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, and Bravo (2011) and contained four items each. Responses range from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*to a very large extent*). Example items for career mentoring ask to what extent faculty advisor(s) have "given or recommended you for challenging assignments that present opportunities to learn new skills" and "given or recommended you for assignments that helped you meet new colleagues." Items were averaged to create a single scale score ($\alpha = .90$). Examples of psychosocial support include items such as the extent to which advisor(s) have "conveyed empathy for the concerns and feelings you have discussed with him/her" and "encouraged you to talk openly about anxiety, fears, or concerns you have that may detract from your work." Items were averaged to create a single scale score ($\alpha = .89$).

Professional identification. Professional identification was measured using five items from Hekman et al. (2009). Example items are "In general, when someone praises my profession, it feels like a personal compliment" and "My field's successes are my successes." Items were averaged to create a single scale score ($\alpha = .74$).

Goal content. The extrinsic content of goals was assessed with eight items: five scale items from Seibert et al. (2013) edited to fit the academic context (e.g., replacing "company" with "field") and three additional items. Example items from Seibert et al. (2013) are "It is important to me to achieve financial success in my career" and "It is important for me to be seen by others as a success in my career." The three additional items were: "A high income is one of my career goals"; "One's success in this career can be judged by the amount of money one makes"; and "Rank and status are important to me in my career."

Intrinsic goals were measured with seven items: five scale items from Seibert et al. (2013) and two additional items. Example items from Seibert et al. (2013) are "I want to have a positive impact on other people or social problems through my work" and "It is important for me to continue to learn and grow over the course of my career." The two additional items were "I want to do work that is important and meaningful" and "I want to have a positive impact on organizations and society through my work." Extrinsic and intrinsic goals were measured twice, once with respect to short-

[2] As a robustness check for potential outliers in the sample, we also ran our analyses removing six respondents who had been in their programs 6 or more years and indicated they were not on track to finish on time. The analyses with this reduced sample did not substantively change results of the hypothesis testing, thus, we retained all respondents in the analyses.

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term goals in Survey 2 and once for long-term goals in Survey 3. Instructions on the respective surveys asked respondents to think about their short- or long-term goals and asked them to rate the extent they agreed with the items with reference to their goals. Items were averaged to create a single scale score for short-term extrinsic (α = .82), short-term intrinsic (α = .78), long-term extrinsic (α = .81), and long-term intrinsic (α = .84) goals.

Goal quality. On Survey 2, respondents were asked to generate short-term goals. These goals were explained as goals that one hoped to achieve soon after graduation, such as getting a particular type of job or getting a job at a particular university/institution. On Survey 3, respondents were asked to generate long-term goals. These goals were explained as occupational goals that one hopes to achieve someday in his or her career, or goals representing more distant occupational aspirations. We asked respondents to list two short-term goals (Survey 2) and two long-term goals (Survey 3), as this was the average of the open-ended request for self-reported goals from the Pilot Study (included as an online supplement). Across the respondents, a total of 626 short-term goals and 519 long-term goals were reported.

After each open-ended goal, respondents replied to statements related to goal difficulty, goal specificity, and goal commitment. *Goal difficulty* was measured with two items from Steers (1976). The items were "This goal will require a great deal of effort from me to complete" and "This goal is quite difficult to attain." *Goal specificity* was measured with two questions from Steers (1976); the two items were "This goal is very clear and specific" and "I have a clear sense of how to achieve this career goal." *Goal commitment* was measured using two items from Hollenbeck, Klein, O'Leary, and Wright (1989): "I am strongly committed to pursuing this goal" and "It would take a lot to make me abandon this goal."

Before creating scale scores for goal quality, two raters independently coded all self-reported short- and long-term goal statements in terms of professional relevance (1 = relevant; 0 = not relevant). The two raters had a moderate level of agreement based on guidelines from Altman (1999) and adapted from Landis and Koch (1977), Cohen's κ = .58; any disagreements were resolved through discussion. The purpose of this coding was to remove any goals that were not professionally relevant when creating the goal quality score. Of the short-term goals, 38 were deemed not relevant (e.g., "To get a great job in Seattle, Washington"); of the long-term goals, 20 were deemed not relevant (e.g., "I want to own and operate my own airplane by age 40"). The dummy code for the relevancy of the goal (1 or 0) was then multiplied by the average of the goal difficulty, specificity, and commitment items for each goal and all 0 values were subsequently marked as missing data in the analysis. In this way, the score for goal quality excludes goals that were not professionally relevant.

The relationship between the higher order goal quality construct and the three first-order dimensions was assessed with a second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A model was specified in which first-order factors for difficulty, specificity, and commitment was predicted by a higher-order goal quality construct; because each first-order factor related to two distinct goals, errors were correlated between items assessing the same goal. The STG model demonstrated moderately good fit (χ^2 = 190.56; RMSEA = .10; CFI = .86; SRMR = .07) and each factor loaded onto the hypothesized goal quality variable ($\gamma_{\text{difficulty}}$ = .86, p = .00; $\gamma_{\text{specificity}}$ = .79, p = .00; $\gamma_{\text{commitment}}$ = .94, p = .00). The fit of the second-order model exhibited significantly better fit than a single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 10.84, Δdf = 3, $p < .05$). Credé and Harms (2015) recommend providing the average variance extracted (AVE) which summarizes the ability of the higher-order factor to account for variance in the lower-order factors; the AVE for the STG model was .75, which surpasses the recommended value of .50 (Credé & Harms, 2015; Johnson, Rosen, Chang, Djurdevic, & Taing, 2012; Johnson, Rosen, & Djurdjevic, 2011). The LTG model demonstrated good fit (χ^2 = 126.62; RMSEA = .09; CFI = .91; SRMR = .06) with each first order factor significantly loading onto the goal quality variable ($\gamma_{\text{difficulty}}$ = .45, p = .00; $\gamma_{\text{specificity}}$ = .79, p = .00; $\gamma_{\text{commitment}}$ = .96, p = .00). The fit of the second-order model exhibited significantly better fit than a single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 19.20, Δdf = 3, $p < .05$) and the AVE for the second-order factor model was .58. Although some of the fit indices are slightly below recommended cut-off points for "acceptable fit," the model comparisons, AVE scores, and correlations among the dimensions (r ranges from .38 to .58 for short-term goals and from .36 to .76 for long-term goals) suggest the dimensions can be represented by a single overall construct, goal quality. Both short-term (α = .80) and long-term (α = .77) goal quality demonstrated adequate levels of reliability.

Control variables. We included two relevant control variables following recommended guidelines (Aguinis & Vandenberg, 2014; Becker, 2005; Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). First, we included whether expectations about the profession were met as a control variable based on Ashforth's (2001) model of identification. Ashforth (2001) positions "met expectations" as a precursor to identity-related processes and subsequent identification; the rationale is that newcomers have certain expectations about new roles, and when these expectations do not match reality, they can experience reality shock which affects subsequent identification processes (Ashforth, 2001; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). We measured met expectations with two items measured on Survey 1: "To what extent have your expectations about the profession been met" and "All in all, have your expectations with regard to the profession been met" (α = .89, Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Lee & Mowday, 1987). Second, we controlled for the length of time the student had been in their graduate program because both career goals and mentoring experiences are likely to differ significantly between the beginning and end of a graduate student's tenure (e.g., Humberd & Rouse, 2016). We considered other control variables such as the program field (hard vs. social science), age, gender, and whether the respondent was an international student, but these variables did not affect the results in a meaningful way. Therefore, we include these variables in the correlation table but not in further analyses.

Results

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among control and study variables are shown in Table 1. Both career mentoring (r = .20) and psychosocial mentoring (r = .30) are positively related to professional identification. In turn, professional identification is positively related to all short-term ($r_{\text{extrinsic}}$ = .30; $r_{\text{intrinsic}}$ = .24; r_{quality} = .20) and long-term goal ($r_{\text{extrinsic}}$ = .27; $r_{\text{intrinsic}}$ = .26; r_{quality} = .21) variables.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	√AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Gender	.45	.50	—	—														
2. Age	28.14	5.81	—	.06	—													
3. International student	.25	.43	—	.24**	−.02	—												
4. Program field	.47	.50	—	−.01	.16**	.00	—											
5. Met expectations	3.81	.86	.89	.08	−.02	.09	.01	*.88*										
6. Time in program (in years)	2.05	1.69	—	−.06	.28**	−.02	.01	−.22**	—									
7. Career mentoring	3.13	1.09	.74	.08	−.05	.09	−.01	.22**	−.03	*.90*								
8. Psychosocial mentoring	3.09	1.16	.75	−.05	−.02	.07	.10	.35**	−.09	.49**	*.89*							
9. Professional identification	3.57	.72	.63	−.22**	−.06	.03	−.02	.21**	−.12*	.20**	.30**	*.74*						
10. STG content-extrinsic	3.43	.67	.80	−.04	−.07	.15*	−.03	.06	−.07	.13*	.10	.30**	*.82*					
11. STG content-intrinsic	4.63	.37	.77	−.16**	.02	−.15*	−.09	.07	−.04	.08	.12*	.24**	.14*	*.78*				
12. STG quality	3.89	.85	.56	−.06	.04	−.01	.12*	.22**	.01	.05	.08	.20**	.21**	.16**	*.80*			
13. LTG content-extrinsic	3.42	.64	.79	−.01	−.12	.23**	−.01	.08	−.04	.15*	.14*	.27**	.82**	.11	.10	*.81*		
14. LTG content-intrinsic	4.63	.43	.80	−.11	.03	−.20**	.00	−.01	.04	.11	.06	.26**	.19**	.62**	.19**	.14*	*.84*	
15. LTG quality	3.88	.78	.57	−.01	−.03	.08	.12	.14*	−.09	.17**	.10	.21**	.27**	.19**	.40**	.22**	.30**	*.77*

Note. *N* ranges from 312 (STG model), 243 (LTG model); STG = short-term goal; LTG = long-term goal; AVE = average variance extracted; values in italics are alpha reliabilities. Gender is coded 0 = female, 1 = male; international student is coded 0 = no, 1 = yes; program field is coded 0 = hard sciences, 1 = soft sciences. Variables 1–4 were potential control variables and are not included in model estimation.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We first conducted a CFA, using Mplus 7.2, to assess the extent to which scale items captured intended constructs. When constructs had more than six items as indicators we created parcels. Given the large number of items relative to sample size in the current study, parcels enabled us to maintain a better sample size-to-parameter ratio and decreased the likelihood of identification problems in the CFA (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008). Parcels were created using the item-to-construct balance approach presented in Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002) with the exception of the parcels for the goal quality variable. Goal quality is multidimensional and comprised of distinct subscales (i.e., difficulty, specificity, commitment), so items from each subscale were grouped into conceptually relevant parcels; this maximizes the internal consistency of each parcel for multidimensional latent variables (Williams & O'Boyle, 2008).

For the hypothesized models, we performed two separate CFAs, one using short-term goals (the STG model), and the other using long-term goals (the LTG model). Each item or parcel was fit to its relative factor. In the CFA for both models, a total of six constructs were included in each analysis: career mentoring (four items), psychosocial mentoring (four items), professional identification (five items), short-/long-term goal content-extrinsic (three parcels each), short-/long-term goal content-intrinsic (three parcels each), short-/long-term goal quality (three parcels each). All factor loadings on the specified factors were significant, which indicates that the items and parcels were acceptable indicators for the designated latent variables.

For the STG model, the hypothesized six-factor model demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2 = 374.15$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .94; SRMR = .05). A test of alternative models showed that the hypothesized model had better fit than a five-factor model where career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring were modeled as a single "mentoring" variable ($\Delta\chi^2 = 509.79$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), a five-factor model where extrinsic and intrinsic goal content variables were combined into a single goal content variable ($\Delta\chi^2 = 353.76$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), or a four-factor model where all goal variables were combined into a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 406.49$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .01$).

For the LTG model, the hypothesized six-factor model demonstrated good fit ($\chi^2 = 363.06$; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .94; SRMR = .06). A test of alternative models showed that the hypothesized model had better fit than a five-factor model where career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring were modeled as a single "mentoring" variable ($\Delta\chi^2 = 436.58$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), a five-factor model where extrinsic and intrinsic goal content variables were combined into a single goal content variable ($\Delta\chi^2 = 251.87$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$), or a four-factor model where all goal variables were combined into a single factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 316.44$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .01$).

We also computed the AVE estimates for the 10 scales (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); the AVE estimate is the average amount of variation that a latent construct is able to explain in the observed variable to which it is theoretically related (Farrell, 2010). For the control variable, AVE was .80 for met expectations. For the model variables, AVE values were .55 for career mentoring, .56 for psychosocial mentoring, .39 for professional identification, .64 for STG content–extrinsic, .59 for STG content–intrinsic, .31 for STG quality, .62 for LTG content–extrinsic, .65 for LTG content–intrinsic, and .32 for LTG quality. A purpose of calculating the

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AVE is to establish discriminant validity in latent variables. Discriminant validity is supported when the AVE of each construct is greater than its shared variance (i.e., square of the correlation) with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) or, alternatively, the square root of the AVE ($\sqrt{}$AVE) is greater than the raw correlation; these values are presented in Table 1. For all but one of the bivariate relationships the $\sqrt{}$AVE is greater than the correlation. The correlation between STG content-extrinsic and LTG content-extrinsic is higher than the $\sqrt{}$AVE value; however, hypothesis testing is done separately for STG and LTG models, so there is no need to demonstrate discriminant validity between these variables.

Hypothesis Testing

After assessing model fit of the measurement model, we tested the theoretical model using structural equation modeling (SEM; Mplus 7.2) with maximum-likelihood estimation. Any missing data was coded as such in the data file; this analysis assumes that data are missing completely at random, uses pairwise deletion (Muthen & Muthen, 2007), and computes standard errors for parameter estimates based on the observed information matrix (Kenward & Molenberghs, 1998). We evaluate the model fit and hypotheses independently for both STG and LTG models.

Short-term goal model. The hypothesized mediated model using short-term goals fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 512.94$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .93; SRMR = .06). The fit of the hypothesized STG model was then compared with four alternative models as reported in Table 2. The model comparisons were between the hypothesized model and three partially mediated models that included direct paths from the independent variables to the goal outcomes; each detailed in Table 2. In models including paths from career mentoring to goal outcomes ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.19$, $\Delta df = 3$, *ns*), psychosocial mentoring to goal outcomes ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.98$, $\Delta df = 3$, *ns*), or both mentoring to all outcomes ($\Delta\chi^2 = 7.42$, $\Delta df = 6$, *ns*) there was no significant difference in model fit. However, examination of the individual paths showed a significant direct relationship between psychosocial mentoring and the goal quality variable. Consequently, we tested a final parsimonious model that included a path from psychosocial mentoring to goal quality. Including this path did significantly improve model fit from the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.81$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .05$). We report and interpret findings from the partially mediated model (Model 5 in Table 2).

The results of the STG model are presented in Figure 1. Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between career mentoring and professional identification, which was not supported ($\beta = .09$, $p = .27$). Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between psychosocial mentoring and professional identification, which was supported ($\beta = .26$, $p < .01$). Together, career and psychosocial mentoring explained 17% of the variance ($R^2 = .17$, $p < .01$) in professional identification. Hypotheses 3 and 4 predicted a positive relationship between professional identification and both STG content-extrinsic and STG content-intrinsic, respectively. Both hypotheses were supported ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .27$, $p < .01$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .30$, $p < .01$). Finally, Hypothesis 5 predicted that professional identification would be positively related to STG quality, which was also supported ($\beta = .40$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 6 predicted that professional identification would mediate the relationship between mentoring and career goals. The indirect effects of the career and psychosocial mentoring on the goal outcomes through professional identification are listed in Table 3. None of the indirect effects from career mentoring to goal outcome variables were significant, thus, Hypothesis 6a was not supported. In contrast, the indirect effects of psychosocial mentoring on STG content-extrinsic (.07), STG content-intrinsic (.08), and STG quality (.10) were all significant ($p < .05$), providing support for Hypothesis 6b. Lastly, in the partially mediated model, psychosocial mentoring ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$) had a positive, direct relation to STG quality. Variance explained for each of the goal outcomes was: STG content-extrinsic ($R^2 = .07$, $p < .05$), STG content-intrinsic ($R^2 = .09$, $p < .05$), and STG quality ($R^2 = .24$, $p < .01$).

Long-term goal model. The hypothesized mediated model using long-term goals fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 460.24$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .93; SRMR = .07). The fit of the hypothesized LTG model was again compared to alternative path models as reported in Table 2. In models including direct paths from career mentoring to goal outcomes ($\Delta\chi^2 = 9.35$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .05$) and psychosocial mentoring to goal outcomes ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.96$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .05$) there was significant improvement in model fit. Including paths from

Table 2
Structural Model Fit for Short- and Long-Term Goal Outcomes

Model	χ^2	*df*	RMSEA [90% CI]	CFI	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$
Short-term goal model						
1. Fully mediated (hypothesized)	512.94	263	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	
2. Partially mediated (career mentoring to all outcomes)	509.75	260	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	3.19
3. Partially mediated (psychosocial mentoring to all outcomes)	506.96	260	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	5.98
4. Partially mediated (both mentoring to all outcomes)	505.52	257	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	7.42
5. Partially mediated (psychosocial mentoring to goal quality)	508.13	262	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	4.81*
Long-term goal model						
1. Fully mediated (hypothesized)	460.24	263	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.07	
2. Partially mediated (career mentoring to all outcomes)	450.89	260	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	9.35*
3. Partially mediated (psychosocial mentoring to all outcomes)	449.28	260	.05 [.04, .06]	.94	.06	10.96*
4. Partially mediated (both mentoring to all outcomes)	446.61	257	.05 [.04, .06]	.93	.06	13.63*
5. Partially mediated (psychosocial mentoring to goal quality)	449.39	262	.05 [.04, .06]	.94	.06	10.85**

Note. All models are compared to fully mediated model. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

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Table 3
Direct and Indirect Effects From Mentoring Variables to Short- and Long-Term Goal Outcomes

IV	Path	Standardized path estimate	95% CI
Short-term goal model			
Career mentoring	Professional Identification ➜ STG Content-Extrinsic	.02	[−.02, .06]
	Professional Identification ➜ STG Content-Intrinsic	.03	[−.02, .07]
	Professional Identification ➜ STG Quality	.03	[−.02; .10]
Psychosocial mentoring	Professional Identification ➜ STG Content-Extrinsic	.07*	[.02, .12]
	Professional Identification ➜ STG Content-Intrinsic	.08*	[.02, .14]
	Professional Identification ➜ STG Quality	.10*	[.03, .18]
	LTG Quality	**.17***	**[.02; .32]**
Long-term goal model			
Career mentoring	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Content-Extrinsic	.02	[−.02, .06]
	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Content-Intrinsic	.02	[−.02, .05]
	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Quality	.01	[−.02, .05]
Psychosocial mentoring	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Content-Extrinsic	.06*	[.01, .12]
	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Content-Intrinsic	.06*	[.01, .12]
	Professional Identification ➜ LTG Quality	.05	[−.01, .12]
	LTG Quality	**.31***	**[.13, .48]**

Note. CI = confidence interval; STG = short-term goal; LTG = long-term goal; direct paths are bolded.
* $p < .05$.

both types of mentoring to goal outcomes also significantly improved model fit from the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 13.63$, $\Delta df = 6$, $p < .05$). Examination of the individual paths suggested that the improvement in fit was attributable to the direct relationship between psychosocial mentoring and the goal quality variable in particular. Thus, we ran a more parsimonious fifth model, where psychosocial mentoring had a direct path only to LTG quality. This model had a significant improvement in model fit over the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 10.85$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .01$). Therefore, we base our interpretation for the LTG model on Model 5 (see Figure 2).

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between career mentoring and professional identification, which was not supported ($\beta = .07$, $p = .42$) and Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between psychosocial mentoring and professional identification, which was supported ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$). Together, career and psychosocial mentoring explained 19% of the variance ($R^2 = .19$, $p < .01$) in professional identification. Hypothesis 3 and 4 predicted a positive relationship between professional identification and both LTG content-extrinsic and LTG content-intrinsic, respectively. Both hypotheses were supported ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .23$, $p < .01$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .22$, $p < .01$). Finally, Hypothesis 5 predicted that professional identification would be positively related to LTG quality, which was not supported by the data ($\beta = .19$, $p = .05$).

The retained partially mediated model included a direct path from psychosocial mentoring to LTG quality. This direct path, along with the indirect effects of all independent variables on the goal outcomes through professional identification are listed in Table 3. The indirect effects test whether professional identification mediates the relationship between mentoring and the LTG outcomes per Hypothesis 6. The indirect effects from career mentoring to all goal outcome variables were not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 6a was not supported. In contrast, the indirect effects of psychosocial mentoring on LTG content-extrinsic (.06, $p < .05$) and LTG content-intrinsic (.06, $p < .05$) through professional identification were significant. However, the indirect effect from psychosocial mentoring to LTG quality (.05) was not. Thus, Hypothesis 6b was supported with respect to LTG content, but not quality. Lastly, in the partially mediated model psychosocial mentoring ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$) had a positive, direct relation to LTG quality. Variance explained for each of the goal outcomes was: LTG content-extrinsic ($R^2 = .05$, $p = .12$), LTG content-intrinsic ($R^2 = .05$, $p = .12$), and STG quality ($R^2 = .18$, $p < .01$).

In summary, the methodological differences between the STG and LTG models were the inclusion of short-term versus long-term goals as outcomes and sample size ($n = 312$ vs. $n = 243$), respectively. We found that a partially mediated model with a direct path from psychosocial mentoring to goal quality fit the data best for both STG and LTG models. There was consistency across both models; the primary difference in findings was that psychosocial mentoring had direct and indirect effects with goal quality in the STG model whereas it was directly, but not indirectly, related to goal quality in the LTG model.

Supplementary Analysis

Although the hypothesized model proposed independent and direct effects for career and psychosocial mentoring, we performed several supplementary analyses to probe potential interactive or compensatory effects of mentoring on professional identification.[3] First, it is unlikely that either career or psychosocial mentoring functions occur completely independently of one another. The effect of one mentoring function could be dependent on another, suggesting the presence of a mentoring "profile" including both mentoring functions. To test this premise, we modeled interactive effects of career and psychosocial mentoring on professional identification, but the interaction term was not significant in the STG ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .69$) or LTG ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .67$) models. This suggests that there is not a particular mentoring profile that predicts professional identification beyond the independent direct effects.

Second, because it is possible that mentoring functions have compensatory or complementary effects, we tested the effects of the mentoring functions independently, running two separate anal-

[3] We thank two anonymous reviewers for these suggestions.

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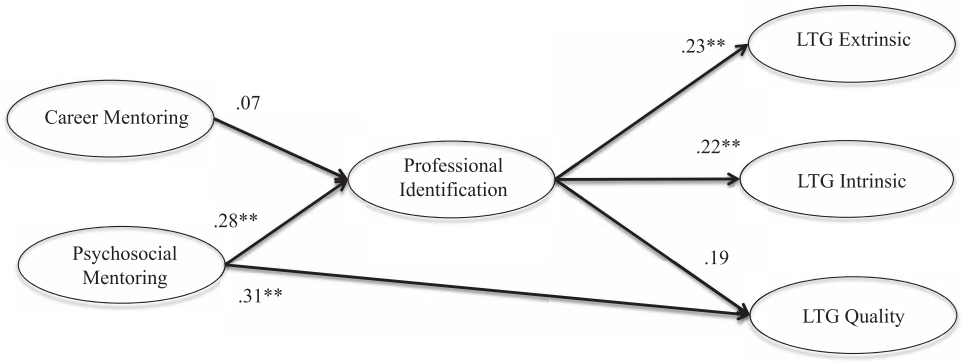


Figure 2. Partially mediated model of mentoring to long-term career goals through professional identification. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

yses with each including only one type of mentoring. When psychosocial mentoring is excluded from the path model, there is a positive relationship between career mentoring and professional identification in both the STG ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$) and LTG ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$) models. The indirect effects of career mentoring on the goal outcomes through professional identification are also significant in the STG ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .06$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .06$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Quality} = .10$, $p < .01$) and LTG ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .05$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .05$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Quality} = .07$, $p < .01$) models. This is a change from the full hypothesized model where the path from career mentoring to professional identification was near zero and nonsignificant and the indirect effects were also nonsignificant. When career mentoring is excluded from the path model, there is a positive relationship between psychosocial mentoring and professional identification in both STG ($\beta = .29$, $p < .01$) and LTG ($\beta = .32$, $p < .01$) models. The indirect effects of psychosocial mentoring on the goal outcomes through professional identification were also significant in the STG ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .08$, $p < .01$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .09$, $p < .01$; $\beta_{Quality} = .05$, $p < .05$) and LTG ($\beta_{Extrinsic} = .07$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Intrinsic} = .07$, $p < .05$; $\beta_{Quality} = .11$, $p < .01$) models. Taken together, career mentoring has a compensatory effect when psychosocial mentoring is not present, while psychosocial mentoring subsumes both mentoring functions in the prediction of professional identification.

Discussion

Career goals are advantageous because they enable a person to direct his or her efforts in a relatively focused manner with a clear plan of action. Despite the many models of career management referencing goal-related concepts (i.e., Gould, 1979; Greenhaus, 1987; London, 1983), there has been little empirical research that examines factors that predict the types of career goals individuals set for themselves. Drawing from Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions, we specifically examined how mentoring experiences and professional identification related to the content and quality of early career professionals' career goals.

We found that psychosocial mentoring, but not career mentoring, was positively related to professional identification in the hypothesized model. Career mentoring, which includes functions such as sponsorship, coaching, exposure, and visibility, was expected to fulfill the control motive (Ashforth, 2001) through helping early career professionals develop their professional competence and shape themselves in ways consistent with in-group classification (Tajfel, 1978). In contrast, psychosocial mentoring, which is based on interpersonal functions such as providing friendship and counseling (Kram, 1985), was expected to relate to professional identification because social support from a mentor can increase feelings of in-group belonging (Ashforth, 2001; Turner, 1985). Considering that the identification process, at its core, draws from inclusion in "in-groups," our findings suggest that early career professionals are more likely to consider themselves to be part of the professional in-group when they have faculty mentors who engage with them on a personal level and engender a sense of belonging, rather than mentors who focus on their career-related success and fulfill motives related to control.

However, supplementary analysis showed that, when tested independently, career mentoring positively related to professional identification, suggesting possible compensatory effects of career mentoring when psychosocial mentoring is absent. Although each form of mentoring is not contingent on the other dimension, as demonstrated by an insignificant interaction effect, the independent effects of each type of mentoring are notable. Psychosocial mentoring positively related to professional identification regardless of the presence of career mentoring in the model, whereas career mentoring was only positively related to professional identification in the absence of psychosocial mentoring, suggesting that career mentoring can compensate or "stand in" for a lack of psychosocial mentoring support in relating to professional identification. To some extent, this speaks to the overlap of mentoring functions; it is likely that psychosocial mentoring contains career-related elements. For example, having dinner at a professional conference with a mentor and coauthors may satisfy both psychosocial and career functions. While a protégé may consider this dinner to be 'friendly' and representative of psychosocial support, the interaction likely confers career related benefits, which could explain the lack of significance for career mentoring as an independent predictor in the full model.

In the STG model, professional identification positively related to all three goal outcome variables. Thus, for early career professionals contemplating their immediate, short-term goals upon graduation, higher levels of professional identification were positively associated with goals containing extrinsic content (i.e., fo-

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cused on obtaining rewards and positive evaluations from others), with goals containing intrinsic content (i.e., seeking opportunities to learn and grow and to do challenging, interesting, and impactful work), and with setting goals of higher quality (i.e., personal goals which are difficult, specific, and to which one is committed). We also found that psychosocial mentoring was indirectly related to all STG goal outcomes through professional identification. Taken together, the sense of interpersonal belonging that develops from psychosocial mentoring experiences enhances early professionals' identification with the profession, which is then positively related to goal content and setting high quality goals.

For the LTG model, professional identification positively related to goals with extrinsic and intrinsic content, but not to goal quality. Instead, psychosocial mentoring had a positive direct effect on LTG quality. Across both STG and LTG models, the effect of the psychosocial mentoring on goals with extrinsic and intrinsic content through professional identification was consistent. However, differences across models arose in regard to the relationship of psychosocial mentoring to goal quality. For short-term goals, psychosocial mentoring was directly and indirectly, through professional identification, related to goal quality. For long-term goals, the effect of psychosocial mentoring on goal quality was direct and not mediated by professional identification. A potential theoretical explanation may be that the role-modeling function of psychosocial mentoring provides early career professionals with a clear long-term vision of one's future self, which is more important to developing specific and challenging long-term goals than is professional identification. However, we recommend some caution in making comparisons between the STG and LTG models because common method variance may explain the stronger findings for the STG model as professional identification and short-term goals were measured on the same survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the limited work assessing the importance of identity development in role transition processes (Ashforth, 2001) by examining the role of mentoring in developing professional identification in a sample of graduate students transitioning into the professional field. We found that psychosocial mentoring, which we proposed fulfills the belonging motive, positively related to professional identification, whereas, career mentoring, which we proposed fulfills the control motive was not (unless psychosocial mentoring was excluded from the model). It is possible that one reason for the lack of support between career mentoring and professional identification is our study context. Ashforth's (2001) original model was conceptualized at the organizational rather than the professional level and professionals have multiple targets to which they can relate. Control motives associated with mentors may relate to identity processes at the organizational (university) level but not at the professional level. That is, career mentoring may affect whether students feel they belong in their particular program within the university, not whether they belong in the profession itself.

We also contribute to social identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) by including goal constructs as outcomes of identification processes. Ashforth (2001) proposes that identity motives lead to role identification which, in turn, leads to enacting a role identity and to role-relevant outcomes, such as improved performance. However, an important mediating step, especially for professionals, is the creation of group-relevant (e.g., organization, profession) goals as a precursor to performance. As such, an important contribution of the current study is demonstrating that identity process and identification are related to goals aligned with standards from one's referent group. This finding is consistent with the self-verification process in SIT in which goal-directed behavior is driven to match the identity standard (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

This study contributes to goal setting theory by examining the content and characteristics of goals in the career context. Setting goals for one's career is often done absent formal goal setting mechanisms—yet this context has received sparse attention in both the goal setting and careers literature (Greenhaus, 1987; Greenhaus et al., 2010). Currently, the career context for goal setting largely addresses the content of individual career goals through assessing distance from career goals, goal importance, goal progress (e.g., Maier & Brunstein, 2001; Noe, 1996). We expanded on this research by including goal quality, a concept integral to goal setting theory, as an outcome. We find that both mentoring functions and professional identification are related to the creation of career goals which are specific, difficult, and to which one is committed, the primary criteria for effective goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). We also extend the goal-setting research by examining short-term and long-term goals separately. That psychosocial mentoring differentially related to short-term and long-term goal quality suggests future research should consider different processes to explain how individuals develop quality short-term versus long-term goals. This is especially important considering that setting short-term (i.e., proximal) goals can affect success in reaching long-term (i.e., distal) goals (Latham & Seijts, 1999).

Our last contribution is to organizational socialization theory and the mentoring literature. As Allen et al. (2017) note, while mentoring is often associated with socialization, "the process by which this occurs is less understood" (p. 331). Combining two socialization tactics (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) with Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions, we proposed that career mentoring is representative of serial socialization tactics through satisfying needs for control while psychosocial mentoring is representative of investiture socialization tactics through satisfying needs for belonging. Investiture tactics (i.e., psychosocial mentoring) were consistently and positively related to professional identification and subsequent career goals. The direct and indirect relationship from psychosocial mentoring to goal quality may help explain why mentoring relates to career success (e.g., Allen et al., 2004). Although previous work in the early career professional context has shown that psychosocial mentoring is not related to the *number* of future publications for graduate students, as a measure of success (Green & Bauer, 1995; Paglis, Green, & Bauer, 2006), it is possible that higher quality goals may target higher *quality* publications, which may better capture career success.

Practical Implications

This study has practical implications for professional workers, graduate students, and mentors. First, socialization into the profession is a process that begins within graduate school, and the extent that an individual develops a relationship with the profession is in some ways determined by mentors (Feldman, 1976).

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Early career professionals should recognize that their career goals, or lack thereof, may be more shaped by psychosocial (i.e., investiture) rather than career mentoring (i.e., serial) experiences. In cases where mentoring and socialization practices are lacking, such as when an assigned advisor is not providing adequate psychosocial support, early career professionals may find it in their best interest to proactively search for such support elsewhere. Also, related to the supplementary analysis showing compensatory effects for career mentoring, early career professionals who lack psychosocial support can still expect career mentoring support to relate to professional identification and related career goals.

Second, professional identification is positively related to both short- and long-term extrinsic and intrinsic goals. When early career professionals internalize the goals and objectives of the profession, a way to solidify their standing in the profession is to obtain a position in which they are highly paid but also able to learn continuously and do meaningful work. This is consistent with several studies of law and business students which have found that students not only identified with their chosen occupation because the profession represented the ability to have the "salary, prestige, and lifestyle of the upper middle class" (Schleef, 2000, p. 156), but also because it represented the ability to make a difference in the world and do work that is inherently meaningful (Schleef, 2000). Thus, professional workers should recognize the importance and legitimacy in pursuit of both internal and external career goals.

Second, for graduate students and advisors it appears that positive psychosocial mentoring experiences such as role modeling, acceptance, counseling, and friendship are more important for creating a sense of professional identity than is career mentoring. Accordingly, advisors should recognize the importance of providing friendship and other related behaviors for their protégés. Caution should be taken, however, when emphasizing the importance of one type of mentoring over the other. Meta-analytic findings reveal that psychosocial mentoring is more strongly related to subjective measures of career success (i.e., career satisfaction, job satisfaction) whereas career mentoring is more strongly related to objective measures of career success (i.e., compensation, promotion; Allen et al., 2004). Therefore, even though career mentoring, in the presence of psychosocial mentoring, was not related to professional identification or goals within the current study, graduate students should still seek out mentor(s) who fulfill both career and psychosocial mentoring roles as both relate to career success.

Professionals and professional associations should recognize that many graduate students pursue altruistic goals in addition to furthering extrinsic career goals. Being motivated to pursue a professional career in some part "for the money" does not imply that all professional workers are materialistic and selfish; many also have nonmaterialistic and generous goals. However, professional associations and universities could offer financial support and emphasize the status of professionals who pursue lower salaried jobs for more altruistic goals. For example, law associations could provide grants for lawyers who become public defenders, or professional associations could encourage donation of time/resources for professional workers to provide services for individuals or organizations that may not usually be able to afford them. In this way, professional associations may encourage goals that further altruistic outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

One strength of this study is the wide breadth of graduate students sampled. Students included in the sample were pursuing both Master's degrees and PhDs and represented a wide variety of fields in both the "hard" and "social" sciences. The wide coverage of graduate students is a strength because the findings are more directly generalizable to professionals from many fields including business, engineering, computer science, and medicine. However, one limitation of the study is the potential for differences between students including whether students were enrolled part-time or full-time. For example, part-time students may be less involved in the profession compared to similar full-time students. Because we did not measure for the enrollment status of respondents, we were unable to control for this as a potential confounding effect. A second limitation is the reliance on self-report data from these graduate students. Same source bias can be problematic because respondents, in an effort to appear consistent, may answer survey questions in a way that leads to inflated relationships between study variables (i.e., CMV; Podsakoff et al., 2003). We attempted to minimize this effect by dividing the surveys across three time periods. Further, based on the individual and affective nature of mentoring experiences, identification, and career goals, we believe that each individual respondent represents the most informed source of information for the current study variables.

Another limitation in the study is the potential for reverse causality between mentoring and professional identification. Individuals with higher levels of professional identification may seek out help from mentors and thus, receive more mentoring. However, we believe that, in the context of professional socialization, this relationship is less likely than the hypothesized one because newcomers' identification with the profession is theorized to develop partly as a result of interacting with established members of the profession, such as mentors (Ashforth, 2001). In addition, mentoring is not directed only at newcomers with strong professional identification. More senior professionals may provide some degree of career and psychosocial mentoring to newcomers who do not identify with the profession out of a sense of professional responsibility to guide and assist newcomers, collegial norms for mentoring, or because the organization rewards mentoring of newcomers.

Results from this study provide several avenues for future research. The current study presented the first test of Ashforth's (2001) widely cited but rarely tested model of role transitions in organizations. However, because we did not measure the motives explicitly, one promising avenue for future research would be to directly measure whether psychosocial mentoring helps fulfill belonging motives, and career mentoring fulfills control motives as we proposed based on the model. Doing so would require first developing and validating scales to measure the motives, but such an effort would provide a stronger test of the underlying theory. Future research can also address whether other variables besides career and psychosocial mentoring fulfill these motives. For example, we proposed a relationship between serial socialization and the need for control and investiture socialization and the motive for belonging. Other socialization tactics such as collective socialization through peer support may also relate to professional identification. Last, future research could assess the same model in regards to role transitions in organizations, rather than professions.

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Ashforth's (2001) model describes individuals entering jobs in specific organizations, so it could be that the variables in the present study are adequate reflections of identity motives, but they may be more effective in identifying organizational, compared to professional, identification processes.

Another future area of study could expand our understanding of the motivation behind both extrinsic and intrinsic goals. For example, it is possible that a professional sets an extrinsic goal to have a high salary job for extrinsic reasons (e.g., "I want to live in a fancy house") or intrinsic reasons (e.g., "I want to be able to give gifts to my favorite charities"). At the same time, it is possible for a professional to set an intrinsic goal to make a positive impact on society for intrinsic reasons (e.g., "I get a sense of fulfillment from helping others") or for extrinsic reasons (e.g., "Others evaluate me better if I do charity work"). This is especially relevant considering that graduate students equally endorsed extrinsic and intrinsic goals. For professional and other types of individuals, future research should examine the content and *motivation* behind both extrinsic and intrinsic goals (e.g., Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006).

It would also be fruitful to examine how goals are related to career-relevant outcomes. For example, a primary tenet of goal setting theory is that higher quality goals lead to better performance. It would be telling to see whether graduate students with higher quality goals do indeed "succeed" more in their chosen career. This, of course, raises the question of how to measure whether or not one met one's career goals. Career goals are likely to change over time based on feedback from incremental goals (Locke & Latham, 2002) or other career relevant events (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Seibert et al., 2013). Understanding the content and quality of early career goals, assessing how they change over time, and then whether any of those goals have been met produces a challenging task for future research.

Conclusion

A defining characteristic of all professions is that they engage in some type of advanced schooling. From the perspective that schooling is the first step of socialization into a profession, graduate school experiences can have distinct effects on professional identification and career-related goals. This study examined how mentoring, as an identity-related process, shaped the development of career goals for early career professionals. The insights advance theory related to identity and are useful for professional workers, graduate students, and their advisors.

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