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Personality at Work

Networking: Theoretical Foundations and Construct Validity

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Abstract

According to popular opinion, networking is an important means via which to become successful in one's job. To examine this assumption, we define networking as a behavior syndrome, summarize relevant research literatures, distinguish networking from related constructs, and investigate both the antecedents and consequences of networking. This paper depicts networking as an individual-level activity that is influenced by not only individual differences (e.g., extraversion, work orientation), but also structural factors as well (e.g., job characteristics). We suggest also that networking contributes to several positive work outcomes, such as information benefits and career success. Finally, we embed the construct of networking into its nomological net, and show that the proximal construct of networking links distal personality variables to work outcomes.

1. Introduction

A number of popular books (Baker, 1994; Nierenberg, 2002; Welch, 1980), magazine articles (Watanabe, 2004), and websites (Misner, 2006) advise people to network. In other words, networking involves building and using contacts with people in order to be successful in their career. Additionally, online networking platforms that claim to enhance networking have grown rapidly in recent years (e.g., www.ryze.com, www.linkedin.com). Scientific research on networking can be traced back to the 1980s (Gould & Penley, 1984; Kotter, 1982; Luthans, Rosenkrantz, & Hennessey, 1985). Since then, several studies have increased our knowledge about not only determinants of networking, such as personality traits (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Thompson, 2005) and structural dependencies (Michael & Yukl, 1993), but also about benefits associated with networking. These include getting a job (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000), career success (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Langford, 2000; Luthans et al., 1985), and job performance (Thompson, 2005).

Despite these research efforts, the "what, why, and how" of the networking construct remain elusive. For example, systematic research on what is (and what is not) networking is lacking. Moreover, important research results are scattered across rather diverse literatures, and practitioners seem to be poorly informed about what remains a "heffalump" construct. The primary aim of the present chapter, therefore, is to outline the theoretical foundations of networking and to provide an overview of definitions. In doing so, we will also consider the antecedents and consequences of networking. Our presentation is based upon findings from a diverse array of research literatures, such as career self management (Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002), career success (Forret & Dougherty, 2004), job search (Wanberg et al., 2000), and entrepreneurship (Witt, 2004), most of which have failed to take notice of each others' findings.

We will additionally discuss what networking means at individual, relational, and structural levels of analysis. Even though networking is an individual level concept, it is not a personality trait. However, as shown in the conceptual model presented in Figure 1, networking constitutes a link between distal, broad personality traits, and work outcomes like career success. Accordingly, networking is a proximal construct (Kanfer, 1992) that is comprised of specific work-related behaviors, which are "facilitated" by certain traits. We thus hope to provide insight into the role of personality in relation to networking, and the relevance of the latter for personnel development and assessment. Figure 1 depicts the framework of our presentation, and we will begin our discussion with the core of the model: networking.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Antecedents and Consequences of Networking
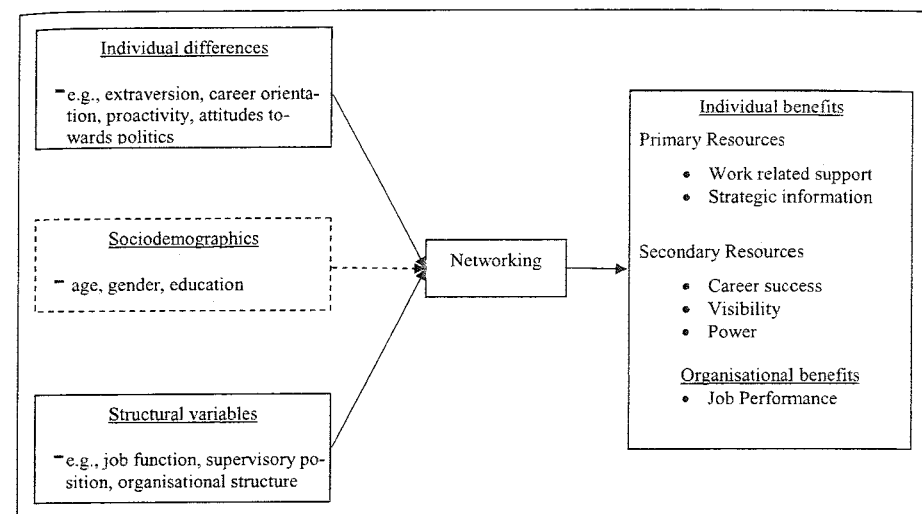
2. What is Networking?

In this section, we will present definitions of networking and also highlight their implications with regard to levels of analysis. Networking will be described as an individual level concept, but we will also characterize networking relationships and will discuss links between networking and social networks. In this vein, we will distinguish networking from the related constructs of social capital, mentoring, and organizational politics. In a final section, we will describe various networking measures.

2.1 Definitions of Networking

Several definitions of networking are presented in Table 1. Although they were gathered from a diverse range of research literatures, they converge on three core characteristics.

First, all definitions refer to the individual level of analysis and characterize networking as a set of particular behaviors. Examples of networking behaviors drawn from the literature include: introducing oneself to an important other, attending social activities (e.g., parties and lunches), and asking for the latest professional gossip. It is implicitly assumed that a high level of networking (i.e., being a 'networker'), is characterized by frequently and consistently exhibiting networking behaviors. Therefore, networking can be considered a behavior syndrome that is comprised of a set of interrelated behaviors that are consistently exhibited by individuals. In fact, results from one study showed that networking possesses temporal stability (Wolff & Moser,

2006; see also Sturgess et al., 2002). However, networking is also sensitive to particular interventions, such as training aimed at enhancing individual networking skills and network-building HR practices (Collins & Clark, 2003).

Table 1. Definitions of Networking

- Individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career. (Forret & Dougherty, 2004, p. 420)
- A wide array of behaviors designed to build informal interpersonal relationships with people inside and outside the organization. In general, networking involves the exchange of affect (liking, friendship), information, benefits, and influence. (Michael & Yukl, 1993, p. 328)
- Managerial networking refers to the process of building up and maintaining a set of informal, cooperative relationships with persons other than the manager's immediate superior and subordinates, in the expectation that such relationships will assist the manager to perform his or her job better. (Orpen, 1996, p. 245)
- A set of strategies to enhance one's professional visibility. Visibility, in addition to enhanced skills, may play an important role in enhancing one's marketability and, ultimately, in promoting one's career advancement. (Osberg & Raulin, 1989, p. 26)
- Individual actions directed toward contacting friends, acquaintances, and referrals, to get information, leads, or advice on getting a job. (Wanberg et al., 2000, p. 491)
- Activities an individual entrepreneur undertakes to build, sustain, or extend her personal network. (Witt, 2004, p. 395)
- Networking includes behaviors aimed at building and maintaining informal relationships, that possess the (potential) benefit to ease work related actions by voluntarily granting access to resources and by jointly maximizing advantages of the individuals involved. (Wolff & Moser, 2006, p. 162)

A second characteristic of the majority of networking definitions is their focus on the goal of networking. A key aim of networking behaviors is to build relationships that can improve one's work performance and/or career success. Networking helps to attain resources by means of social contacts (see the section on resources below). Networking may thus be considered an investment in social relationships that one anticipates will eventually pay off. Note that although the goal of networking is confined to the workplace, it can occur either at work or in one's spare time.

A third characteristic is the quality of networking relationships. This moves the focus from the level of individual behavior to the level of dyadic relationships between individuals. Networking relations are typically considered to be *informal* ties. Some definitions (see Orpen, 1996 in Table 1) even explicitly exclude formal relations, such as those with one's supervisor or to a supplier. In such definitions, these are not considered to be examples of a networking relationship. However, we suggest that

formal relations *can* be considered networking relationships if they are additionally characterized by a sufficient amount of informality (the "particularization of universalistic relations", see e.g., Parsons, 1991/1951). Furthermore, networking relationships are characterized by a cooperative exchange of resources (Kaplan, 1984; Michael & Yukl, 1993). In other words, networking relies on the voluntary exchange of favors (Cohen & Bradford, 1989). It should also be noted that these informal, cooperative exchange relationships require a certain amount of trust between actors (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988), such as the expectation that a favor will be returned in the future.

2.2 Distinguishing Networking From Related Constructs

The value of networking as a construct depends on both its conceptual distinction from other related constructs, and also the kinds of predictions that can ultimately be derived from it. In this section we outline the differences between networking and three constructs that have a similar focus on the benefits attainable from social relations: social capital, mentoring, and political tactics.

The concept of *social capital* originates from sociological research and refers to resources available from specific network structures (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988). Social capital is a function of specific qualities of social networks. It thus focuses on a structural level, where individual characteristics are not taken into account. Network analysis is used to identify structural characteristics of relations (e.g., strength, multiplexity), characteristics of the network (e.g., size, density), and the position of an individual within a network (e.g., centrality; for further description of network measures see Burt, 1992). Research has shown that the availability of resources is contingent upon particular structural characteristics. For example, Podolny and Baron (1997) showed that large, diverse networks are more suitable to attain instrumental resources, such as task advice or strategic information, whereas small, dense networks can provide a higher amount of psychosocial support. Similarly, Granovetter (1973) found that weak ties (i.e., relations of little intimacy and emotional intensity) as opposed to strong ties are beneficial for a successful job search.

Networking and social capital are distinct, but related constructs that pertain to different levels of analysis. Both constructs consider benefits derived from social contacts. However, networking focuses on individual behavior to build social networks, while social capital focuses on the characteristics of these social networks. Social capital thus addresses a structural level of analysis. The relationship between these two concepts is most likely to be reciprocal, and has been described in terms of motivation and opportunity (Burt, 1992). According to Burt, motivation refers to the individual activity of building and maintaining social networks. In this vein, networking can be considered an antecedent of social capital (Gould & Penley, 1984; Thompson, 2005; Wolff & Moser, 2006). In one of our studies (Wolff & Moser, 2006), we found that networking leads to a particular network structure that is characterized by a large and nonredundant network. Networkers possess more contacts that are in turn less likely

to be acquainted among each other. Opportunity refers to using and exploiting existing social networks. Existing network structures provide access to resources and thus further help an individual to network. Also, networkers should be more proficient at exploiting and improving existing network structures.

We now turn to *mentoring*, a construct that also considers social relations at work. Mentoring has been defined as either an informal or formal relationship "in which a senior person working in the protégé's organization assists with the protégé's personal and professional development" (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 265). Mentoring relations yield psychosocial support as well as career-related support (Kram, 1985). Although mentoring shares several aspects with networking (e.g., career related support, informal relations), the two constructs differ in several aspects. For example, mentoring is concerned with a single relation, whereas networking focuses on a network of contacts (Bozionelos, 2003). Also, networking relations include weak tie relations (i.e., casual acquaintances), whereas a strong tie forms the basis of a mentoring relationship (see also Forret & Dougherty, 2004). A further difference lies in the asymmetric exchange of resources in mentoring relationships. Protégés receive career-related and psychosocial support, whereas the mentor benefits from loyal support and the fulfillment of generative needs (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). Finally, networking research focuses on the behaviors of the person who "networks", whereas mentoring focuses on the behavior of the mentor, though the career advancement of the protégée is of concern.

Recently, the mentoring concept has been extended to include group and peer mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001). This refined definition of mentoring removes restrictions upon the mentor being an older, more senior person in the protégé's organization. Rather, in the context of this extended meaning, mentoring focuses on the benefits attainable from any social relationship. As such, mentoring refers more generally to the "provision of career and psychosocial support" (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 267). Networking also aims at attaining career support. However, it is important to note that by focusing on network diversity and relationship strength, Higgins and Kram (2001) move mentoring to a structural level, whereas networking focuses on individual level behaviors that lead to certain types of networks (i.e., "entrepreneurial networks" according to the taxonomy of Higgins and Kram).

We are not aware of any empirical studies linking networking and *political behaviors*. From a theoretical perspective, the foci of these related constructs differ on a conceptual level. Political behavior can be broadly defined as the management of influence (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Mayes & Allen, 1977). Research has shown that the use of at least some political tactics is associated with career success (e.g., Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003). Political behavior focuses on the achievement of one's vested interests by means of a set of influence tactics. There are indeed commonalities between networking and some influence tactics. For example, the exchange of favors or coalition tactics can be considered as networking behavior, but

they can also be used to 'bend the rules'. Moreover, other tactics such as pressure or sanctions are clearly distinct from networking. In addition, the emphasis of networking is on cooperative relations and the development of networks that can be used to influence others who usually do not belong to the network. In contrast, influence tactics can potentially destroy social networks. Lastly, influence tactics involve only the utilization of networks or coalitions rather than building or maintaining them.

### 2.3 Measures and Dimensions of Networking

There have been various approaches to assess networking. Early research on networking by Kotter (1982) and Luthans et al. (1985) used participant observation. For example, Luthans et al. observed that successful managers devoted more time to interactions with outsiders, socializing, and politicking, which they summarized as networking behaviors. While these observations yield rich and detailed insights into individual behavior at work, they also require considerable effort on the part of the researcher. Therefore, several self-report measures have been developed in the last two decades. In research on entrepreneurial networks, participants have been asked how much time they devoted to networking (e.g., Ostgaard & Birley, 1996). More typically, however, networking measures consist of a list of networking behaviors that participants use to indicate how often they have recently engaged in various forms of networking. In these scales, networking has been operationalized as both a one-dimensional as well as a multidimensional construct. One-dimensional measures typically capture networking from a broad perspective (Gould & Penley, 1984; Langford, 2000; Orpen, 1996). Exceptions to this are scales by Sturges et al. (2002) and Wanberg et al. (2000) that respectively focus on networking within the organization and networking during the job search.

In addition, finer grained, multidimensional measures that consist of several networking subscales have been developed. Forret and Dougherty (2001) derived 33 networking behaviors from the practitioner literature, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended written elicitation methods. They used exploratory factor analysis to identify five networking dimensions: 1) maintaining contacts, 2) socializing, 3) engaging in professional activities, 4) participating in church and community, and 5) increasing internal visibility. Based on theoretical arguments, Michael and Yukl (1993) have developed a two-dimensional measure. It distinguishes internal from external networking, which refers to networking within and outside the organization, respectively.

In our own research (Wolff & Moser, 2006), we used a theoretical approach to distinguish between two facets of networking that yielded six networking subscales. In line with Michael and Yukl (1993), the first facet refers to the structural distinction between internal and external networking. The second facet designates the function of networking behaviors and distinguishes between building, maintaining, and using contacts. This distinction has been made in several definitions of networking (Baker, 1994; Forret & Dougherty, 2004), but has not previously been considered in item construction. It also depicts an elementary process of relationship development (al-

though some relations may be "inherited" or derived from other contacts, e.g., Podolny & Baron, 1997). As depicted in Figure 2, crossing the two facets results in six networking subscales (i.e., building internal contacts, building external contacts, maintaining internal contacts, etc.). Items were obtained from interviews as well as the literature and were integrated into the facet structure. The facet structure was confirmed by multidimensional scaling, where the items were ordered in a circumplex pattern in line with the six subscales. Figure 2 shows a schematic representation of this pattern. We also conducted confirmatory factor analysis to show that the six scales form a higher-order factor of networking. This pattern justifies analyses on different levels of generalization. For example, beyond considering the six subscales, aggregates such as internal networking or a total networking score can also be derived.

Figure 2. Networking Subscales: Schematic Representation of Circumplex Pattern
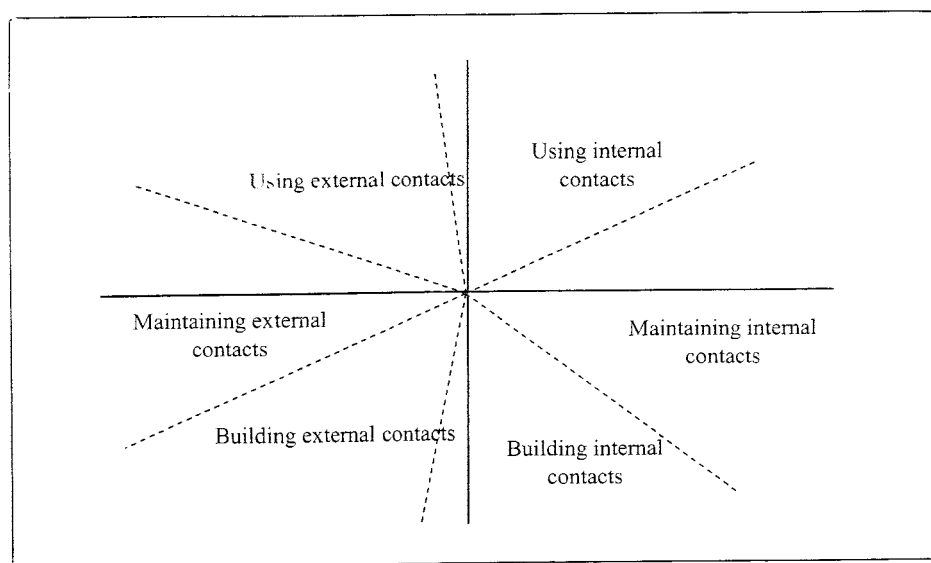
It should be noted that another type of measure focuses on individuals' assessment of the quality of their own network (Bozionelos, 2003; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). For example, Eby et al. measured breadth of internal networks with items such as "I am well connected within the organization" (p. 695). These measures should not be considered indicators of networking behavior, but rather as another approach to assess characteristic features of network structure.

3. Putting Networking Into Context

The previous sections have focused on networking in and of itself, which we consider a necessary first step in understanding the construct. Referring to Figure 1, we now consider antecedents and consequences of networking, starting with a description of the resources (i.e., consequences) attainable from networking. As networking can be considered an investment in social relationships, the question about return on investment is clearly important. Next, antecedents of networking will be delineated, specifically: individual differences, sociodemographics, and structural antecedents.

3.1 Resources

Definitions of networking broadly specify that networking leads to work- or career-related benefits for individuals. In further specifying these benefits, this section will focus on networking research, but it will also highlight findings from the broader literature on the benefits of social contacts.

Resources attainable from networking can be classified into primary and secondary resources according to the structural elements providing these resources. Primary resources, such as task advice and strategic information (Podolny & Baron, 1997), are available from dyadic relationships. Task advice refers to assistance from others that directly enhances an individual's effectiveness on the job. For example, this may include receiving help with a computer program or getting important documents by circumventing slow official channels (Anderson, 2008). Strategic information denotes general information about the "goings-on" in an organization, such as information on the goals and strategies of other individuals, divisions, or companies (see also informational gossip in Fuchs, 1995). Research on social capital has shown that these resources are attainable from large, diverse networks (Burt, 1992; Podolny & Baron, 1997). In one of our studies (Wolff & Moser, 2006), we examined the link between networking and the structure of task advice and strategic information networks. Our results confirmed that networkers were more likely to possess large and diverse networks. It should also be noted that this study showed that networking is not related to the structure of psychosocial support networks (i.e., networks in which an individual can discuss personal matters). Psychosocial support is usually available from dense, small networks, whereas networking aims at large, diverse networks.

Secondary resources are career success, visibility, and power. They are less likely attainable from a dyad, but rather are available from a network of relations. For example, the reputation – which is closely related to visibility - of individual A depends on B telling C something about A, and thus necessitates several actors and relations (Roberts, 2005). With regard to secondary resources, networking research has predominantly focused on career success. A host of studies have shown that networking is positively related to measures of objective career success, such as salary (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Gould & Penley, 1984; Langford, 2000; Orpen, 1996) and number of promotions received (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Luthans et al., 1985; Michael &

Yukl, 1993; Orpen, 1996). Studies also report that networking enhances measures of subjective career success, such as perceived career satisfaction (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Langford, 2000). To our knowledge, all existing studies linking networking to objective and subjective career success used retrospective or concurrent research designs (e.g., relating networking to prior promotion rates or current salary level). These research designs must therefore rely on strong assumptions about causality. They assume that networking leads to career success, but cannot rule out that career success causes networking. For example, individuals could resort to networking as they climb up the career ladder and have to fulfill tasks with higher responsibility and higher structural dependencies (see also section on structural antecedents below). Therefore, prospective studies concerning the relationship between networking and career success are warranted.

Several other studies have found that social contacts also play a prominent role in job search activities (De Graaf & Flap, 1988; Granovetter, 1973). Using a prospective research design, Wanberg et al. (2000) concluded that networking is a useful job search strategy for unemployed individuals, although it is not superior to traditional job search techniques. Similarly, Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) have shown that job applicants with informal contacts to the employing organization submit applications of higher quality and are more likely to be interviewed and offered a job.

The two other secondary resources are visibility and power. As they have not been studied as determinants of networking, this presumption's only support comes from theoretical insights and findings from the related literature on social capital. Visibility refers to others' awareness of an individual's skills and achievements. The amount and variety of contacts attained by networking should contribute to increased visibility (Osberg & Raulin, 1989). In fact, networks can enhance one's reputation as a good performer (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994). Power refers to the ability to influence others by means of one's network. In other words, this occurs by mobilizing contacts to convince or influence others, and also by the ability to withhold information from others (Brass, 1992). For example, Brass (1984) found that access to as well as control of communication networks was related to influence in an organization.

The results presented thus far refer to benefits that individuals can obtain from networking. In addition, a few studies have shown that organizations can benefit from their employees' networking as well. These findings indicate that networking can be of relevance to human resources practitioners. Thompson (2005) and Sturges, Conway, Guest, and Liefhooge (2005) reported positive correlations between networking and supervisory ratings of job performance. This finding might be explained by the availability of task advice attained via networking, which in turn may enhance job performance. In addition, Collins and Clark (2003) showed that network-building HR practices (e.g., training, evaluation and discussion of the development of personal relationships) were related to top management team network structure, which in turn was related to firm performance. Therefore, assessing, supporting, and developing (at

least some) employees' networking seems to play a vital part in Human Resource Management in order to increase job performance and, ultimately, firm success.

3.2 Antecedents of Networking

This section highlights research on the antecedents of networking. Referring to Burt's (1992) distinction between motivation and opportunity, we assume that some individuals are better at networking than others, but structural aspects also facilitate networking. Thus we will argue that networking is facilitated by specific aspects of personality, as well as situational or structural factors (see also Wanberg et al., 2000).

3.2.1 Personality and Individual Differences.

Wanberg et al. (2000) examined the relationship between networking and the "Big Five" personality factors. The authors found that networking was positively related to extraversion (see also Forret & Dougherty, 2001), conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience, but negatively related to neuroticism. The authors assumed that agreeable individuals are more trusting and cooperative, conscientious individuals are more motivated and persistent in their efforts to network, individuals open to new experiences are flexible and try new methods, whereas individuals high in neuroticism are more hostile and moanful in their interactions with others. In a multivariate analysis, Wanberg et al. found that extraversion and conscientiousness were the most important predictors of networking. It should be noted that due to the study's specific focus on networking during job search activities, these findings should be replicated with a broader networking measure.

In one of our studies, we further examined the social components of networking (Wolff & Moser, 2006). We found that the relationship between networking and extraversion is not only driven by the social facets of extraversion (e.g., gregariousness, friendliness), but also by the facet of assertiveness. This indicates that networking goes beyond being a well-liked acquaintance, and contains an instrumental facet as well. In addition, networking is also correlated with self-monitoring and interpersonal trust. The relationship with self monitoring suggests that networkers can adjust their behavior to situational needs, as postulated by Kaplan (1984). The relation with interpersonal trust (IPT) illustrates the importance of trust in networking relations.

Further research on networking and individual differences shows that networking is positively related to self-esteem (Forret & Dougherty, 2001). Networking behaviors, such as making phone calls to stay in contact or introducing oneself to others, may be threatening to individuals low in self-esteem. Networking is also related to proactivity (Thompson, 2005), indicating that networking requires a proactive approach to social relations at work. In fact, in this study networking mediated the relationship between proactivity and job performance. Two studies have also assessed attitudinal correlates of networking. Wanberg and colleagues (2000) distinguished between networking intensity and networking comfort. Networking comfort is considered to be

an attitudinal antecedent to networking intensity (i.e., networking behavior). The positive relationship found between these two measures suggests that while individuals may have personality characteristics that facilitate networking, their attitude towards "exploiting" contacts to attain their personal goals (i.e., finding a job) is of importance as well. In a similar manner, Forret and Dougherty (2001) found that networking was positively associated with attitudes towards workplace politics. More specifically, networkers were more likely to accept that some goals are accomplished more easily by using informal means.

Definitions of networking typically imply that individuals' thoughts, goals, and interests focus on their work or career. In accordance with this presumption, we found that networking is positively related to an individual's work related achievement motivation (Wolff & Moser, 2006). Furthermore, we assessed in this study central live interests, such as career orientation, leisure orientation, and alternative engagement (i.e., realizing nonmaterialistic or postmaterialistic interests at work). As expected, the relationship between networking behavior and career orientation was positive, while the relationship with leisure orientation was negative. Also, an unexpected positive relationship was found between networking and alternative engagement. One explanation for this finding is that similar to career orientation, alternative engagement implies a focus on work that provides a motivation to network for individuals with such an orientation.

3.2.2 Sociodemographics

Research relating networking to sociodemographics has produced mixed results. For this reason, the effect of sociodemographics on networking is depicted by a broken line in Figure 1. Correlations with age are mostly nonsignificant (Sturges et al., 2005; Sturges et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2000; Wolff & Moser, 2006, studies 2 & 3) and clearly negative in only two studies (Gould & Penley, 1984; Wolff & Moser, 2006 study 1). In contrast, mixed findings have been reported with regard to education; some studies report positive (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Wanberg et al., 2000; Wolff & Moser, 2006 study 1), negative (Sturges et al., 2002), and nonsignificant (Gould & Penley, 1984; Sturges et al., 2005; Wolff & Moser, 2006 studies 2 & 3) correlations with networking.

In terms of gender differences, studies show that men and women do not differ in their networking behavior, though the returns they receive from this investment may differ. Most studies find nonsignificant correlations between networking and gender (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Sturges et al., 2005; Sturges et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2000; Wolff & Moser, 2006). In fact, only Gould and Penley (1984) reported a tendency for men to show more networking. The absence of gender effects is consistent with researchers' suggestions that gender differences in *behavior* do not explain differences in managerial or career success (e.g., Morrison & von Glinow, 1990). However, the return on investment in networking seems to be lower for women. For example, Forret and Dougherty (2004) found that the relationship between two of five

networking subscales and objective career success was significantly positive for men, but not for women. Ibarra (1992; 1997) provided an explanation for these differences on a structural level. Based on the finding that homophilous (e.g., same sex) ties are easier to build and maintain, Ibarra concluded that it is more difficult for women to build and maintain ties to individuals in powerful positions because these positions are mainly held by men. Therefore, in order to achieve comparable benefits, women have to put more effort into networking.

3.2.3 Structural Antecedents

Besides individual and sociodemographic differences, networking behavior also depends on situational antecedents, such as job function and position. For example, the majority of studies indicate that incumbents of supervisor or managerial positions report more networking than individuals at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Gould & Penley, 1984; Michael & Yukl, 1993; Sturges et al., 2005; Wolff & Moser, 2006). There is also some evidence that networking is associated with salary for managers, but not for nonmanagers (Gould & Penley, 1984). Furthermore, structural dependencies entailed by job functions are related to some aspects of networking. Michael and Yukl (1993) found that marketing managers showed more external networking, but not internal networking, than accounting or production managers (for a similar result see Forret & Dougherty, 2001). Furthermore, they showed that the effects of managerial level and function on networking are partially mediated by structural dependencies. As such, networking is in part necessitated by the cooperation and support inherent in some job requirements. In fact, Orpen (1996) found that networking yields higher returns for managers in high-dependency jobs.

3.3 Conclusions

Networking has been introduced as an individual level construct (i.e., individuals differ in the amount of networking they engage in). Researchers from different areas have accumulated an ample amount of findings on networking and its relations to both antecedents and consequences. The overall impression concerning the antecedents of networking is that individual differences as well as structural dependencies have an impact on networking, whereas evidence for the relationship between sociodemographics and networking remains inconclusive. Once further studies have been published, meta-analysis may provide a means to further examine these latter relations. With regard to outcomes, research has focused on the effects of networking on career success. Prospective studies are warranted to gain additional insight into the exact causal relations between networking and career success. Also further research should examine the effects of networking on visibility and power, as well as benefits to the organization associated with employee networking.

Taken together, the present findings indicate how personality traits may be related to work outcomes, such as career success. Figure 1 assumes that personality traits (and

other antecedents) influence networking behaviors that in turn lead to individual and organizational benefits. So far, this presumed mediational chain has only been tested by Thompson (2005) and should be corroborated in further research (e.g., does networking mediate the relationship between extraversion and career success?). The relationship between networking and organizational benefits suggests that the construct is also of relevance to human resources management. Human resources practices aimed at increasing employees' networking behavior may prove fruitful in terms of enhancing employees' job performance. While the networking scales presented above allow for the assessment of networking, we are not aware of specific training in networking. Further research is needed to develop and evaluate such training for applied settings.

Three additional areas for future research should be noted. First, further research on individual differences needs to be conducted. For example, the relationship between networking and the Big Five should be replicated. In addition, little research has been conducted concerning the motivational bases of networking, (e.g., do networkers have a high need for affiliation or power?). A second question pertains to cultural differences in networking. It can be assumed that behavioral norms differ in different cultures. For example, introducing oneself may be considered rude in some cultures (e.g., China). Therefore, networking behaviors that are adequate in some countries may be considered offensive elsewhere. Furthermore, social contacts may not yield career benefits in all cultures (e.g., Bozionelos & Wang, 2005). Finally, as networking is considered an investment in social contacts, it would be of value to examine networking from a broader "economic perspective". While studies have shown that networking is beneficial to career development, little is known about the costs of networking. We can only speculate about whether costs might be incurred as a result of centering one's contacts around work, neglecting other contacts, or missing out on time with the family. Future research should also investigate whether there is a "dark side" of networking.

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