


The effects of mentor alcohol use norms on mentorship quality: The moderating role of protégé traditionality

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Abstract

Mentorship quality is an important aspect of mentorship effectiveness, yet we know little about its predictors. Using social identity theory, we examined the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality as perceived by protégés. Our study also considered the mediating role of protégé identification with the mentor and the moderating role of protégé traditionality. The findings, based on mentor-protégé dyadic data collected through a three-wave survey in China, indicate that mentor alcohol use norms are negatively related to mentorship quality, and that this relationship is mediated by protégé identification with the mentor. Furthermore, the traditionality of protégés alleviates not only the negative relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with the mentor, but also the indirect relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality via protégé identification with the mentor. The results underscore the value of focusing on mentor behavioral norms that are not directed toward the protégé. We conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications for mentoring research.

KEYWORDS

alcohol use norms, identification, mentoring, mentorship quality, traditionality

1 | INTRODUCTION

The presence of alcohol at work and business/social gatherings is common worldwide. Data from a national probability sample of over 2,000 workers in the United States indicated that about 63% of respondents could drink alcohol during work hours if they wanted to do so (Frone, 2012). Some employers are fine with employees drinking on the job because they believe that drinking can make employees happy and creative and entice them to stay on and work at night (Farnham, 2012). In addition, managerial and professional employees are often encouraged to attend gatherings for drinks with people from work (Forret & Dougherty, 2001). Organizations that promote workplace drinking tend to hire and retain employees who are less likely to regard the pressure to drink as a threat to their fit with the

organization (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). In China, one of the oldest brewing nations, drinking is a part of business and social exchanges (Hao, Chen, & Su, 2005). The Chinese business world is becoming highly competitive, and thus drinking is considered a beneficial behavior for business success (Hao & Young, 2000). Alcohol is also believed to help establish and maintain good relations between salespeople and customers, supervisors and employees, and among colleagues (Cochrane, Chen, Conigrave, & Hao, 2003; Hao & Young, 2000).

Although drinking is common and typically a personal choice, alcohol consumption is divisive because not all people regard the opportunity to drink as an advantage, given that alcohol may be detrimental to both drinkers and organizations (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). According to a meta-analytic study, alcohol consumption

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increases the risk of many diseases (Corrao, Bagnardi, Zambon, & La Vecchia, 2004). In the West, alcohol consumption has been found to be positively related to aggression toward coworkers (Greenberg & Barling, 1999), and negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, & McGrath, 2004). Similarly, the frequency of heavy episodic drinking over a month has been positively related to the number of absentee days during the following 12 months (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Biron, 2010). Moreover, employees of organizations that promote workplace drinking may feel pressure to drink to please others and fit in (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). Furthermore, alcohol consumption on the job has been regarded as a form of organizational deviance (R. J. Bennett & Robinson, 2000). In China, drinking alcohol has been linked with social problems and the abuse of public funds (Hao et al., 2005; Tang, 1994). Although solitary drinking and heavy drinking are usually discouraged, the customs of toasting, urging others to drink, and engaging in drinking games are likely to lead to intoxication at social events (Hao & Young, 2000). Due to such negative influences, the Chinese government has prohibited civil servants from drinking alcohol during lunch hours and official gatherings since 2013 (Peng, 2017). Taken together, the attitude toward alcohol consumption likely depends on the presence or absence of other people and the contextual setting (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018).

This study explores the phenomenon of drinking in a mentoring context. As alcohol consumption at social gatherings in China can represent "respect" for other people, some mentors are prone to ask their protégés to show respect through heavy drinking, which can lead to tragedies such as sudden death (Chen, 2019). Hence, it is important and timely to understand how and when drinking influences protégés' perceptions of mentorship quality.

Mentorship in organizations has received substantial attention over the past three decades because it is an effective tool for the career and personal development of employees (Allen, Eby, Chao, & Bauer, 2017). "Mentorship" describes a relationship between a senior employee (the mentor) and a less experienced employee (the protégé) (Kram, 1985) in which the mentor sponsors and supports the protégé's personal and professional development. The effectiveness of mentoring relationships has captured substantial scholarly attention (Allen & Eby, 2003; Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000), because research has shown that not all mentoring relationships are effective and beneficial (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011; Hernandez, Estrada, Woodcock, & Schultz, 2017; Ragins et al., 2000). Mentorship quality, an overall evaluation of the mutual benefit of and satisfaction with the relationship, is highly relevant for understanding the effectiveness of mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2003). In particular, studies have shown that mentorship quality is positively associated with protégés' perceptions of the mentoring function (Kwan, Liu, & Yim, 2011), proactivity, self-esteem (Wu, Lyu, Kwan, & Zhai, 2019), career satisfaction, voice behavior, and positive work-family spillover (J. Liu, Kwan, & Mao, 2012), and with mentors' personal learning and work-family enrichment (Mao, Kwan, Chiu, & Zhang, 2016). A review article on mentoring summarized the various benefits of high-quality mentoring and called for future research to

examine the characteristics and processes of such mentorship (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007).

However, there has been little research on the behavioral norms of mentors and their potential influence on protégé perceptions of mentoring quality. To address this research gap and advance the drinking and mentoring literature, this study explores the alcohol use norms of mentors, defined as a mentor's beliefs and perceptions about the legitimacy of alcohol consumption during business encounters with clients (Frone & Brown, 2010; S. Liu, Wang, Bamberger, Shi, & Bacharach, 2015) as a critical factor potentially affecting protégé perceptions of mentorship quality. The main goal of this study is to understand how and why mentor alcohol use norms influence mentorship quality as perceived by protégés.

Drawing on social identity theory, we propose that the alcohol use norms of mentors affect their protégés' identification with them, which in turn influences mentorship quality. "Identification with a mentor" refers to personal identification, characterized by an individual's belief that the mentor has become a reference for self-definition (Pratt, 1998; P. Wang & Rode, 2010). We argue that a protégé's identification with a mentor is impeded by the perception that the mentor's norm is to consume alcohol with clients, and that this diminished identification with the mentor negatively affects mentorship quality.

As mentoring and drinking are culturally specific concepts, we propose that the effects of mentor alcohol use norms are contingent on cultural variables. In China, drinking is regarded as a social tool used to please others and demonstrate respect (Hao et al., 2005), whereas drinking in the West tends to emphasize appreciation and enjoyment (Jiang, 2011). Similarly, compared with Western culture, Chinese culture affords mentors greater respect, giving them a status similar to that of a dignified parent (Shao, 2008; Zhou, Lapointe, & Zhou, 2019). Therefore, we are interested in investigating the role of cultural factors in attenuating the detrimental effects of mentor alcohol use norms on mentoring quality. We suggest that protégé traditionalism, that is, the extent to which protégés hold traditional values (Schwartz, 1992), may make them less sensitive to the alcohol use norms of mentors, providing a boundary condition for the effect of alcohol use norms.

In summary, this study contributes to the mentoring literature in three ways. First, we build a model linking mentor alcohol use norms to protégé perceptions of mentorship quality in a Chinese setting to enhance our understanding of the predictors of mentorship quality. By testing hypotheses about the effects of mentor behavioral norms such as alcohol use, we acquire knowledge that can contribute to effective mentoring. Our approach can help scholars determine whether alcohol use norms are beneficial or detrimental to mentoring effectiveness and challenge the conventional assumption that protégés should model all of their mentors' beliefs and behaviors (Kram, 1985). Our findings can also guide Chinese managers and organizations in selecting mentors and promoting appropriate behavioral norms.

Second, by revealing the mediating role of protégé identification with mentors, this study extends our knowledge of how mentor norms influence mentorship quality. A conceptual paper has called for research to understand how the process of personal identification occurs in mentoring from the viewpoint of both mentor and protégé,

and how such identification is associated with mentorship quality (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Identity has long been regarded as a major component of career development in the mentoring literature (Kram, 1985). Thus, by considering the mediating role of identification with the mentor in the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality, our study answers the call to integrate mentoring and identification into a single model (Humberd & Rouse, 2016), and enriches the drinking and mentoring literature with social identity theory (Pratt, 1998).

Third, we shed light on the moderating role of traditionality, providing a complex picture of the influence of cultural values and the effects of mentor alcohol use norms. We consider the unique Chinese mentoring phenomenon from the perspective of drinking culture, thereby enriching the indigenous management literature following the recommendation by Zhou et al. (2019) to consider cultural values when studying mentoring in China. The model used in our study is depicted in Figure 1.

2 | HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 | Mentor alcohol use norms, protégé identification with mentors, and mentorship quality

Past research on the predictors of mentorship quality has strongly associated mentorship quality with mentorship type (Haggard et al., 2011), mentor-protégé similarity such as demographically matched variables (Allen & Eby, 2003), perceived similarity (Allen & Eby, 2003; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Marchese, 2006), and mentor and protégé personality traits such as proactivity and openness to experience (Wanberg et al., 2006). A recent meta-analysis identified demographics, human capital, and relationship attributes as predictors of mentorship quality (Eby et al., 2013).

However, the effects of mentors' behavioral norms on protégé perceptions of mentoring quality have received little attention. This oversight is surprising, because the importance of behavioral norms to the individual learning and development process within dyadic relationships has long been highlighted (Bandura, 1986). The current mentoring framework is unable to fully explain the influence of such behavioral norms on mentorship quality, despite the core assumption driving the mentoring literature that similarity-attraction affects mentorship quality (Allen & Eby, 2003; Eby et al., 2013). Although this assumption has yielded fruitful findings, its limitations are increasingly apparent in terms of understanding the predictors of mentorship

quality and providing managers and organizations with practical guidance to enhance mentoring effectiveness. The key reason for such limited practical application is that it is difficult to change individual values and/or personalities; thus, organizations are encouraged to focus on mentor and protégé matching (Eby et al., 2013).

A recent conceptual paper on mentoring acknowledged that identification is important to the formation and sustainment of a mentoring relationship, and the authors encouraged researchers to apply social identity theory to explain how identification occurs in mentoring and how protégés identify with mentors (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). They also called for investigation of the predictors and processes through which mentors and protégés identify with each other, and how this identification influences mentorship quality (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). In responding to this call, the present study applies social identity theory, which suggests that individuals identify with other individuals or groups when they are attracted to the characteristics or values of the influencing agent (Kelman, 1958).

Identification is the process by which individuals come to see other people or groups as defining themselves (Pratt, 1998). The target of identification for protégés could be a mentor or an ideal mentor (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Identification in mentoring refers to "the amount of projective self-image or value congruence that the protégé feels toward an idealized mentor" (Bouquillon, Sosik, & Lee, 2005, p. 241). It also involves the process by which protégés find a cognitive overlap between themselves and their mentors in a mentoring relationship (Humberd & Rouse, 2016).

According to social identity theory, individuals have an instinct for positive self-evaluation and are thus attracted to people whose values align with their own, while setting themselves apart from those whose norms they consider wrong (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). Following this line, we suggest that identification with a mentor occurs when a protégé's beliefs about the mentor become self-defining or the mentor's beliefs are used to form the protégé's self-concept (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). In other words, identification occurs when protégés perceive their mentors to be the same sort of people as themselves, or when they adopt and share their mentor's values.

As discussed previously, drinking alcohol is divisive given the double-edged nature of alcohol at work (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). Although alcohol consumption can ease tensions and help to establish relationships among businessmen (Forret & Dougherty, 2001), it also brings many health and social problems (Corrao et al., 2004; Hao et al., 2005). As a result, it attracts certain types of employee but excludes others. Research has posited that the impact of alcohol use at work is often harmless, but can be harmful under

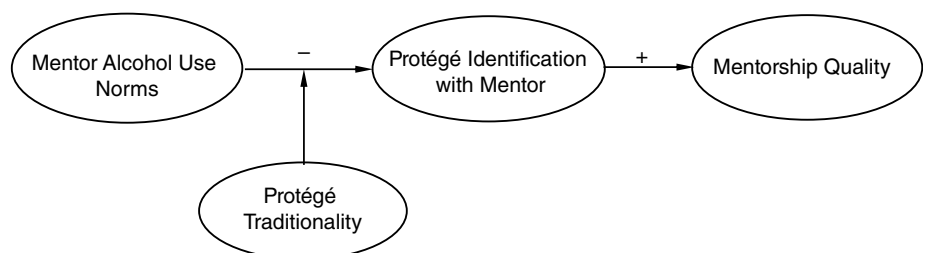


FIGURE 1 The conceptual model of this research. Note: Mentor alcohol use norms were rated by mentors; Protégé traditionality, protégé identification with mentor, and mentorship quality were rated by protégés

certain circumstances (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). This study proposes that mentor alcohol use norms are detrimental in a Chinese mentoring setting.

A mentoring relationship is supposed to provide a protégé with appropriate career direction, and the mentor is believed to act as a role model for working effectively in the organization (Kram, 1985) and balancing work and family life (Greenhaus & Singh, 2007). Exhibiting divisive behavioral norms may not fit with the ideal image of a mentor, as alcohol consumption is related to job withdrawal, work accidents (J. B. Bennett & Lehman, 1998), and aggression toward others (Greenberg & Barling, 1999). Moreover, Chinese people hold a high degree of power distance, and this cultural phenomenon is reflected in alcohol consumption at social gatherings (Xu, 2011). More specifically, people of different classes used different types of drinking vessels in ancient China. Although this custom has disappeared in modern China, Chinese people apply toasts to show hierarchical relationships. In a business setting, low-status employees (e.g., subordinates and protégés) need to drink a toast to high-status people (e.g., supervisors, mentors, and customers) proactively to show respect (Xu, 2011). Such circumstances may make protégés feel pressured to drink to please others and fit in with the mentoring relationship. Worse, low-status people are required by high-status people to empty their glasses (Xu, 2011). Consequently, protégés are at risk of heavy drinking and even sudden death (Chen, 2019). In such circumstances, protégés are likely to evaluate drinking negatively.

This study proposes that mentors' alcohol use norms may impede their protégés' identification with them. As social identity theory suggests, protégé identification with a mentor may be enhanced in two ways: recognition and integration (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). First, recognition occurs when protégés recognize shared values or beliefs between themselves and their mentor through interactions. In other words, the protégé's self-concept can be evoked through recognition of shared values with the mentor. As drinking is divisive, protégés are likely to evaluate mentors' alcohol use norms negatively and thus have difficulty achieving value congruence (Bao & Li, 2019). Second, integration occurs when protégés integrate the values or beliefs of their mentors into their own selves. Protégés' expectations can influence integration because they usually consider where they would like to be in the future (Humberd & Rouse, 2016)—that is, who they would like to become in their career—compared with where they are at present. As protégés identify their mentor as representative of their future (Ragins, 1997), they tend to adjust their self-concept to become more like the mentor (Pratt, 1998). However, as mentor alcohol use norms are divisive and the custom of proactive toasts represents forced drinking in the present and forcing others to drink in the future, mentor alcohol use norms do not accord with protégé expectations of an ideal mentor. Consequently, protégés are less likely to regard their mentor as a change agent in the mentoring relationship, in turn impeding identification with the mentor. In sum, we offer the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 *Mentor alcohol use norms are negatively related to protégé identification with the mentor.*

Mentorship quality is a key aspect of mentorship effectiveness, which encompasses the benefits protégés gain from mentoring and their satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (Allen & Eby, 2003). High-quality mentoring relationships are based on mutual trust and respect and involve close reciprocal exchange (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Social identity theory suggests that individuals tend to assess their own identity positively (Pratt, 1998). Once protégés regard mentorship as part of their identity, they are likely to feel satisfied with and appreciate the relationship to maintain their self-esteem (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Moreover, protégés who identify strongly with their mentor are likely to commit to following in their mentor's footsteps. They may closely observe and emulate their mentor's behavior, even asking for advice on how best to replicate it (Kwan, Mao, & Zhang, 2010). In response, mentors willingly direct more attention and energy toward their protégés, such as by providing access to key social networks or resources or setting special work assignments to enhance the protégés' careers. As a result, protégés gain more support, information, opportunities, and feedback from their mentors, enhancing their careers and personal development (Noe, 1988). Such a reciprocal appreciation and giving and receiving through social exchange result in high-quality mentorship. Consequently, we suggest that protégé identification with the mentor is positively related to mentorship quality.

According to social identity theory, identification with a group or an individual may be a critical mediator between the characteristics of the target group or individual and the quality of the relationship between the focal person and the target (Allen & Eby, 2003; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). As discussed previously, alcohol use is divisive because of the double-edged effects of drinking at work (Klotz & da Motta Veiga, 2018). Demonstrating divisive behavioral norms has a destructive impact on the image of mentors. Alcohol use norms make the values of these mentors less likely to be recognized and integrated into their protégés' own selves, thereby negatively influencing protégé identification with the mentor. As learning and positive affect are facilitated by mutual trust and respect (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007), protégés who do not identify with their mentors are less likely to learn from them and inclined to experience negative affect toward them, decreasing mentorship quality. Such arguments imply a mediating role for identification in the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 *Protégé identification with the mentor mediates the negative relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality.*

2.2 | Moderating role of protégé traditionality

A culture-specific perspective suggests that individuals with different cultural values may have different attitudes toward the same social event and assess it differently (Hofstede, 2001). Drinking and mentoring have a long history in China. Both alcohol use norms and

mentorship are culturally specific concepts rooted in traditional Chinese societies (Hao & Young, 2000; Zhou et al., 2019). Traditional Chinese societies were regulated by Confucian values including the five cardinal relationships, which are called *wu-lun* (K. S. Yang, Yu, & Yeh, 1989). They emphasize the hierarchical relationships between emperor and subject, parent and child, husband and wife, elder and younger, and among friends. Modern Chinese society still observes these traditional Chinese values, which also influence Chinese business practices (X. Y. Liu, Kwan, & Chiu, 2014; K. S. Yang et al., 1989). Employees who adhere to traditional Chinese values are likely to tolerate and fall in line with the divisive norms of authority figures (X. Y. Liu et al., 2014). Under the influence of this Confucian ideology, Chinese people focus on hierarchical relationships during alcohol consumption, such that juniors need to toast their seniors and empty their glass of alcohol proactively (Xu, 2011). Additionally, a mentor is expected to play the role of parent and teacher in the mentorship (Zhou et al., 2019). Mentors not only pass their knowledge on to their protégés but also take care of them. This study thus chooses Chinese traditionality to represent cultural factors and proposes that traditionality reduces the negative effect of mentor alcohol use norms on protégé identification with the mentor.

Chinese traditionality is defined as “the typical pattern of more or less related motivational, evaluative, attitudinal and temperamental traits that is most frequently observed in people in traditional Chinese society and can still be found in people in contemporary Chinese societies” (K. S. Yang, 2003, p. 265). Chinese traditional values fall into five main categories: submission to authority, filial piety, endurance, fatalism, and male dominance (K. S. Yang et al., 1989). The core factor is submission to authority (Farh, Hackett, & Liang, 2007). As in the adage “juniors and seniors have their ranking” (Bond, 1991), the protégé-mentor relationship is hierarchical.

Protégés with high levels of traditionality embrace Confucian values, which include great respect for teachers and acceptance of status differences in organizations (Farh et al., 2007). They believe that mentors are usually right and that protégés should obey them (J. Liu, Kwan, Wu, & Wu, 2010). In addition, establishing and maintaining high-quality mentorship are particularly important to such protégés, given that traditionalists regard a relationship with a high-status person as a key indicator of their own competence and status (Wu et al., 2019). These values encourage protégés to tolerate mentor alcohol use norms, because they tend to accept even divisive mentor values or behavior (J. Liu et al., 2010). In particular, the use of drinking to show hierarchical relationships is rooted in traditional Chinese societies (Xu, 2011).

Social identity theory suggests that when people ascribe aspects of themselves to another person, they tend to identify with that person (Pratt, 1998). As traditional values lead protégés to perceive mentor alcohol use norms as more acceptable, protégés who show a high degree of traditionality are less reactive to mentor alcohol use norms. This helps such protégés to recognize aspects of themselves as shared with their mentors and change their sense of self to more closely resemble their mentors (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Accordingly, traditionalists are less influenced by the detrimental effect of mentor alcohol use norms on their identification with the mentor. Conversely,

protégés with low levels of traditionality are less tolerant of divisive norms or behavior in their mentors, particularly when these are rooted in hierarchical relationships. As they are more reactive to mentor alcohol use norms, it is more difficult for them to find a cognitive overlap between themselves and their mentor. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 *Protégé traditionality moderates the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with the mentor, such that the negative relationship is weaker when the protégé is more traditional.*

Cumulatively, the aforementioned predictions suggest an integrated model in which protégé identification with the mentor mediates the negative relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality, and traditionality moderates the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with the mentor. According to the earlier argument, it is reasonable to propose that traditionality also moderates the strength of the mediating role of protégé identification with the mentor in the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality—a first-stage moderated mediation model (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Formally, we predict the following.

Hypothesis 4 *Protégé traditionality moderates the mediating effect of protégé identification with the mentor in the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality, such that the mediating effect is weaker when traditionality is higher.*

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Sample and procedures

We collected dyadic mentor-protégé data from a financial organization in Shanghai, China, in a three-wave survey with 2-week intervals. To control for protégé job effects, we targeted protégés in financial product sales. Jobs of this kind give protégés many opportunities to meet clients face to face and share meals with them. As the organization provided a 2-year mentoring program for all sales newcomers, the protégés were relatively young and junior. Research has indicated that mentoring relationships have positive effects on the learning process of newcomers during early organizational socialization, such that protégés generally rely on mentors to acquire information about their new setting (task, role, and organization) (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). The aim of the formal mentoring program in place at this organization was to help protégés advance their careers and share feelings and personal issues. The program also offered a critical channel for mentors to transfer basic work skills and informal work norms to protégés, because role modeling and special coaching on the job are important functions of mentoring (Kwan et al., 2010; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). The mentors were self-nominated and the organization selected mentors whom it

regarded as role models. Consistent with other formal mentoring programs (Allen et al., 2006), the mentors and protégés were matched by the human resources department based on job functions and other job-related characteristics (e.g., department). Although the organization did not provide formal training for mentors, formal training was compulsory for protégés. The training included information on the role of mentoring and its benefits to a protégé.

With the help of the human resources department, 540 formal mentoring relationships were identified. The questionnaires were coded before being distributed to the target respondents, accompanied by an explanation of the study procedure. The respondents returned their completed questionnaires by mail. To assess whether respondents had a mentorship, we provided a well-developed definition of mentor in our surveys: "A mentor is generally defined as a higher-ranking, influential individual in the work environment who has advanced experience and knowledge and is committed to providing upward mobility and support to the career of an individual. Your mentor/protégé may or may not be in your department and s/he may or may not be your immediate supervisor/subordinate" (Mao et al., 2016; Ragins et al., 2000). The respondents needed to confirm their current mentoring relationships before rating any key variables.

In the first wave, 540 questionnaires were sent to mentors and protégés. After matching and deleting unusable responses, 468 dyadic responses were collected. The mentors provided information on their alcohol use norms and demographic characteristics (gender, age, job tenure, position, and marital status), and the protégés rated their traditionality and supplied demographic information (gender, age, education, and job tenure) and information about their current mentoring relationship (duration, number of meetings, mentor rank, mentor department, and supervisory relationship). Two weeks after the first wave, a second wave of 468 questionnaires was distributed to protégés who had completed the first-wave survey, and 317 responses were received. In this wave, protégés rated their identification with their mentor during the past 2 weeks. In the third wave, 2 weeks after the second, 317 questionnaires were sent out and 210 were returned. In this wave, the protégés were asked to rate the quality of their mentorship quality during the past 2 weeks. Finally, 210 usable sets of dyadic data were collected, giving a response rate of 38.89%.

Of the mentors, 63.80% were male. The average age was 29.73, and they had worked at the organization for an average of 5.09 years. More than half (57.60%) were managers (e.g., frontline managers) and 54.64% were married. Of the protégés, 46.20% were male, and their average age was 24.06. Most (81.90%) held a Master's degree or higher and had an average job tenure of 0.99 years. The average mentoring relationship had lasted 6.36 months, with the protégé and mentor meeting 12.32 times per month. In 95.2% of cases, the mentors and protégés worked in the same department, and 79% of the mentors were also their protégés' supervisors.

3.2 | Measures

All of the key measurement scales used were Chinese versions previously validated for use in a Chinese setting. All of the key variables except for the control variables were measured using

5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

3.2.1 | Alcohol use norms

A five-item scale developed by S. Liu et al. (2015) was used to measure the alcohol use norms of the mentors. A sample item is "Drinking alcohol together is an important part of my interactions with my clients." The reliability was .96.

3.2.2 | Traditionality

A five-item scale originally developed by K. S. Yang et al. (1989) and later by X. Y. Liu et al. (2014) was used to measure protégé traditionality. A sample item is "The chief government official is like the head of a household; the citizen should obey his decision on all state matters." The reliability was 0.89.

3.2.3 | Protégé identification with mentor

A 10-item scale developed by Kark et al. (2003) was adapted to measure this factor. This scale was originally used to measure employee identification with a leader and then successfully applied by M. Wang, Kwan, and Zhou (2017) in China. A sample item is "When someone criticizes my mentor, it feels like a personal insult to me." The reliability was 0.91.

3.2.4 | Mentorship quality

A five-item scale originally developed by Allen and Eby (2003) and later applied in a Chinese setting by J. Liu et al. (2012) was used to measure the quality of the mentoring relationship as perceived by protégés. A sample item is "The mentoring quality between my mentor and me is very effective." The reliability was 0.89.

3.2.5 | Control variables

Prior theoretical and empirical research on mentoring (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990) has indicated that perceptions of the mentoring relationship are influenced by the demographics of both mentor and protégé and by relationship factors (Haggard et al., 2011). To control for these potential effects, we entered the demographic characteristics of the mentors (gender, age, job tenure, position, and marital status) and protégés (gender, age, education, and job tenure) into the analysis as covariates. To consider the effect of mentorship characteristics, we followed Ragins et al. (2000) in controlling for relationship information such as mentorship duration (i.e., "How long has this relationship lasted?"), number of meetings (i.e., "How

many times do you meet your mentor per month?”), mentor rank (i.e., “How many levels are there between your mentor and yourself?”), mentor department (i.e., “Are you and your mentor in the same department?”), and supervisory relationship (i.e., “Is your present mentor your supervisor?”). To alleviate concerns about potential problems with the statistical control variables, as recommended by Becker (2005), we conducted the data analysis with and without the control variables, and found that the results did not differ significantly. To provide more information regarding the effect of control variables on the mediator and outcome variable, we present the results of the data analysis with the control variables in the next section.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis with Mplus 8.0 was used to estimate the convergent and discriminant validity of our variables. Considering the small sample size associated with our scale items (Landis, Beal, & Tesluk, 2000), we used item parceling to reduce the number of estimated parameters (Nasser & Wisenbaker, 2003). We created three indicators for each construct (mentor alcohol use norms, traditionality, protégé identification with mentor, and mentorship quality) that involved more than three items (Mathieu & Farr, 1991). Specifically, the highest and lowest factor loading items were combined to form the first indicator, the second highest and lowest formed the next indicator, and so forth, creating three parcels. The results (Table 1) indicated that the four-factor model fit the data acceptably ($\chi^2 = 311.67$, $df = 48$, $p < .01$, $RSMR = 0.05$, $CFI = 0.90$, $TLI = 0.86$, and $AIC = 4,130.49$). All of the factor loadings linking the expected construct and indicator were significant, indicating a good level of convergent validity. We then used model comparison to examine the distinctiveness of the four key variables. In particular, we contrasted the proposed four-factor model with three three-factor models, one two-factor model, and one one-factor model. The results (Table 1) show that the four-factor model yielded

better fit indexes than any of the alternative models. Therefore, the results support the discriminant validity of the key measures.

4.2 | Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics (means, *SDs*, and correlations) and the reliability of the estimated variables are shown in Table 2.

4.3 | Hypothesis testing

Hierarchical multiple regression with SPSS 22.0 and bootstrapping processes with Mplus 8.0 were used to test the hypotheses. The regression results are presented in Table 3. Hypothesis 1 related to the main negative effect of mentor alcohol use norms on identification with the mentor. The results (Model 2) showed that mentor alcohol use norms were significantly and negatively associated with identification with the mentor ($\beta = -.14$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that protégé identification with the mentor mediates the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality. We first tested the mediating effect of identification with the mentor using SPSS 22.0 (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Model 2 indicated that mentor alcohol use norms were negatively related to protégé identification with the mentor ($\beta = -.14$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .01$). Model 7 indicated a significantly positive relationship between protégé identification with the mentor and mentorship quality ($\beta = .76$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .001$). When both mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with the mentor were included in the model (Model 8), identification with the mentor still significantly predicted mentorship quality ($\beta = -.74$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .001$), but the effect of mentor alcohol use norms on mentorship quality became insignificant ($\beta = -.04$; $SE = 0.03$; *n.s.*). Hypothesis 2 was thus preliminarily supported. The bootstrapping results with 10,000 resamples (Muthén, Muthén, & Asparouhov, 2017) presented in Table 4 also

TABLE 1 Results of confirmatory factor analyses

Models	χ^2	<i>Df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$ (<i>df</i>)	SRMR	CFI	TLI	AIC
Four-factor model: The measurement model	311.67	48		0.05	0.90	0.86	4,130.49
Three-factor model 1: Protégé traditionality and protégé identification with mentor combined	519.79	51	208.12**(3) ^a	0.09	0.82	0.76	4,332.61
Three-factor model 2: Protégé identification with mentor and mentorship quality combined	381.74	51	70.07**(3) ^a	0.06	0.87	0.83	4,194.56
Three-factor model 3: Protégé traditionality and mentorship quality combined	580.47	51	268.80**(3) ^a	0.09	0.79	0.73	4,393.30
Two-factor model: Protégé rated variables combined	600.11	53	288.44**(5) ^a	0.09	0.79	0.73	4,408.93
One-factor model: All items loaded on one factor	1,709.79	54	1,398.12**(6) ^a	0.35	0.35	0.20	5,516.61

Note: $N = 210$.

Abbreviations: AIC, akaike information criteria; CFI, comparative fit index; SRMR, standardized root-mean square residual; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index.

^aModel was compared with the four-factor model.

** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

TABLE 2 Means, SDs, and correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1. Mentor gender																			
2. Mentor age	0.15*																		
3. Mentor job tenure	0.08	0.93**																	
4. Mentor position	0.10	0.48**	0.47**																
5. Mentor marital status	-0.21**	-0.49**	-0.57**	-0.21**															
6. Protégé gender	0.20**	0.25**	0.21**	-0.21**	-0.10														
7. Protégé age	0.14	0.36**	0.33**	0.15*	-0.30**	0.55**													
8. Protégé education	-0.10	0.22**	0.21**	-0.02	0.01	0.19**	0.31**												
9. Protégé job tenure	0.09	0.48**	0.46**	0.08	-0.18**	0.39**	0.61**	0.16*											
10. Mentorship duration	0.01	0.52**	0.55**	0.11	-0.33**	0.37**	0.58**	0.05	0.67**										
11. Meet time per month	0.05	-0.20**	-0.28**	-0.05	0.31**	-0.23**	-0.23**	-0.11	0.08	-0.29**									
12. Mentor rank	-0.08	0.10	0.09	0.14*	-0.18**	-0.09	-0.13	0.19**	-0.03	-0.04	0.01								
13. Mentor department	-0.30**	-0.28**	-0.23**	-0.22**	0.05	-0.21**	-0.13	-0.19**	-0.01	-0.14*	0.08	-0.08							
14. Direct supervisor	-0.32**	-0.02	0.00	0.04	-0.11	-0.13	0.05	-0.06	-0.12	-0.06	-0.05	-0.15*	0.43**						
15. Mentor alcohol use norms	0.20**	-0.09	-0.08	-0.12	-0.07	0.23**	0.08	-0.10	0.08	-0.11	0.08	-0.17*	0.03	-0.22**	(.96)				
16. Protégé traditionality	-0.13	-0.02	-0.01	-0.39**	-0.07	0.04	-0.23**	-0.19**	-0.12	-0.01	-0.07	0.03	0.20**	0.09	-0.05	(.89)			
17. Protégé identification with mentor	0.11	-0.05	-0.07	-0.25**	-0.02	-0.08	-0.14*	-0.22**	-0.16*	0.11	-0.11	-0.11	0.02	-0.07	-0.21**	0.62**	(.91)		
18. Mentorship quality	0.12	-0.10	-0.19**	-0.38**	0.26**	0.04	-0.17*	-0.06	-0.09	0.04	0.18**	-0.05	-0.05	-0.08	-0.22**	0.41**	0.75**	(.89)	
Mean	1.64	29.73	5.09	1.84	1.45	1.46	24.07	4.82	0.99	6.36	12.31	1.84	1.05	1.21	2.27	2.69	3.81	4.03	
SD	0.48	3.77	3.41	0.84	0.50	0.50	1.85	0.39	0.78	6.28	7.72	0.93	0.21	0.41	1.01	1.01	0.60	0.62	

Note: N = 210. Mentor and protégé gender: 1 = female, 2 = male; mentor position: 1 = frontline employee, 2 = frontline manager, 3 = middle-level manager, 4 = top manager, and 5 = director; mentor marital status: 1 = married, 2 = not married; protégé education: 1 = middle school or below, 2 = high school, 3 = community college, 4 = Bachelor's degree, 5 = Master's degree or above; mentor rank = the number of organizational levels between a mentor and a protégé; mentor department: 1 = same department as protégé, 2 = different department than protégé; direct supervisor: 1 = mentor was direct supervisor, 2 = mentor was not direct supervisor. Bracketed values on the diagonal are the Cronbach's alpha value of each scale.

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

** $p < .01$.

TABLE 3 Results of hierarchical regression analysis

	Protégé identification with mentor				Mentorship quality			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Control variables								
Mentor gender	0.23* (.09)	0.23* (0.09)	0.28*** (0.07)	0.28** (0.07)	0.33*** (0.09)	0.33*** (0.09)	0.16** (0.05)	0.16** (0.05)
Mentor age	0.06* (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03* (0.02)	0.08** (0.03)	0.07** (0.03)	0.04* (0.02)	0.03* (0.02)
Mentor job tenure	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.05* (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Mentor position	-0.31*** (0.07)	-0.30*** (0.06)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.06)	-0.40*** (0.06)	-0.39*** (0.06)	-0.17*** (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.04)
Mentor marital status	0.06 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.24*** (0.05)	0.20*** (0.05)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.18*** (0.03)
Protégé gender	-0.30** (0.11)	-0.21* (0.11)	-0.25** (0.08)	-0.23** (0.08)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.10)	0.09 (0.06)	0.11 (0.06)
Protégé age	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Protégé education	-0.29* (0.12)	-0.32** (0.12)	-0.08 (0.09)	-0.10 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.11)	-0.11 (0.11)	0.14* (0.07)	0.13 (0.07)
Protégé job tenure	-0.34*** (0.09)	-0.31*** (0.09)	-0.20** (0.07)	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.33*** (0.08)	-0.30*** (0.08)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)
Mentorship duration	0.04*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)
Meet time per month	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.00)	0.02*** (0.00)
Mentor rank	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.09* (0.04)	-0.09** (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.08** (0.03)	0.07* (0.03)
Mentor department	0.16 (0.22)	0.25 (0.22)	0.00 (0.17)	-0.12 (0.18)	-0.07 (0.21)	0.01 (0.21)	-0.20 (0.13)	-0.17 (0.13)
Direct supervisor	-0.12 (0.11)	-0.22 (0.11)	-0.23* (0.09)	-0.21* (0.9)	0.12 (0.11)	0.01 (0.11)	0.21** (0.07)	0.18* (0.07)
Independent variable								
Mentor alcohol use norms		-0.14** (0.04)	-0.11** (0.03)	-0.12*** (0.03)		-0.14*** (0.04)		-0.04 (0.03)
Moderator								
Protégé traditionality			0.38*** (0.03)	0.36*** (0.04)				
Interaction								
Mentor alcohol use norms × Protégé traditionality				0.09* (0.04)				
Mediator								
Protégé identification with mentor							0.76*** (0.04)	0.74*** (0.04)
R ²	0.30	0.34	0.59	0.61	0.40	0.44	0.78	0.78
ΔR ²		0.04**	0.29***	0.02*		0.04**	0.38***	0.34***
F	5.87***	6.52***	17.87***	17.53***	9.18***	9.94***	45.17***	42.75***

Note: N = 210. SEs are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

indicated a significant indirect effect of mentor alcohol use norms on mentorship quality through identification with the mentor ($\beta = -.09$; SE = 0.03; $p < .01$; 95% bias-corrected CI [-0.15, -0.03], excluding zero), further supporting Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that protégé traditionality moderates the effect of mentor alcohol use norms on protégé identification with the mentor. As indicated by the results in Table 3, the interaction between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé traditionality was significantly

Mentor alcohol use norms (X) → Protégé identification with mentor (M) → mentorship quality (Y)			
Relationships	β	SE	95% bias-corrected CI
Mean level	-.09	0.03	[-0.15, -0.03]
Conditional indirect effect			
Low protégé traditionality (-1 SD)	-.16	0.04	[-0.24, -0.07]
High protégé traditionality (+1 SD)	-.02	0.05	[-0.11, 0.07]
Difference	.13	0.07	[0.01, 0.26]

Note: N = 210. Bootstrapping = 10,000.

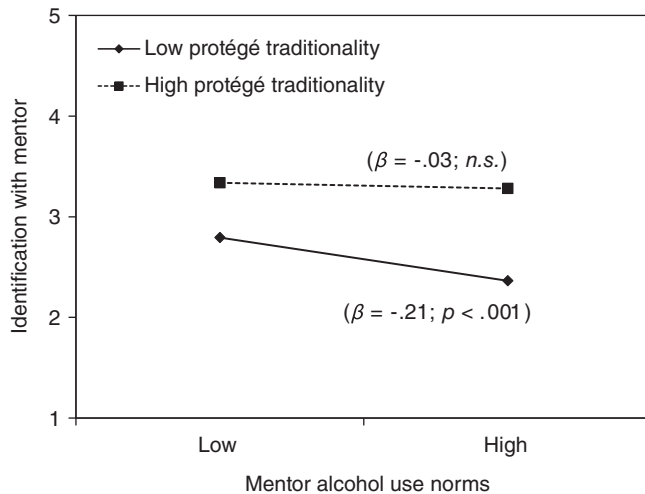


FIGURE 2 The moderating effect of protégé traditionality on the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with mentor

and positively related to protégé identification with the mentor ($\beta = .09$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .05$). To further test the moderating effect of traditionality, we conducted a simple slope test (Aiken & West, 1991) on low (1 SD lower than the mean) and high (1 SD higher than the mean) traditionality. Figure 2 shows that mentor alcohol use norms were significantly and negatively related to identification with the mentor for protégés with low traditionality ($\beta = -.21$; $SE = 0.05$; $p < .001$), but did not predict identification with the mentor among protégés with high traditionality ($\beta = -.03$; $SE = 0.05$; $n.s.$). The difference between the effect of mentor alcohol use norms on identification with the mentor among protégés with higher and lower traditionality was also significant ($\Delta\beta = .18$; $SE = 0.07$; $p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

To test Hypothesis 4, we analyzed the conditional indirect effect of mentor alcohol use norms on mentorship quality through protégé identification with the mentor at two different protégé traditionality levels (1 SD below and above the mean) using Mplus 8.0 with 10,000 resamples (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). The results of the bootstrapping analysis (see Table 4) indicated that the link between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality through protégé identification with the mentor was significant for low protégé traditionality (-1 SD; $\beta = -.16$; $SE = 0.04$; $p < .001$; 95% bias-corrected CI [-0.24, -0.07], excluding zero) but not high traditionality (+1 SD; $\beta = -.02$; $SE = 0.05$;

TABLE 4 Result of conditional indirect effect of protégé traditionality

$n.s.$; 95% bias-corrected CI [-0.11, 0.07], including zero). Table 4 reveals that the difference in indirect effect for high versus low traditionality was also significant ($\Delta\beta = .13$; $SE = 0.06$; $p < .05$; 95% bias-corrected CI [0.01, 0.26], excluding zero). Hence, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

5 | DISCUSSION

This study used mentor-protégé dyadic data collected in China to test a proposed model of how and when mentor alcohol use norms influence mentorship quality. In particular, protégé identification with the mentor was found to mediate the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and mentorship quality, while protégé traditionality alleviated the effects of mentor alcohol use norms. Our findings have important theoretical and practical implications.

5.1 | Theoretical implications

First, according to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974), our study revealed that mentor alcohol use norms are negatively associated with mentorship quality. Although past research has found various antecedents of mentorship quality (Allen & Eby, 2003; Wanberg et al., 2006) and developed the concept of negative mentoring experiences (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008), we know little about the effects of divisive mentor norms or behaviors, and our study is the first attempt to explore this. This approach is consistent with other pioneering mentoring research that has underscored the importance of examining variables associated with behavior (Allen, Shockley, & Poteat, 2010). Our findings indicate the potential benefit of shifting scholarly attention within the mentoring literature from the matching of mentors and protégés to specific behavioral norms not directed toward the protégé. Our study challenges the conventional knowledge that all of a mentor's beliefs and behaviors should be modeled (Kram, 1985), and can guide future research to focus on other divisive mentor norms or behaviors, such as smoking (Hao & Young, 2000) or unethical pro-organizational behavior (Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). Although these types of behavior are not directed toward the protégé, their potential to influence mentorship quality and/or the protégé is important and should not be overlooked.

Second, in accordance with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974), our study found that the negative relationship between mentor

alcohol use norms and mentorship quality is mediated by protégé identification with the mentor. This finding fills a gap in the literature by showing how the process of personal identification occurs in mentoring from the perspective of both mentor and protégé, and how such identification relates to mentorship quality (Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Thus, our research also contributes broadly to the mentoring literature by using identification to understand the effect of mentor behavioral norms on the quality of the mentoring relationship. Previous research on mentorship quality has been based mainly on the similarity-attraction paradigm (Allen & Eby, 2003), which simply explains why certain mentor characteristics can predict mentorship quality; it does not account for the effects of divisive mentor values or behaviors. Our findings provide evidence that social identity theory is key to interpreting the mediating mechanism by which mentor values affect mentorship quality.

Third, this study found that traditionality moderates the relationship between mentor alcohol use norms and protégé identification with the mentor, such that the negative relationship is weaker among protégés with high rather than low levels of traditionality. Staunch traditionalists are more likely to respect and obey their seniors' values and believe that their mentors are right. These findings answer the call by Zhou et al. (2019) to consider Chinese culture in mentoring research. In addition, our study and other pioneering work in the mentoring and traditionality arenas (Wu et al., 2019) can guide future mentoring research to pay attention to cultural factors, especially in high-context countries such as China, Korea, and Japan (Lin & Sun, 2018; Q. Wang, Liao, & Burns, 2019). Other potential cultural variables such as *guanxi* (Xin & Pearce, 1996) and Confucian introspection (Z. Wang, Liu, & Ye, 2017) may also create cultural boundary conditions for the effects of mentor values or behaviors.

5.2 | Practical implications

In practical terms, the current findings highlight the importance of mentor selection. Mentors are critical role models and agents for protégés to learn from and socialize with (C. C. Yang, Hu, Baranik, & Lin, 2013). Thus, mentors with good values and behavior are likely to benefit their protégés and the organization. Organizations should improve their mentor selection processes and introduce mentor training programs that teach employees how to be good mentors, such as by reducing the demonstration of their alcohol use norms when interacting with a protégé. In addition, the effects of mentor alcohol use norms on mentorship quality highlight the negative influence of China's drinking culture, even though consuming alcohol with clients may facilitate client relationships and business. Organizations may also need to establish anti-alcohol policies to reduce the physical and social availability of alcohol in the workplace.

Second, managers may wish to promote traditional values through training, because such values will make protégés less reactive to divisive mentor values or behavior. However, traditional values regarding tolerance may also encourage drinking, because highly traditional protégés are likely to keep quiet and follow the

norms of their mentors. Hence, encouraging traditional values is a double-edged sword. Organizations should view reducing alcohol use as a priority.

Our findings also provide practical implications for mentors and protégés. Mentors need to think about their behavior and norms, and the signals they send to protégés. If mentors have divisive habits or norms including drinking, smoking, or unethical pro-organizational behavior, they should consider restraining them or not exhibiting them in front of protégés. When protégés have a mentor who engages in divisive behavior, they should focus on the positive aspects of the mentor (e.g., supportive and career-oriented) and not model the divisive behavior. Through effective communication, both parties could help each other to understand the appropriate norms in a mentoring relationship.

5.3 | Limitations

This study has three limitations. First, all of the mentoring relationships in our study were formal, and the demographics of the mentors and protégés were not entirely typical (e.g., relatively young and little work experience). As protégés are probably more likely to tolerate divisive mentor values or behaviors if they have less freedom to choose their mentors in a formal mentorship, the effects of mentor alcohol use norms could have been mitigated in our study. Thus, future research should test our model in an informal mentoring setting. Additionally, although the purpose of the mentoring program was to help the protégés advance their career, these individuals were on average in their first year of employment with the organization. Hence, more attention would be directed toward the protégés learning their jobs than developing their careers. The mentors were also not so senior, and thus would focus on providing on-the-job coaching rather than career advancement opportunities. Future research could replicate and extend our findings in the context of mentoring programs with characteristics different from those in this study (e.g., protégés with longer job tenure and mentors with more seniority).

Second, the data used were collected through questionnaires, which may have introduced reverse causality, such as the possibility that protégés in higher-quality mentoring relationships are more likely to identify with their mentors. However, this concern may be alleviated by the insights provided by social identity theory and mentoring-related theories, which highlight identification as a critical antecedent of high mentorship quality (Allen & Eby, 2003; Hernandez et al., 2017; Humberd & Rouse, 2016). Nevertheless, other research designs, such as personal interviews and vignette experiments, could be used in future mentoring research.

Finally, protégé attitudes toward alcohol use for work purposes were not measured. Hence, we do not know whether protégé attitude is also a key moderator providing a boundary condition for the effects of mentor alcohol use norms. As discussed previously, a misfit between mentors and protégés strongly undermines personal identification and relationship quality. Future research should include protégé

attitude toward alcohol use in the model and test its moderating effects.

6 | CONCLUSION

Drinking is divisive given the double-edged nature of alcohol at work. Although drinking is often harmless, it can be detrimental under certain settings. Drawing on social identity theory, this study examined the impact of drinking in a mentoring relationship. The results of this study demonstrate that mentor alcohol use norms are highly associated with mentorship quality. Protégé identification with the mentor is a key mediator of this association, while protégé traditionality is a critical moderator. Our study provides a springboard for further study of the potentially detrimental effects of mentor values and behavior on the establishment of effective mentoring relationships.

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