

## **Are self-leaders more willing to mentor others? A study among Indian and Spanish university teachers**

*Purpose:* This study aims to understand the influence of self-leadership on the intention to mentor among university teachers considering the mediating role of self-efficacy and the moderating role of individualism-collectivism dimensions.

*Design/methodology/approach:* A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data from Indian and Spanish university teachers. SEM and hierarchical multiple regression analysis were used to theorize about the relationship between self-leadership and intention to mentor, and the potential influence of self-efficacy and cultural variables in this relationship.

*Findings:* Self-leadership strategies influence the intention to mentor through university teachers' self-efficacy. The positive relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor becomes stronger when the respondents are inclined towards vertical collectivistic or horizontal individualistic values.

*Research limitations/implications:* The study extends mentoring literature since it incorporates both individual and cultural variables, allowing observing their interplay and giving a holistic understanding of the issue. The main limitation of the study is its cross-sectional survey design, which is the use of data collected from a single-sitting, self-reporting measure. Different procedures were used to control method biases.

*Practical implications:* Intention to mentor can help university teachers (especially the younger staffs) and students to establish the process that can reinforce their commitment towards realistic goals. In the long term, entering into a mentoring relationship might boost self-efficacy and self-leadership qualities of the mentors themselves.

*Originality/value:* The comprehensiveness and relevance of the variables in the context chosen is the primary strength of this research. In the scenario of increasing professionalization and globalization, the cross-cultural nature of this study brings in a global perspective of the research problem.

**Keywords:** Self-leadership, self-efficacy, intention to mentor, cross-cultural study, individualism-collectivism.

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## **Introduction**

The emergence of a knowledge-based economy has led to the increased professionalization of work force (Antal International, 2015). Professionals are characterized by long periods of extensive training and specialized education (Shulman, 1998). Compared to individuals at managerial roles, professionals enjoy a high level of autonomy in their work sphere and are governed more by the internalized ethical values of the profession than by their managers or organizational rules and procedures (Forsyth and Danisiewicz, 1985). Thus, professionalized jobs are considered to be self-governed and not externally governed (Weggeman, 1989). Recent changes in the social structures, technology and demographics have also increased the need for self-direction in most careers (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

Employee self-governance requires self-influence in the form of discipline and direction, the qualities which can be grouped under the taxonomy of self-leadership (Neck and Manz, 1992). Most theorists have construed self-leadership as a self-influence process involving a set of behavioural and cognitive strategies, which are broadly classified into three groups, namely: behaviour focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought process strategies (Anderson and Prussia, 1997). Setting goals and aligning oneself towards them, rewarding oneself when those goals are achieved, and self-correction during deviation from those goals are some forms of behaviour focused strategies. Natural reward strategies aim to improve the perception of inherent positive elements in a given task, which is similar to that of finding an innate meaning in the given task rather than looking for external rewards. Constructive thought pattern strategies involve challenging irrational belief

systems, mental imagery of successful performance and positive self-talk (Neck and Houghton, 2006). These self-leadership qualities are highly relevant for professionalized jobs with high levels of autonomy and self-control (Manz and Sims, 1987).

From an organization's point of view, using traditional measures of managerial and leadership control may not be effective in managing such self-directed workforces. In the context of self-directed and autonomous work force, leadership might involve encouraging others to lead themselves. Manz and Sims (1991) call this form of leadership as super-leadership. Being self-leaders themselves, super-leaders might be highly motivated to inculcate those qualities in their followers (Houghton *et al.*, 2003). Demonstrating the benefits of self-leadership qualities to others as a role model might involve creating nurturing relationships like a mentoring relationship. Thus, it would be very interesting to analyse if self-leaders commit themselves to the idea of creating leaders out of followers by mentoring others in the organization.

The relationship between self-leadership qualities and willingness to mentor can be explained by the improved sense of security and control among self-leaders. Especially, self-leadership as a self-regulatory mechanism can improve an individual's perception of self-control and self-confidence and this can translate into higher levels of self-efficacy (Neck and Houghton, 2006). In this sense, self-efficacy is one's judgement of "how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (Bandura, 1982, p. 122) and it is also a strong determinant of a person's behaviour, thought pattern and emotional response in reaction to challenging situations.

Among various professionals, academic jobs are considered to be protean careers in which the individuals are self-driven, and their personal values drive their career progress (Baruch and Hall, 2004). According to Higgins and Kram (2001), relational influences like

mentoring can serve as a key resource for such kind of employees. So, understanding the influence of self-leadership on intention to mentor through academicians' self-efficacy might give valuable insights, specifically because both variables are highly relevant in the context of academic profession (Demir, 2008).

Increased globalization and mobility of people across national boundaries have created the need to understand the role of cultural orientation in employees' behaviour. Cultural values can have a strong influence on the career attitudes of the employees (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011). Many contextual factors like cultural values, political environment, economy along with personal factors can influence an individual's journey in his/her career path (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). For example, Segers *et al.* (2008) found that individuals in lower power distance cultures were more self-directed in their career management. This study also argues that employees with different cultural orientations may have widely different career needs and may be motivated by different career factors. Thus, understanding the influence of cultural values on the work behaviour of professionals like academicians can bring in valuable insights.

The significance of this study is the selection of variables and the study context because it is quite novel to analyse the role of self-leadership for teacher's effectiveness in higher educational institutions across different nationalities. Selecting university level teachers is a key highlight of this study because their role is expected to be that of a nurturant one. In fact, most societies expect the teacher to imbibe holistic development of other people through mentoring (Davis, 2003). So, the primary objective of the present study is to understand the effect of self-leadership on the intention to mentor through Spanish and Indian university teachers' self-efficacy, considering different cultural values.

## **The concept of Self-leadership**

Self-leadership is a process involving control and influence of one's own behaviour through certain behavioural and cognitive strategies (Manz, 1986). Employees who regulate their actions in a positive direction can be an asset to the organization, wherein they not only perform effectively but also influence people around them as role models (Gong *et al.*, 2009).

The concept of self-leadership borrows heavily from the larger theoretical framework of self-influence (Neck and Houghton, 2006). According to behavioural self-regulation approach (Carver and Scheier, 1981, 1998), individuals monitor and control the balance between their aspirations and actual behaviour through a self-regulatory process that helps to reduce the discrepancy between one's own performance standard and the effort exerted. Bandura's (1986) theory of social cognition also has a strong relevance to self-leadership. Similar to self-regulation theory, social cognitive theory establishes an individual's self-regulatory system as a product of three processes, namely: self-monitoring, self-judgment and self-reaction (Neck and Houghton, 2006). Self-leadership strategies are also closely related to the concept of intrinsic motivation (Manz, 1986). Unlike self-management strategies, which focus on the external rewards as a result of successful completion of the task, self-leadership focus on the natural rewards which are the rewarding nature of the task itself (Neck and Houghton, 2006).

Previous studies on self-leadership in work context were primarily focused on the areas of self-managing work groups (Manz and Sims, 1986, 1987) and empowering leadership (Manz and Sims, 1991). In fact, empowering leadership in contrary to mainstream leadership models of the 1970s insisted on the notion of empowering followers and creating self-leaders as an effective leadership practice (Manz and Sims, 1991). The concept of empowering leadership is like that of super-leadership, which is helping the subordinates to

lead themselves more effectively (Neck and Houghton, 2006). As leadership qualities, self-leadership and super-leadership are connected in many ways. A super-leader not only creates self-directed subordinates but also becomes a self-leader him/herself demonstrating the benefits of those self-leadership qualities to others as a role model.

According to Houghton *et al.* (2012), to measure self-leadership it is necessary to consider three sub-dimensions, behavioural awareness and volition (BAV), task motivation (TM) and constructive cognition (CC). BAV involved self-observation and self-goal setting which can be categorized as behaviour focused strategies of self-leadership. TM factor involves visualizing successful performance and self-reward and represents both the behaviour focused and constructive thought process strategies dimensions. The CC factor includes self-talk and evaluating beliefs and thus represents constructive thought process strategies of self-leadership.

The researches on self-leadership in university context and those analysing the relationship between self-leadership and other outcomes are scarce. Self-leadership strategies are highly relevant for the successful career of professionals including university teachers. In most cases, apart from the broader organizational guidelines for career advancements, performance targets of university teachers are highly internalized and are associated with long terms career goals (Austin, 2002).

### **Intention to mentor as an outcome**

Mentoring is defined as a process through which the older experienced individual (mentor) acts as a guide, counsellor and a friend to a younger or inexperienced individual (mentee), with potential benefits to the mentees (Koyuncu *et al.*, 2014). Among various factors which affect the effectiveness of a mentoring program, the mentors' willingness or intention to

mentor plays a crucial role (Ragins and Scandura, 1994). Various theories in social psychology have also noted the role of intentions in actual behaviour of an individual (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Specifically, the theory of planned behaviour suggests individuals' attitude towards behaviour leads to intentions which in turn leads to actual behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). So, considering intention to mentor can help understand the individual's discretionary preferences to get involved in a mentoring process, aiming to avoid already existing mentoring relationships potentially influenced by external factors like formal mentoring programmes prescribed by the own organization. Previous research on mentoring has used the mentors' willingness to mentor as the outcome variable (Allen *et al.*, 1997; Ragins and Scandura, 1999; Bear and Hwang, 2015; Banerjee-Batist *et al.*, 2019).

Being self-aware and having the ability to manage one's own emotional state and cope with hardships are some of the crucial predispositions of an effective mentor (Leban and Zulauf, 2004). Intention to mentor is considered as a crucial super-leadership quality because it acts as a starting point for nurturing such self-leadership practices within the organization (Kram and Hall, 1996). Based on career and life stage theories, Allen (2003) proposes that mentors might be motivated to get into mentoring relationships primarily to fulfil their own developmental needs. Thus, teachers who are high in self-leadership qualities would be more willing to mentor others and help their mentees become self-reliant. It could be thought that a teacher's responsibilities encompass the role of a mentor to the students (Stanulis, 1995), but if mentoring is understood as a process that involves teachers and students in a deeper relationship than that based on teaching activity, this kind of process do not arise in all cases. Thus, the social expectation of the role of a teacher as a mentor to the students is an implicit one and in many cases it does not agree with a formal job description. So, teachers' mentoring behaviours can be often discretionary and extra-role in nature (DeAngelo *et al.*, 2016).

The need for faculty-faculty level of mentoring is also acute, as most academic careers emphasize individuals to choose their own career paths and take care of their progress in those chosen paths (Young *et al.*, 2005). Self-leadership qualities can help in situations where the structure and certainty in career paths are low. They may increase the willingness to mentor, encouraging teachers to mentor younger colleagues who are in the early stages of their careers (Manz and Neck, 2004). The crucial link which connects self-leadership qualities and willingness to mentor is the level of control one perceives over his/her life (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007), which is related to the concept of self-efficacy.

### **The role of Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997) proposes that efficacy beliefs are strong determinant of people's choice of goals, and their effort and persistence in achieving those goals. Social cognitive perspective considers self-efficacy as a dynamic quality which is linked to particular performance domains which are task specific (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is also considered as a generalized state of mind (Chen *et al.*, 2001). Generalized self-efficacy represents "the individuals' perception of their ability to perform across a variety of situations" (Judge *et al.*, 1998, p. 170). Researches have shown a positive impact of leadership on self-efficacy and many of these studies focus on external leadership rather than self-leadership (Karl *et al.*, 1993). As a construct, self-efficacy is closely associated with self-leadership. In this sense, self-regulatory strategies have proximal connection to the concept of confidence in terms of perception of one's own personal capabilities (Neck and Houghton, 2006). According to social learning theory, modelling in the form of self-instructional thoughts (labelled as cognitive modelling) is an influential antecedent of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). These self-instructional thoughts are similar to

constructive thought patterns associated with self-leadership. So, self-leadership strategies like natural reward and thought pattern strategies are aimed to enhance self-efficacy perceptions (Manz and Neck, 2004). Therefore, we hypothesize:

*H1: Self-leadership is positively related to an individual's self-efficacy.*

Earlier research has shown a reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor. In this way, several studies have shown that mentoring play an important role in increasing self-efficacy among mentees (Day and Allen, 2004) and it is also clear that self-efficacy among teachers can instil confidence to mentor others (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007). According to Bandura (1977) and Zimmerman (2000), self-efficacy beliefs motivate individuals to act, exert extra effort and be persistent when they face challenges. Since mentoring involves a significant investment of time and energy, individuals with higher self-efficacy might feel more confident to take this responsibility and might be more willing to mentor others. Thus, we hypothesize:

*H2: Self-efficacy is positively related to an individual's intention to mentor.*

Researchers have argued that natural reward and thought pattern strategies aim to improve self-efficacy perceptions among individuals and thus increase performance (Manz, 1986; Manz and Neck, 2004). According to planned behaviour theory, perceived behavioural control can be a significant predictor of behavioural intentions (Terry and O'Leary, 1995). Also, empirical evidences suggest that self-efficacy can function as the primary mechanism through which self-leadership influence performance (Neck and Houghton, 2006). Thus, we hypothesize:

*H3: Self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between self-leadership and an individual's intention to mentor.*

The way in which self-efficacy influence the willingness to mentor may vary depending on the cultural context (Richard *et al.*, 2009). Especially, cultural values like individualism-collectivism might help us to understand why individuals with higher self-efficacy are more willing to mentor others by explaining the driving forces behind such motives.

### **Individualism-Collectivism**

Individualism-collectivism is generally considered to be a bi-polar construct where collectivistic individuals tend to prioritize the interests of the larger group, they belong to than their self-interest (Moorman and Blakely, 1995). Collectivism is associated with qualities like interdependence, conformity and mutual responsibility; whereas individualism is associated with independence, assertiveness and being ambitious (Marin and Triandis, 1985). While most researchers have conceptualized individualism-collectivism as a dichotomous construct, Triandis and Gelfand (1998) have treated it as a polythetic construct. That is, individualism and collectivism are not just two distinct cultural patterns, but there are many kinds of individualism and collectivism. Horizontal and vertical social relationships can be crucial attributes while differentiating individualism and collectivism. According to these authors, while horizontal patterns are based on the assumption of equality among individuals, vertical patterns acknowledge the role of social hierarchies. Therefore, the interaction between horizontal-vertical component and individualism-collectivism component can lead to four distinct patterns: horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism.

Earlier researches show that individualism-collectivism dimension can have a significant impact on the mentoring process (Feldman and Bolino, 1999; Richard *et al.*,

2009). Individuals from collectivistic culture are more willing to help others (Moorman and Blakely, 1995), the expatriates tend to receive more mentoring in countries which are associated with collectivistic cultural values than in countries with individualistic values (Feldman and Bolino, 1999), and mentees with collectivistic values receive significantly more mentoring than individuals with individualistic orientation (Richard *et al.*, 2009). Recent research has also found collectivism as a significant moderator which enhances information sharing in organizations (Chiu *et al.*, 2018). These findings about the impact of cultural values on the mentoring process show the potential role of these cultural values in an individual's intention to mentor others. This study intends to analyse this idea in the university context.

Triandis and Gelfand (1998) propose that individuals who are oriented towards horizontal individualism tend to concentrate on their work without being specifically interested in gaining social status or acceptance. They are highly self-reliant but not necessarily competitive in relation to others. On the other hand, individuals oriented towards vertical individualism value social status and aim to gain it through competitive strategies. They also tend to aspire for powerful positions and evaluate success in relative terms. Both scenarios are detrimental in the context of mentoring. In the first scenario (high horizontal individualism), disinterest in social status/acceptance might discourage an individual from getting into a mentoring relationship. In the second scenario (high vertical individualism), orientation towards competitiveness might be a barrier for an individual to perceive mentoring as an aid of gaining social status, since it involves high levels of cooperation with the mentee.

Conversely, individuals with high horizontal collectivism (tend to believe in equality and interdependence which prevail in the group) and vertical collectivism (tend to believe in the importance of authority in social order and thus sacrifice their personal goals to the larger social goals prescribed by the authority figures) might have a strong drive to get into a

mentoring relationship. From the perspective of individuals with high horizontal collectivism, mentoring can be seen as an opportunity to identify themselves with the larger community (i.e. the organization). For individuals with high vertical collectivism mentoring is an opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise to the young and inexperienced subordinates.

Hofstede (1983, 1985) found differences in relation to different cultural dimensions between India and Spain. For example, India being a highly populous country has a tremendous pressure among most professional groups (including academicians) to compete among themselves, which could lead to higher individualism scores than other Asian or European countries. Minkov *et al.* (2017) compared 56 countries on individualism and collectivism dimension and found also significant differences between India and Spain. So, taking the sample from both countries (a priori different and with very heterogeneous respondents) can help reach one of the objectives of this paper, which is to delineate the role of cultural values as a moderator in the model proposed. This study has used cultural values to measure cultural differences instead of nationality to avoid the bias of assuming that the differences between nationalities could by default lead to differences in cultural values. Several researchers have heavily criticized the idea of equating nation states with cultures; that is, they have criticized the idea of assuming differences in cultural values as an outcome of different nationality (O'Leary and Levinson, 1991; Baskerville, 2003). Especially, increased mobility of people and ideas fuelled by globalization and advancements in information and communication technologies, have led to a greater confluence of cultural values (Weber *et al.*, 2018). Also, it is not appropriate to isolate a single set of cultural values based on the political construct of the nationality. For example, countries like India or Spain

are an amalgamation of diverse groups with their own set of cultural values, therefore assuming a unified set of values to represent the entire country would be not advisable.

In the context of this research, although most professional values are common across cultures certain behaviours might be strongly influenced by the socio-cultural norms and values. For example, in the university context, helping others can be a way to exert referent power in socio-cultural contexts where power distance is valued, whereas the same behaviour can be considered pro-social where power distance is low. Cultural orientation is a strong predictor of workplace behaviour (Nicholson and Stepina, 1998; Mathew and Taylor, 2018) and it can be a powerful influence on the way that self-efficacy relates to the intention to mentor among university teachers. Therefore, we hypothesize:

*H4: Horizontal individualism moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor by weakening the relationship.*

*H5: Horizontal collectivism moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor by strengthening the relationship.*

*H6: Vertical individualism moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor by weakening the relationship.*

*H7: Vertical collectivism moderates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor by strengthening the relationship.*

## **Method**

### *Participants and procedure*

The sample comprised of faculty from Indian and Spanish universities. Purposive sampling method was used to select the respondents. A total of 193 respondents filled up the survey, of which 88 respondents were from Indian public universities and 105 were from Spanish public

universities. The total sample comprised of 74 women and 119 men with an age average of 43.8 years ( $SD = 10.57$ ), 9.2 ( $SD = 8.15$ ) years of experience in the current designation and 12.1 ( $SD = 9.71$ ) years of experience in the current organization. Indian and Spanish samples showed significant differences in relation to gender ( $\chi^2_{(3, 193)} = 193.000, p < .000$ ), age ( $t = 4.237, p < .000$ ), experience in the current designation ( $t = 6.787, p < .000$ ) and experience in the current organization ( $t = 8.175, p < .000$ ).

An online survey tool created by Google Forms was used to collect data from June to December 2014. Questionnaires were accompanied by a small set of instructions, highlighting the purpose of the study and the importance of participating in it. The data and the hypothesized relationships were analysed using structural equation modelling and hierarchical multiple regression with the statistical software 22.0 AMOS package.

### *Instruments*

The following standardized questionnaires were used to measure the variables of the present study. The Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire was used to measure self-leadership (Houghton *et al.*, 2012). The questionnaire uses a 5-point rating scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. It has 9 items measuring 3 self-leadership strategies, namely: behaviour awareness and volition (3 items), task motivation (3 items) and constructive cognition (3 items). A second-order multidimensional construct was used in this study to demonstrate the appropriateness and validity of the second-order construct. The process defined by Johnson *et al.* (2011) was followed. General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire consisting of 8 items was used to measure self-efficacy (Chen *et al.*, 2001). This questionnaire uses a 5-point rating scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Intention to mentor a student or a colleague was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Ragins and

Cotton (1993). This scale uses a 7-point rating scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. All these items are included in Table 3. Individualism and collectivism were measured using the scale developed by Triandis and Gelfland (1998). This scale measures individualism and collectivism at two levels namely horizontal and vertical. Therefore, the scale has four subscales, namely horizontal individualism (4 items), vertical individualism (4 items), horizontal collectivism (4 items) and vertical collectivism (4 items). 9-point rating scale was used where response ranged from *never/definitely no* to *always/definitely yes*. The country has been used as a control variable of the model.

## Results

The means, standard deviations, simple correlations and estimated reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of the variables used in this study are presented in Table 1. All of them showed Cronbach's alpha values acceptable and higher than 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive correlation between self-leadership and self-efficacy, intention to mentor, horizontal individualism, vertical individualism and vertical collectivism. Intention to mentor displayed a significant positive correlation with self-efficacy, vertical individualism and horizontal collectivism. Apart from the intention to mentor, self-efficacy showed a significant positive correlation with horizontal collectivism. Correlational analysis also noted that nationality was significantly correlated with intention to mentor, horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, vertical collectivism and behavioural awareness and volition; hence nationality was controlled when testing the model (Shi *et al.*, 2011).

(Insert Table 1 about here)

There are significant differences between Indian and Spanish respondents on both vertical individualism ( $M(SD)$  India = 5.06(1.5),  $M(SD)$  Spain = 3.6(1.5),  $t(df) = 6.36(193)$ ,

$p < .01$ ) and vertical collectivism ( $M(SD)$  India = 7.2(1.4),  $M(SD)$  Spain = 6.6(1.4),  $t(df) = 3.27(194)$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and also in horizontal individualism ( $M(SD)$  India = 6.75(1.57),  $M(SD)$  Spain = 6.23(1.42),  $t(df) = 2.42(186)$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Indians teachers had higher scores, which is in contradiction to the popular belief that individuals belonging to eastern countries are more collectivistic than the westerners. A keen look at the items of the questionnaire and the definition of the sub dimensions reveal interesting insights. The present study shows that for the Indian respondents, the vertical component is the overpowering attribute of the individualism-collectivism dimension. Indian respondents also showed a higher value in one of the dimensions of self-leadership (namely, behavioural awareness and volition,  $M(SD)$  India = 4.05(0.6),  $M(SD)$  Spain = 3.7(0.63),  $t(df) = 3.34(195)$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which means, that the increase in competition has created the need to be more self-observant and focused on their goals. Finally, Indian respondents showed higher intention to mentor than the Spain counterparts ( $M(SD)$  India = 5.7(1.2),  $M(SD)$  Spain = 5.2(1.08),  $t(df) = 3.52(185)$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which can also be associated with their high scores in several cultural values dimensions. The rest of the variables did not show significant differences between Indian and Spanish respondents.

### *Measurement model*

Convergent validity analysis showed that all indicators loaded onto their respective latent factor significantly ( $p < .001$ ) and substantially ( $\lambda > .5$ ). Moreover, two additional indicators namely composite reliability index and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated in order to measure the scale's reliability. Thus, the scale's reliability was confirmed. Lastly, discriminant validity was evaluated in two different ways. First, the AVE and the squared correlations between constructs were compared (Hair *et al.*, 2009). In all cases, the AVE was

greater than the squared correlation estimates. Second, a series of CFA tests were evaluated on alternative measurement models (Table 2). Using a chi-square difference test, the hypothesized three-factor measurement model was compared with these alternative measurement models. Model 1 had a significantly better fit to the data than model 2 ( $\Delta\chi^2 (1) = 7.775, p < .001$ ). Simultaneously, model 1 showed better fit to the data than model 3 ( $\Delta\chi^2 (2) = 0.356, n.s.$ ) and model 4 ( $\Delta\chi^2 (4) = 0.437, n.s.$ ), although the differences were not significant. So, results of comparisons between the hypothesized model and the alternative models showed that model 1 provided the best fit to the data:  $\chi^2 (df) = 155.886(97), p < .001$ , GFI = 0.910, RMSEA = 0.056, TLI = 0.946, CFI = 0.956,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.607$ .

(Insert Table 2 about here)

(Insert Table 3 about here)

### *Structural model*

The theoretical model was tested. The goodness-of-fit indices of the model presented good values:  $\chi^2 (df) = 214.971(111), p < .001$ , GFI = 0.888, RMSEA = 0.070, TLI = 0.909, CFI = 0.926,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.937$ . The structural paths between self-leadership and self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.622, p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy and the intention to mentor ( $\beta = 0.413, p < .05$ ), were significant, thus confirming H1 and H2. The structural path between country variable and self-efficacy was not significant ( $\beta = 0.093, p < n.s.$ ), however the path between country variable and the intention to mentor was significant ( $\beta = 0.215, p < .01$ ). The results indicate that self-leadership accounts for 41.6% of the self-efficacy in the university teachers and, in turn, self-efficacy accounts for 26.3% of their intention to mentor.

From the results it can be deduced that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between self-leadership and intention to mentor. In order to confirm this result, two additional

models were proposed (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Table 4 presents the model-fit statistics and Table 5 shows the path coefficients of the three models. As shown in Table 5, the relationship between self-leadership and intention to mentor was only significant in Model 3 (direct effects) but disappeared once self-efficacy was taken into consideration (Model 1). The paths from self-leadership to self-efficacy and from self-efficacy to the intention to mentor remained significant in both models (partial and full mediation). In addition, the Sobel test (1982) was performed to assess the significance of the indirect effects of self-leadership on the intention to mentor through self-efficacy. The test supported the mediating effect of self-efficacy ( $z = 3.83; p < .001$ ). As shown in Table 4, the chi-square of Model 2 (full mediation) ( $\chi^2 = 215.018, df = 112$ ) was greater than the chi-square of Model 1 (partial mediation) ( $\chi^2 = 214.971, df = 111$ ), although not significantly different ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 0.047, \Delta df = 1, n.s.$ ), and lower than the chi-square of Model 3 (direct effects) ( $\chi^2 = 281.260, df = 113$ ) and significantly different ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 66.242, \Delta df = 1, sig$ ). Some authors disagree that the final decision on mediation depends on the significance of a parameter (which is always a convention) and prefer to establish as criterion of analysis where part of the total effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is due to the mediation effect (Variance Accounted For - VAF). Our results showed VAF of 0.9518 and supported full mediation as it exceeded 0.80 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). So, the above results establish Model 2 as a better choice. Thereby, the hypothesis H3 which asserts that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between self-leadership and intention to mentor is supported.

(Insert Table 4 about here)

(Insert Table 5 about here)

We also analysed the moderating effect of cultural dimensions in the relationship between self-efficacy and the intention to mentor, considering them as a proxy of the country,

since as mentioned above, three of the four cultural dimensions considered in the study have shown significant differences between both countries. With this background, moderating effects of cultural orientation dimensions were studied using hierarchical multiple regression (Cohen and Cohen, 1983). Specifically, horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism were used as separate moderators in the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor. After centring the predictor variables to reduce the correlation between them (Dawson, 2014), four different regression analyses were conducted. Table 6 shows that while horizontal individualism and vertical collectivism interacted with self-efficacy and had significant impact on intention to mentor, the interaction of vertical individualism or horizontal collectivism and self-efficacy did not have any significant impact on the intention to mentor. Therefore, H7 was supported. And H4 was supported in a different direction from the one hypothesized, whereas H5 and H6 were not supported.

(Insert Table 6 about here)

Hence, the above results show that the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor differ according to the level of horizontal individualism or vertical collectivism; however, it was not clear how it differs. The interaction terms were positive, so it suggests that the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor becomes more positive as horizontal individualism or vertical collectivism increased; however, the size and precise nature of these effects were not easy to estimate using only these coefficients. Therefore, these effects were plotted in to interpret it visually (Dawson, 2014) (Figures 1 and 2). Two new grouping variables were created, categorizing horizontal individualism and vertical collectivism into three levels – low, moderate and high – to predict the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor at the three levels of the moderator variables, obtaining

three different regression groups. It was shown that a high level of horizontal individualism had a strong regression effect ( $R^2$  Lineal = 0.484) on self-efficacy and intention to mentor relationship (correlation value = 0.69).  $R^2$  Lineal horizontal individualism moderate = 0.147 (correlation value = 0.38), and  $R^2$  Lineal horizontal individualism low = 0.004 (correlation value = 0.06). Hence, it was demonstrated that the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor is always positive, but it was higher for individuals with higher levels than for individuals with lower levels of horizontal individualism. Although horizontal individualism has moderated the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor as we have hypothesized, it does it in the opposite direction. Results also indicate that a high level of vertical collectivism has a strong regression effect ( $R^2$  Lineal = 0.347) on the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor (correlation value = 0.58).  $R^2$  Lineal vertical collectivism moderate = 0.161 (correlation value = 0.40), and  $R^2$  Lineal vertical collectivism low = 0.019 (correlation value = 0.13). Here it is demonstrated that the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor is always positive, but it is distinctively heightened for individuals with higher levels of vertical collectivism than for those with lower levels.

(Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here)

Figure 3 summarizes the results of the hypotheses tested.

(Insert Figure 3 about here)

## **Discussion**

The study results show that self-leadership has a significant impact on self-efficacy. As previously discussed, self-leadership involves individuals exerting conscious effort to set their own performance goals and monitor progress towards fulfilling those goals. During this process, individuals may introspect on their strengths and weaknesses, and be conscious about

the external factors which can influence their performance (Hollenbeck and Williams, 1987). Thus, the increase of self-awareness due to introspection and awareness of the environment (external factors) may bring in a sense of control, which in turn increases the individual's self-confidence and self-efficacy (Károlyi, 1993).

The significant positive impact of self-efficacy on intention to mentor among the respondents denotes the importance of self-confidence among employees in nurturing leadership qualities like intention to mentor others (Rekha and Ganesh, 2010). The ultimate objective of mentoring is to create independent self-reliant individuals, i.e., self-leaders. Through this understanding mentoring can be viewed as an act of creating more leaders (super-leadership) with self-confidence which is a necessary trait in any form of leadership (Kipnis and Lane, 1962). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy may consider mentoring others as a positive way of gaining referent power in the organization (Carson *et al.*, 1993). Studies also show that mentoring relationships can help mentors gain self-confidence, therefore in contrast to our hypothesis; it is possible that employees use mentoring as an avenue to improve themselves (Rekha and Ganesh, 2010).

Results also show that self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship between self-leadership and intention to mentor. This proves the role of self-efficacy as the process through which self-leadership influence intention to mentor. From an organizational perspective, nurturing self-leadership involves certain level of delegation and decentralization of authority from the top, reducing the dependency on external performance control mechanisms (Stewart and Manz, 1995). Thus, teachers can perceive mentoring students and colleagues as a moral obligation to the organization which has given them more autonomy and power (Moberg and Velasquez, 2004).

In the present study, horizontal individualism and vertical collectivism moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor. This result is in line with recent research which has also found collectivism (Chiu *et al.*, 2018) or individualism (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2012; Alcántara-Pilar and Del Barrio-García, 2015) play a moderator role in different study contexts. The nature of the moderating effect shows that the positive relationship between self-efficacy and intention to mentor becomes stronger when the respondents are inclined towards vertical collectivistic or horizontal individualistic values. The reason for the different direction of the moderating effect of horizontal individualism could be due to the unique nature of the context of academic work. The fact that most academic institutions have few formal hierarchical levels to differentiate between teachers can instil a sense of equality among them. Teachers with high self-efficacy are inclined towards mentoring; their intention becomes stronger when they are driven by a feeling of empathy generated from the equality (Kalbfleisch and Keyton, 1995). In a knowledge-based industry like a University, reverse mentoring (mentors gaining through mentoring) and learning orientation are important driving factors in an individual's intention to mentor (Allen, 2003). The changing nature of the interaction of cultural values with other variables over decades have created difficulties for researchers to hypothesize the exact nature of their moderation effect (Matsumoto and van de Vijver, 2010) irrespective of existing strong theoretical support. On the other hand, the moderating effect of vertical collectivism shows that the moral obligation to their roles by complying with certain social norms strengthens the relationship between self-efficacy and mentoring among University teachers.

A previous study found that cultural value orientation in terms of individual and collectivistic values influence the way individuals define extra-role performances at the workplace (Varela *et al.*, 2010). If we consider intention to mentor as a voluntary behaviour,

it can be focused towards the organization (a sense of obligation towards the organization drives the employee's performance) or focused towards fellow workers (a sense of empathy drives it) (Organ, 1997). The results from the present study indirectly show that some respondents have viewed mentoring as beneficial to the organization, while others have viewed it as primarily an interpersonal behaviour aimed at developing individuals.

### **Implications**

The primary insight from this research is the need for organizations to encourage self-management skills among their employees in order to improve their effectiveness in the workplace. In practice, it implies that empowering professionals to manage their own career is important not only to boost their self-efficacy but also to instil voluntary behaviours like intention to mentor. Also, it asserts that self-leadership qualities in the workplace can be facilitated by providing autonomy to academicians to choose the means of achieving their goals as well as their long-term career goals. This can be accomplished by the academic institutions promoting a varied set of performance standards as criteria for career advancements and providing other rewards for teachers, instead of focusing on few rigid standards. For example, in the present scenario most universities evaluate a teacher's performance using their research and published papers, which may be a source of stress to those academicians whose interests lie in private organizations collaboration, socially relevant projects or excellence in teaching. So, by bringing in these dimensions to the specification of a teachers' role and giving shared weightage to these components the teachers would be free to choose their long-term career goals and the criteria they are comfortable with. However, it must be noted that higher levels of autonomy to choose one's own career goals can lead to a sense of lack of direction, particularly for academic professionals who are in their early stage

of their careers. This can be tackled by encouraging young faculty to choose mentors within the organization who can help them in the self-goal setting process. Mentoring will help young university teachers not only to set realistic goals but also to establish the process that will reinforce their commitment towards those goals. In the long run, entering into a mentoring relationship might boost self-efficacy and self-leadership qualities of mentors as well. Mentoring as a support is found to help mentees convert their research efforts into entrepreneurial ventures (Fernández-Pérez *et al.*, 2015). Previous research clearly states that there is also a strong need felt among students at university levels to participate in mentoring programs (Luna and Cullen, 1998). Benefits of increasing teachers' intention to mentor can go beyond students' academic career and can lead to students' increased professionalism and sensitization to ethical values (Rose *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, teachers can play a fundamental role in the future professional possibilities of those students with whom they establish a relationship that goes beyond the relationship based on a mere teaching activity. Regardless of who is the mentee, as a policy level implication this study throws light on the key challenge for the administrators while choosing between formal and informal mentoring programs. Formal mentoring programs may reduce the voluntary nature of the process of mentoring, and thus the internal motivation associated with it decreases. Informal mentoring programs may overcome this weakness but in contrast might not have much support from teachers.

Moderation results show that teachers with higher self-efficacy are driven either by the sense of equality (horizontal individualism) or moral obligation (vertical collectivism) in their choice of whether or not to mentor. As a managerial implication, this explains that the structure and policies of the organization can play an important role in disseminating both these cultural values among its employees. Flatter organizational structures encourage interaction and collaboration and thus bridge the gap arising due to the diversity in age,

tenure, and functional background. These increased interactions will bring in the sense of equality and increase empathy towards each other. Implication of such a policy in organizations can be done using physical infrastructures such as shared facilities, open office spaces and lounges that can increase personal interaction to nurture the culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Policies and procedures which facilitate fairness also play a major role in disseminating the value of equality. In organizations where flat structures are not possible, employee friendly policies (for example, non-monetary benefits like certificate of appreciation or awards and felicitation during university celebrations) which facilitate career growth for young people or work-life balance can bring in a sense of moral obligation (Ganesh, 2015). Another crucial policy level implication would be to provide financial and infra-structural support for faculty research like setting up of laboratory space or the recognition of faculty achievements. These might instil normative commitment among university teachers, which could translate into voluntary behaviours like intention to mentor.

### **Strengths, limitations and future research**

The comprehensiveness and relevance of the variables chosen is the key strength of this research. In the context of increasing professionalization and globalization, the cross-cultural nature of the study brings in a global perspective of the research problem. Anyway, having chosen university teachers only from India and Spain, the extrapolation of the implications to other cultures should be considered with caution. In addition, incorporating variables from individual and broader cultural levels allow this study to observe their interplay and give a holistic understanding of the issue.

One of the limitations of this study is its cross-sectional survey design, which is the use of data collected from a single-sitting, self-reporting measure could have led to a common

method variance bias (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). The design of the study's procedure is one of the ways to control method biases (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). One way was assuring the respondents that their responses would be anonymous and treated confidentially. Also in the survey tool the dependent variables were located after the independent ones, thus avoiding or at least minimizing the influence of consistency artefacts (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977), while trying to allow the logical progressing from general to specific questions (Peterson, 2000). Besides, tested and confirmed scales were used to eliminate the potential ambiguity of the items and to facilitate the comprehension stage of the response process (Tourangeau *et al.*, 2000). The procedures mentioned above helped the participants to feel less judged and consequently encouraged them to provide honest answers that were not influenced by their perceptions of the study's aims. Additionally, we used a Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1967) to estimate common method variance bias, carrying out an exploratory factor analysis on all the study's variables to detect one general factor responsible for a majority of the covariance between the measures. This test revealed the existence of six factors with eigenvalues of more than one, which explained 67.69% of the total variance, explaining the first factor 27.56%. So it has not detected any single factor responsible for most of the variance (Christmann, 2000). In order to supplement the above analysis, all the variables were loaded onto one factor in order to examine the fit of the confirmatory factor analysis model (Korsgaard and Roberson, 1995). The results concluded that the single-factor model did not fit data well:  $\chi^2 (df) = 996.980 (170), p < .001$ , GFI = 0.635, RMSEA = 0.159, TLI = 0.408, CFI = 0.470,  $\chi^2 / df = 5.865$ ; and was significantly worse than the measurement model ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 733.959 \Delta df = 44, p < .001$ ). So, common method variances did not seem to be a significant problem in this study.

While the variables used in this study are extremely important, there are other variables that could be considered in future studies such as mentoring behaviour. Also, it would be worthy to probe the role of job-related self-awareness and metacognition in highly intellectual jobs like that of a university teacher. Also, future research could focus on other organizational level factors, like organizational culture, and individual level factors, like personality or affect related factors.

## **Conclusion**

Being a teacher is seen mostly as a role rather than a designation and this role is broadly defined in most cultures. Social norms expect teachers to fulfil responsibilities beyond their job description and hold them morally responsible for the holistic development of their mentees. Given this context, mentoring can be considered as an inherent task of a teacher, irrespective of the level they teach. Amidst these social norms, various cultural and organizational factors influence teachers' effort to optimize their role. Grounded in this assumption, the present study aimed to understand the interplay between personal and cultural factors in influencing a teacher's intention to mentor. The primary finding is the positive impact of self-leadership on an individual's self-efficacy, which in turn results in higher intention to mentor. The study also reiterates the fact that cultural factors may operate in different ways across different groups but leads to the same behaviour. So, in a culturally diverse work environment, organizational policies should be designed keeping in mind the cultural dynamics and its interplay with other factors. Above all, in a knowledge-based economy, building people is the best way to build long lasting organizations.

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Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables and estimated reliabilities

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	SL	BAV	TM	CC	SE	IM	HI	VI	HC	VC	Country
SL	3.71	0.54	0.755										
BAV	3.89	0.64	.731**	0.761									
TM	3.37	0.79	.817**	.364**	0.697								
CC	3.97	0.78	.626**	.238**	.293**	0.763							
SE	3.87	0.51	.375**	.374**	.249**	.200**	0.840						
IM	5.48	1.17	.171*	.218**	.097	.058	.383**	0.832					
HI	6.45	1.52	.178*	.300**	.045	.054	.029	.101	0.678				
VI	4.73	1.93	.279**	.275**	.302**	-.025	.126	.186**	.331**	0.732			
HC	7.12	1.49	.103	.170*	.039	.018	.171*	.235**	.221**	.107	0.829		
VC	6.91	1.53	.147*	.274**	.014	.049	.084	.134	.393**	.336**	.484**	0.799	
Country	-	-	.125	.227**	.118	-.114	.063	.261**	.155*	.415**	-.075	.222**	-

Note: N = 193. Variables: Self-leadership (SL); Behavioural Awareness and Volition (BAV); Task Motivation (TM); Constructive Cognition (CC); Self-efficacy (SE); Intention to Mentor (IM); Horizontal Individualism (HI); Vertical Individualism (VI); Horizontal Collectivism (HC); Vertical Collectivism (VC). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  on the diagonal.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 2

Comparison of model fit indices

	$\chi^2 (df)$	$p$	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	$\chi^2 / df$	$\Delta \chi^2 (df)$
Model 1 (three-factor model, preferred model)	155.886(97)	.000	0.910	0.056	0.946	0.956	1.607	-
Model 2 (single-factor model)	163.661(98)	.000	0.905	0.059	0.940	0.951	1.670	7.775(1)
Model 3 (four-factor model, BAV, TM, CC, SE+IM)	155.530(95)	.000	0.910	0.058	0.943	0.955	1.637	0.356(2)
Model 4 (five-factor model, BAV, TM, CC, SE, IM)	155.449(93)	.000	0.910	0.059	0.940	0.953	1.671	0.437(4)

Table 3

Standardized measurement coefficients

Latent variable	Indicator	Standardized weights
Self-leadership	I work toward specific goals I have set for myself	0.798***
	I make a point to keep track of how well I'm doing at work	0.664***
	I establish specific goals for my own performance	0.728***
	Sometimes I picture in my mind a successful performance before I actually do a task	0.735***
	I visualize myself successfully performing a task before I do it	0.958***
	I think about my own beliefs and assumptions whenever I encounter a difficult situation (evaluating beliefs and assumptions)	0.795***
	I try to mentally evaluate the accuracy of my own beliefs about situations I am having problems with (self-talk)	0.788***
	When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	0.569***
Self-efficacy	I believe I can succeed at most any endeavour to which I set my mind.	0.686***
	I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	0.785***
	I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	0.712***
	Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	0.717***
	Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	0.692***
Intention to mentor	I would like to be a mentor	0.932***
	I intend to be a mentor	0.826***
	I would be comfortable assuming a mentoring role.	0.870***

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 4

Fit results for structural equation models

	$\chi^2$ (df)	<i>p</i>	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	$\chi^2$ /df
Model 1 (partial mediation)	214.971(111)	.000	0.888	0.070	0.909	0.926	1.937
Model 2 (full mediation)	215.018(112)	.000	0.888	0.069	0.910	0.926	1.920
Model 3 (direct effects)	281.260(113)	.000	0.862	0.088	0.855	0.879	2.489

Table 5

Structural equation path coefficients

	Standardized coefficients and ( <i>t</i> -values)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Self-leadership → Self-efficacy	0.622(5.02)***	0.624(5.11)***	
Self-efficacy → Intention to mentor	0.413(2.00)*	0.417(5.79)***	
Self-leadership → Intention to mentor	0.013(0.06)		0.266(2.56)*

Note: Model 1: partial mediation; Model 2: full mediation; Model 3: direct effects.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 6

Moderation effects in self-efficacy – intention to mentor relationship

Main effect of self-efficacy and moderation effect of cultural dimensions on intention to mentor			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Self-efficacy (beta value)	0.4210***	0.4167***	0.400***
Horizontal individualism (beta value)		0.089	0.07
Vertical individualism (beta value)		0.120	0.097
Horizontal collectivism (beta value)		0.176**	0.164*
Vertical collectivism (beta value)		0.124	0.103
Self-efficacy X Horizontal individualism (beta value)			0.276(0.000)
Self-efficacy X Vertical individualism (beta value)			0.104(0.122)
Self-efficacy X Horizontal collectivism (beta value)			0.065(0.329)
Self-efficacy X Vertical collectivism (beta value)			0.146(0.028)
<i>df</i> (regression and residual)	191	190	189

Note: All the four moderation analyses were run separately as four independent equations and had significant F values. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

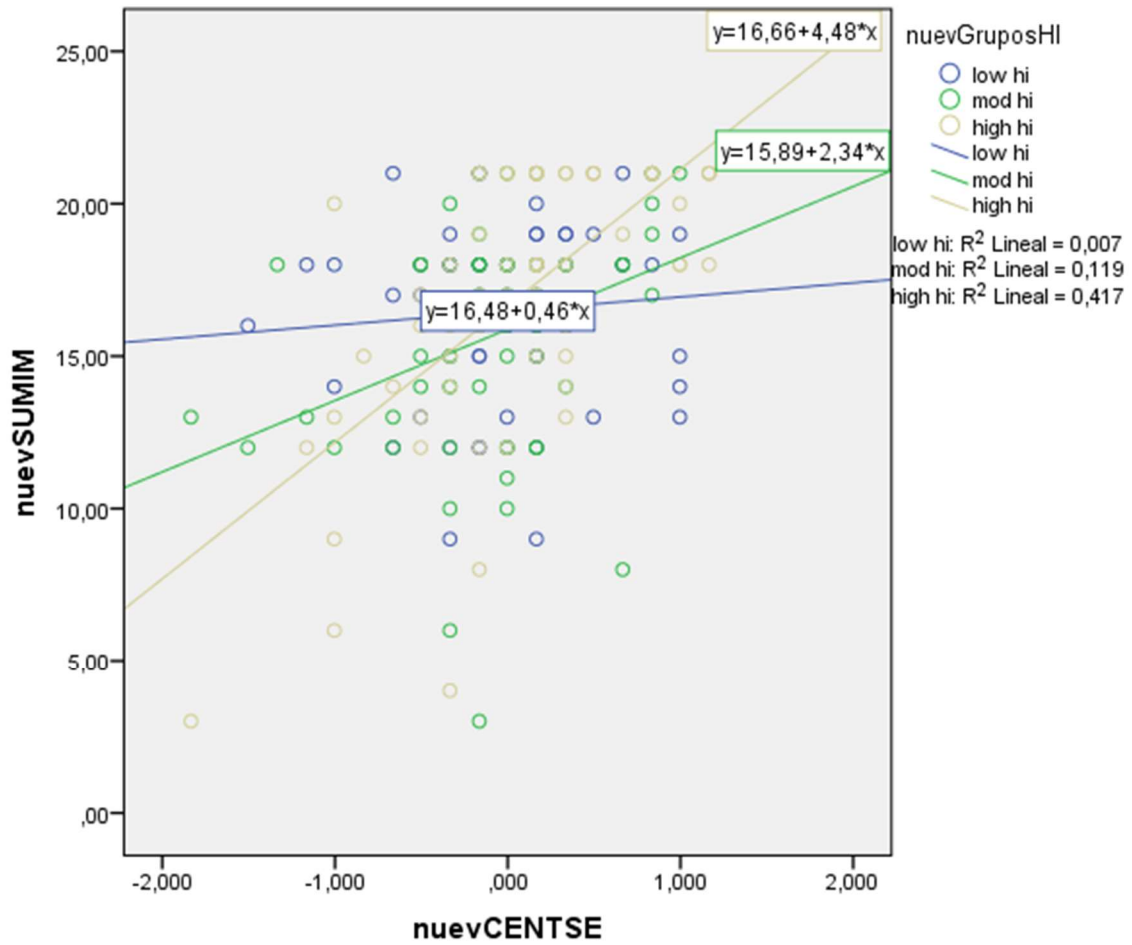


Figure 1. Graph of regression effects between self-efficacy and intention to mentor depending on different levels of horizontal individualism (cultural orientation)

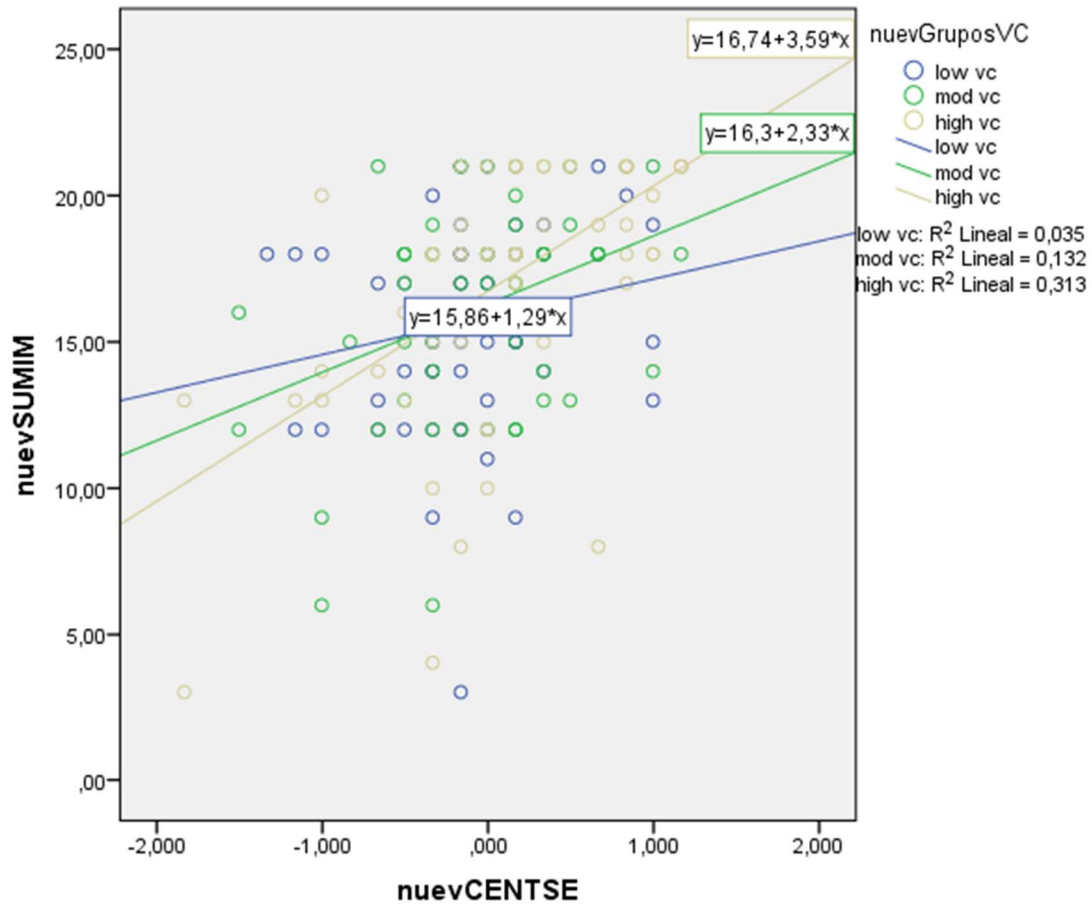


Figure 2. Graph of regression effects between self-efficacy and intention to mentor depending on different levels of vertical collectivism (cultural orientation)

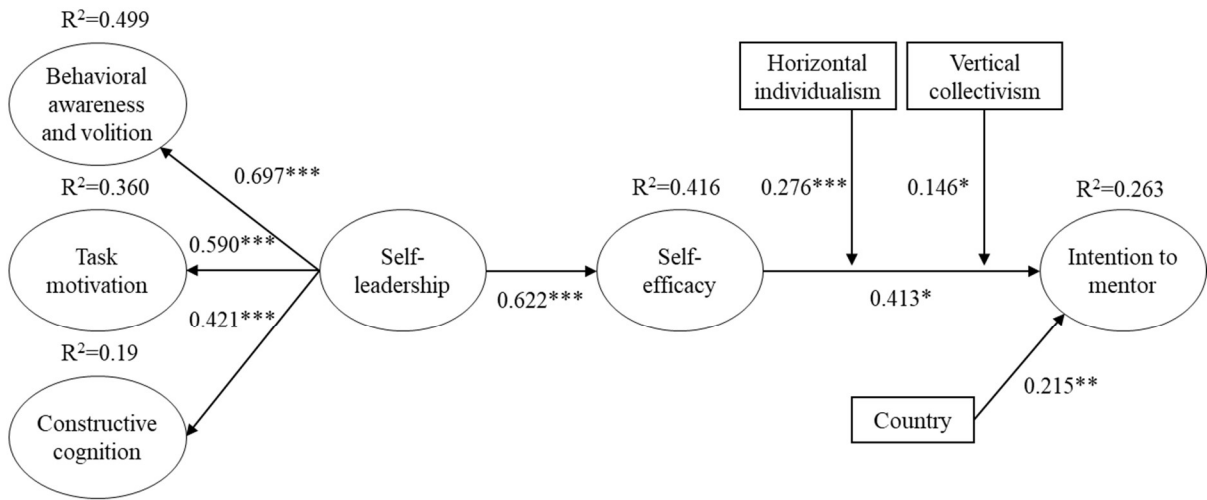


Figure 3. Structural model