African American and West African males' perceptions of mentoring:
Exploring the role of Cultural Intelligence

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Michael Goh, Adviser

September 2015

Acknowledgements

I am forever grateful to the many supporters that have guided and helped me along this journey. My life's journey has truly been one fostered by a village.

First, to my family – In high school I gave a presentation about my life and said that my family was an ordinary/normal family. A friend of mine approached me the next day and told me that I lied because my family was far from the norm. She was right; and I'm thankful for that truth. Mommy, the words, " you can do it" rang loud every time I wanted to give up during this process. Pop, the many lessons about the importance of relationships drove me in many ways. Chaka, your weekly haircuts served as valuable venting sessions and times for you to push me to my limits. Thank you for being a great role model and best friend. Halwa, what role haven't you played in my life? From school conferences to showing up at every public appearance I've made; you're always there. Mapenzi, I still get chills from the joy you felt when I defended my dissertation. Thank you for keeping me grounded in a world outside of academia and for bringing me Nas'r. Hassani, it was clear at times that you had no clue what I was frustrated by or exactly what this process entailed but you never stopped listening. O2, while we argued about the value of formal education you always wanted to celebrate with me when I hit a milestone. You are greatly missed. To my nieces and nephews, you have been a driving force in my life to set an example of success. I will continue striving to be that example. And to all my other siblings and family, I appreciate you.

A huge thank you to Jazlynn…My better 3/4… for the constant push, challenge, and support. Going through this process with you has eased many of the hardships.

To my friends – Too many to name. You know who you are. I am grateful for your patience, motivation, understanding, and love.

My dissertation committee was amazing! Thank you for the countless hours of review and critical feedback. Especially Dr. Goh. Thank you for taking me on as an advisee. Your balance of support and challenge is bar none. I am also indebted to the many faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota that have taught and advised me throughout my 11 years. I have been fortunate to be the recipient of numerous scholarships and graduate assistantships. A big shout out goes to the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change and all of my ICGC-ers.

I came into my program with nine other students. Your support and hard work has been crucial to my advancement in this program.

I spent many'a hours at coffee shops and restaurants studying and writing over the past five years. Mad love to those of you in Dinkytown and other areas around Minneapolis and St. Paul for creating the environment that allowed me to focus.

The mentoring field is still young. Throughout this research project, I continually found myself feeling the need to explore mentoring more broadly and needing to do more. As this complex notion of mentoring unfolded I grew more and more appreciative of those that practice mentoring and those that are brave in their search of mentors and of guidance and the vulnerability required for mentoring relationships. While there are serious ramifications for negative mentoring relationships and more research is necessary, conducting this research highlighted the countless possibilities for positive outcomes. I am grateful to the many people that willingly shared personal stories with me—a stranger—and to the program, which anchored this study.

Dedication

First, I dedicate this dissertation to my many formal and informal mentors. And also, to those that have allowed me to serve as a mentor. Thank you for being vulnerable with me and allowing me to share my vulnerabilities with you.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my dear brother – Omari Omari. I only regret never telling you of the profound impact you had on me. It is an impact that grows in your physical absence. Rest well, my brother. Peace.

Abstract

The current study used qualitative methods to explore the perceptions of mentoring for West African and African American males in Minnesota. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to conduct 16 in-depth interviews, which led to over 18 hours of interview data. Three research questions were addressed: How do West African and African American males define and describe mentoring? How do West African and African American males perceive their relationship with mentors in the Northern Star Mentoring Program? What do African American and West African males identify as characteristics of effective mentoring relationships? A total of 55 codes and 16 themes emerged. These themes were grouped into four domains. Several findings emerged about the mentoring process, mentoring relationships, mentoring effectiveness, and mentoring practices. Findings show that there are various definitions of mentoring, descriptions and experiences with the mentoring process, and various conceptualizations of effective mentoring. Second, there are large intersections between mentoring components. Third, mentors and mentees perceive a need for more than one mentor and recognize the effectiveness of having more than one mentor. Fourth, all mentoring relationships should be approached from an emic yet fluid perspective and assume that they all have unique dynamics and individual nuances. Finally, while there is an overwhelming need for mentors in multiple areas of a person's life, participants perceive that mentoring during transitions could be the most impactful.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem statement

Recently, foreign countries have surpassed the United States' (US) education system in achievement. Today, the United States is lagging behind in many educational indicators (Baker & LeTendre, 2005), such as math and science. While education quality has long been a concern for policymakers, the nature of global markets has caused a desire for the US to maintain a competitive edge over other developed countries. However, in recent decades, the United States has lagged behind not only developed nations, but developing countries, as well. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States ranked 17th in reading and 27th in math achievement when compared to 39 other countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: Programme for International Student Assessment, 2012). These comparatively low ratings have caused those concerned with educational achievement and other opportunity gaps to search for ways to improve these scores.

One potential redress to the poor educational performance of youth in the United States is mentoring within the context of school and community. Mentoring has been widely cited as a social intervention for improving outcomes among struggling youth (Rhodes & Dubois, 2008; Scales & Gibbons, 1996). A mentor is someone with knowledge and skill, able to empower another through instruction, reflective dialogue, affirmation, example, challenge, and support (Hatfield, 2012). An estimated three million young people are involved in formal one-to-one mentoring relationships and a total of

five million when natural mentoring relationships are included[1] (Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002; Rhodes & Dubois, 2008). Rhodes and Dubois illustrate the importance of mentoring on educational outcomes by stating that, "Studies have revealed significant associations between youth involvement in mentoring relationships and positive educational outcomes" (2008, p. 254). Moreover, scholars have consistently demonstrated that identifying theoretical frameworks is challenging. Further, alignment of frameworks and mentoring models with organization structures, cultures, and missions compounds the challenge (Keller, 2010). While young people benefit from mentoring relationships, there are still obstacles that stand in the way of positive impact on educational achievement, and their lives, in general.

Those struggling to be successful in US schools have largely been among minority youth (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Burns, 2009). Researchers have shown that relationships between mentors and mentees can lead to positive educational outcomes such as improved test scores, higher attendance rates, and improvements in reading; however, minority youth are hard pressed to establish such relationships because of a lack of exposure to mentors in and outside of school (Darling, Hamilton, & Shaver, 2006; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Scales & Gibbons, 1996; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Burns, 2009). When these relationships are established, significant improvements in outcomes are likely to be seen, and many minority youth who do succeed in school and other facets of life attribute much of their success to mentoring relationships (Suarez-Orozco,

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[1] The distinction between formal and natural mentoring will be discussed in chapter two.
[2] Grounded theory will be fully discussed in chapter three.
[3] Chapter two will highlight the historical connection between mentoring literature and

Pimental, & Martin, 2009). How such mentoring achieves these results and, in particular, how these relationships are perceived and understood to aid in the success among youth who often struggle to succeed in the US, specifically, West African and African American male teenagers, is the question that lies at the heart of this dissertation. By understanding youth perspectives more fully, it is hoped that this dissertation will lead to improved mentoring relationships and mentoring programs, and bridge the theoretical gaps. Recognizing areas where their common identities, as young people of color, may converge, and where their distinct histories may make various styles of mentoring more efficacious.

In order to examine how these relationships establish positive outcomes and how the relationships are perceived by youth, this study is situated in an interpretivist paradigm and uses a grounded theory approach[2]. As Patton (2002) has demonstrated, interpretivism allows research participants to formulate reality and thus meshes with the intention of unpacking perceptions of mentees. Further, interpretivism is heavily situated within the discourse of culture (Geertz, 1973), meaning that the cultural experiences of individuals are deeply influenced by one's cultural background. For this dissertation, I will consider culture beyond race and ethnicity. My working definition is in line with counseling psychology[3], which often includes gender, ability/disability, age, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation (Goh, 2008). The immersion of an interpretivist researcher gives way to a dialogical method of research. This is a method that allows for

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[2] Grounded theory will be fully discussed in chapter three.
[3] Chapter two will highlight the historical connection between mentoring literature and the field of psychology. Because of that history it is appropriate to use a definition of culture that complements the field where much of the mentoring literature has surfaced.

experience and interpretation to create knowledge. The interpretivist, "aims to reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). In doing so, the inquirer takes into account the experience of the actor. Because both the researcher and the actor create knowledge, the need for familiarity and immersion is again put at the fore of the interpretivist paradigm. The sought after knowledge is co-created in that the inquirer is external to and unaffected by the interpretive process as he or she seeks for understanding (Schwandt, 2000). Schwandt explains, "interpretivists aim to reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions" (2000, p. 193). Therefore, the co-creation of knowledge suggests that the epistemological assumption for my work is transactional. Epistemologically, I question absolute truth with regard to the perceptions of mentoring for different people involved in mentoring relationships. The third chapter focuses on methodology in this dissertation and will discuss how I completed this work and answered the research questions, and will draw links to interpretivism. In chapter two, I explore some of the theoretical underpinnings of mentoring and explain the close alignment with the field of psychology, while reviewing existing mentoring literature.

Theoretical framework

A Cultural Intelligence (CQ) framework informs this dissertation. CQ moves beyond common forms of intelligence such as general intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ). Cultural Intelligence is defined as, "an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings" (Ang, Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007, p. 494). In its earliest development, CQ consisted

of three types of intelligence: cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. Later, CQ was extended to include four critical elements, which are metacognitive (strategy) CQ, cognitive (knowledge) CQ, motivational (drive) CQ, and behavioral (action) CQ. According to Ang et al., this is consistent with Schmidt's definition of intelligence as, "the ability to grasp and reason correctly with abstractions (concepts) and solve problems" (2007, p. 4). Intelligence is, more simply, the ability to learn.

Sternberg's integrative framework of IQ informs the framework of CQ. Metacognitive intelligence is the ability to control cognition and knowledge about one's cognition (Sternberg, 1986). Cognitive intelligence refers to knowledge structures and is in line with the notion that knowledge is a key part of intelligence. Sternberg draws a distinction between metacognition and cognition by stating that metacognition, "as control processes would be the formation of a strategy to solve a problem, whereas an example of cognition as controlled processes would be the mental steps that are actually used to solve the problem" (1986, p. 6). Motivational intelligence is an individual's ability to direct and maintain energy on specific topics. Sternberg (1986) explains that all people have motivation, but the level of motivation that is directed to specific actions (learning, for example) varies. Lastly, behavioral intelligence is described as one's outward actions and that intelligence is not about what is in one's head (as is the case with metacognition, cognition, and motivation) but rather the mental function that leads to one's behavior (Sternberg, 1986). Cultural Intelligence aligns with Sternberg's integrative framework while relating directly to culture.

Metacognitive (strategy) Cultural Intelligence refers to mental processes that a

person uses to understand and gain cultural knowledge and views things from higher-order cognitive processes. Metacognitive CQ involves strategizing about how to get knowledge of other cultures (Tuleja, 2014). Cognitive (knowledge) CQ, "reflects knowledge of norms, practices and conventions in different cultures acquired from education or personal experience" (Ang, Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007, p. 338). Cognitive CQ assumes that people 'know what they know' and recognizes that 'they do not know what they do not know' (Tuleja, 2014). Motivational (drive) Cultural Intelligence is one's ability to direct attention to learning about and functioning in situations where cultural differences are at play. Motivational CQ is a person's interest in culture and implies that a person enjoys learning and then applying information about other cultures. Lastly, behavioral (action) CQ is a person's capability to display appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds. Tuleja says, "In essence, the culturally intelligent person is highly motivated and interested in interacting with people from other cultures and is successfully able to assess a situation, scan for cues, and then act accordingly" (p. 7). Figure 1 provides a visual of Cultural Intelligence.

A recent emergence within strategy CQ (metacognitive) is *mindfulness* (Teluja, 2014). Mindfulness can be thought of as individuals having awareness of their thoughts, actions, and experience (Thomas, 2006). Teluja describes the mindfulness strategy by saying, "that the culturally intelligent person must practice if she or he is to be successful in cross-cultural interactions. Mindfulness requires reflectively paying attention through monitoring personal feelings, thoughts, and actions" (2014, p. 7). Cultural Intelligence

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with particular interest in mindfulness has gained popularity in various areas including

global leadership, counseling, teaching, and corporate cultural change.

Behavioral/Action: The ability of behavior flexibility in intercultural interactions	Metacognitive/Strategy: Mental ability to acquire and understand cultural knowledge
	CQ
Cognitive/Knowledge: Knowledge and knowledge structures about culture and cultural differences	Motivational/Drive: Capability to direct and sustain energy toward functioning in intercultural situations

Figure 1. Factors of Cultural Intelligence. Adopted from "Developing Cultural Intelligence for global leadership through mindfulness," by E. Teluja, 2014, p. 7. Copyright 2014 by Routledge - Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Research questions and organization of chapter one

This dissertation sought to answer key questions about the perceptions of

mentoring relationships for African American and West African males[4]. In order to

conduct this study I asked the following questions:

- How do West African and African American males define and describe

  mentoring?

- How do West African and African American males perceive their relationship

  with mentors in the Northern Star[5] Mentoring Program?

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[4] Throughout this work I will use the masculine rather than neutral descriptors and pronouns because this study focuses on males.
[5] In order to maintain anonymity of the program from which participants were drawn for this study I use the alias "Northern Star Mentoring Program" rather than the real name of the mentoring program.

- What do African American and West African males identify as characteristics of effective mentoring relationships?

The remainder of this introductory chapter will discuss the context within which this study takes place, recent policy related to mentoring, followed by an overview of the mentoring program from which participants will draw upon, and ends with an overview of the remainder of this dissertation.

Setting the context

Recent national and international attention has been directed toward Minnesota for various reasons; namely, the 2014 Ebola outbreak and the ongoing opportunity gaps that exist within the state. The Ebola outbreak has been a topic of discussion for Minnesota because of its large populations of West Africans. The opportunity gaps have largely been discussed because Minnesota maintains some of the largest gaps in the nation when it comes to educational success and unemployment rates between blacks and whites (Belz, 2014; McGuire, 2014). While Ebola is not linked to mentoring; both Ebola and the opportunity gaps in Minnesota shed light onto the distinct populations that are explored within this study. These two issues link directly to the thesis of this project in that uncovering the perceptions of successful mentoring relationships could shrink those very gaps that are experienced.

Since the 1960s, the number of foreign-born blacks in the United States has increased from 125,000 in 1960 to 2.8 million in 2005 (Kent, 2007). These increases contributed approximately, "17% of the U.S. black population in the 1990s, and at least 20% between 2000 and 2006" (Kent, 2007, p. 4). The increase in African immigrants is

credited to policy and law changes that began in 1965 and continue today. While

Ethiopian, Sudanese, and Somali blacks have risen recently, "West African Countries—

in particular Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone—still account for the majority of

US African immigrants" (Kent, 2007, p. 8). Of all African-born US blacks Nigeria,

Ghana, and Liberia are in the top four, comprising 19%, 9%, and 7%, respectively. In

addition, in 2005 more than one million US-born black children had at least one foreign-

born parent. While New York, Miami, and Washington D.C. are the top metro areas for

foreign-born blacks (Logan & Deane, 2003; Kent, 2007), the metro area in Minnesota has

a large number as well. In fact, the Minneapolis metro area is home to the largest number

of Liberians, outside of Liberia (Belluck, 2014).

Minnesota has seen a 130% spike in foreign-born residents between 1990 and

2000 compared to 57% growth nation-wide (Fennelly & Huart, 2010). One reason for the

upward spike is due to large numbers of people coming from war-torn countries such as

Somalia and Liberia over the past few decades. Overall, immigrants in Minnesota make

up a vast amount of the labor force and the future of a declining population (Fennelly &

Huart, 2010). Table 1 compares foreign-born and native-born workers in three industries

obtained from Fennelly and Huart (2010).

Table 1		
Percentage of foreign-born and native-born workers by industry in Minnesota		
Industry	Foreign-born workers (%)	Native-born workers (%)
Manufacturing	22	14

Arts, entertainment, recreation	13	7
Health, education, social services	21	23
Table 1		

In addition to large numbers of foreign-born people in the Minnesota workforce, immigrants comprised 10% of high school graduates and 14% of college graduates. The total population of African immigrants in Minnesota is estimated to be approximately 50,000 people (18% of state population and 17% of the total black population); however, researchers have been unable to identify the exact number of West Africans because of poor reporting systems (Fennelly & Huart, 2010; Kent, 2007; Pierce, Cooper, Martin, Romero, Owen, & Tarley, 2007). Not only is it difficult to decipher the number of West Africans compared to other Africans in Minnesota, it is also difficult to distinguish educational success between West Africans and African Americans, or populations grouped as "black."

According to the census bureau (2013) the largest number of blacks (aggregate) reside in the cities of Minneapolis (18.6% or approximately 72,000) and St. Paul (15.7% or approximately 46,000). According to the 2010 census, aggregate data showed that there were 39,594 in Brooklyn Park and 14,788 in Brooklyn Center and the vast majority of West Africans reside in Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, which are both within the same county as the largest city in the state, Minneapolis (Pierce, Cooper, Martin, Romero, Owen, & Tarley, 2007). Not only is there a dire need to increase high school

graduation rates for those grouped as black, there is also a need to disaggregate this

descriptor in order to better serve the unique needs of individuals from these two

communities. Sanchez and Colon capture the complexity of race and ethnicity by stating

that, "at the relationship level, a mentor or mentee can be of the same race, such as Black,

but have different ethnicities, such as Jamaican, African American, or Dominican" (2005,

p. 192). My study aims to provide information that will shed light on the nuances of two

groups of youth that are frequently combined and who both statistically struggle with

their academic achievement and other success factors.

In addition to broad demographic information, student demographic information

does not differentiate by ethnicity. In other words, the educational institutions also

combine West African and African American students into one category, "black". In

Minneapolis Public Schools, the second largest school district in Minnesota, the 2011

four-year graduation rate was 39% for black students compared to 69% for white

students. Five-year graduation rates were wider for black and white students at 41% and

73%, respectively (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). In St. Paul Public

Schools, the third largest district in the state, the four-year graduation rate gap was larger

than Minneapolis with blacks at 57% and whites at 77% (Minnesota Department of

Education, 2011). More recently, in 2013 the graduation rates have increased to 56% for

black students and 85% for white students (McGuire, 2014). And the state has vowed to

the US Department of Education to cut the educational achievement gap in half by 2017

(McGuire, 2014). In 2014, four-year graduation rates increased for all Minnesota

students. The overall graduation rate for Minnesota high school students was 79%, white

students was 85%, black students 57%, and students with limited English proficiency graduated 59% of the time in four years (Adequate Yearly Progress Report, 2014).

Moreover, kindergarten to 12th grade success directly relates to enrollment at higher educational institutions. At Minnesota's flagship university, the University of Minnesota, which is also world renowned and one of the largest universities in the United States, there are large disparities and gaps in enrollment. The Twin Cities (TC) campus is one of five system campuses and is located in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Of the 47,810 students enrolled in spring 2015 on the TC campus, 1,950 (4.1%) are black (Office of Institutional Research: University of Minnesota). This percentage is more than 1% lower than the state population of black Minnesotans, which is 5.8. This number reflects self-reported students and includes black immigrants and native-born blacks. Further, this reflects a strikingly lower number of black enrollees compared to the percentages of black Minnesotans in Minneapolis and St. Paul (18.6 and 15.7%, respectively), outlined in the previous paragraph. While this illustrates the links between early and post-secondary education, the next paragraph will highlight gaps in the workforce.

Not only are these gaps apparent in education, but they exist in the workforce as well. Table 1 above illustrated the number of foreign-born workers and the industries in which they work in Minnesota. However, the unemployment rates are striking. While Minnesota touted one of the lowest unemployment rates in 2014, just two years earlier, Minnesota had one of the largest unemployment gaps in the United States between whites and blacks. In 2012, the unemployment rate for black Minnesotans was three times that of whites (nearly 18%) (Gilbert, 2012). This number has decreased significantly to 15%

in 2013 and to 10.6% in 2014 (Belz, 2014). Decreases in unemployment should be celebrated; however, the overall unemployment rate in Minnesota was 4.1% in 2014 compared to the over double rate for black Minnesotans above. This study aims to broaden the conversation about interventions by providing the perceptions of mentoring for populations impacted by these disparities. Table 2 highlights some of the important demographics and disparities.

Table 2

Relevant demographics and unemployment gaps in Minnesota

# of black population in Minneapolis (2013)	# of black population in St. Paul (2013)	# of black population in Brooklyn Park (2010)	# of black population in Brooklyn Center (2010)	State-wide unemployment rate for blacks in 2012	State-wide unemployment rate for blacks in 2013	State-wide unemployment rate for blacks in 2014	State-wide unemployment rate for whites in 2014
72,000 (18.6% of total)	46,000 (15.7% of total)	39,593	14,788	18%	15%	10.6%	4.1%

Table 2

Policy impacts on mentoring

Interest in the change-making effects of mentoring has increased among policymakers because of the positive impact that mentoring has on youth success. New policies, however, must be accompanied by evidence of *why* mentoring programs and mentoring relationships work and *how* they work differently for different groups of people. Within mentoring literature, little attention is paid to such differences and how perceptions and interpretations of success might differ within and between groups.

In 2002, United States President George W. Bush authorized The Department of Education's (DOE) Student Mentoring Program under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Dagget (2010) claims that the NCLB Act is a continuation of the 1983 push to improve education sparked by the governmental report, *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. In order to assess the success of this grant program, the DOE funded an evaluation of outcomes for participants in programs that were awarded grants. The evaluation focused on three domains including: interpersonal relationships and personal responsibility, academic achievement and engagement, and high-risk or delinquent behavior (Bernstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009). The evaluation sampled students in two academic years (2005-2006 and 2006-2007). Results showed no statistically significant impacts in any of the three domains. The stagnant results of the DOE evaluation—namely a lack of consistency in programs, combined with national economic hardships, led to a 50% cut in mentoring funding in FY2010 under President Barack Obama's administration, which eliminated the DOE's mentoring program grants that were previously established (MENTOR, 2010). However, the Obama administration continued to increase funding for broader mentoring programs. In fiscal year 2014, mentoring funding increased to $88.5 million and $90 million fiscal year 2015 (MENTOR, 2015).

President Obama has taken the opportunity gaps that exist in Minnesota, and more broadly, our nation, and begun to implement programs and initiatives aimed at tackling these gaps. Most prominent of these efforts was President Obama's signed memorandum launching "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK) in early 2014. The president issued a powerful

stance on the futures of young people stating that MBK should, "help ensure they have

the tools and opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of who they are, where they

come from, or the circumstances into which they are born" (U.S. Department of

Education, 2015). A 2015 report by the MBK Task Force notes:

> …No single factor is more important in the life of a child than the love and
>
> support of a caring, committed adult. In addition to parents, high-quality mentors
>
> can help youth to make good decisions and engage in positive, pro-social
>
> behavior. (U.S Department of Education, 2015, p. 31)

The report highlights new and existing mentoring initiatives all around the country at

multiple levels and sectors. Local and city initiatives are wide-ranging and corporate

programs range from funding to direct sponsorship and practical support. President

Obama's pledge and the array of efforts being galvanized across the country further

highlight the importance, relevance, and timeliness of this study.

The mentoring program

In the mid-1990s, three African American fathers established the Northern Star

Mentoring Program mentoring program in the metropolitan area of Minnesota[6]. Similar

to many other programs that focus on African American males transitioning into

adulthood, students are paired with an adult mentor (almost always a US-born African

American), participate in a number workshops and programs, and culminate the program

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[6] This is not a case study of a mentoring program. Rather, participants have all been a
mentor or mentee in a single program between 2010 and 2013. The program will be
referenced several times throughout this dissertation and it is important to be clear about
the boundaries and interaction with the program itself. There was limited interaction with
the program coordinator and the participants in this study. Participants consented on a
voluntary basis with no pressure from the program coordinator.

with a rite of passage ceremony in which their parents symbolically release them into the world as adults. The Northern Star Mentoring Program is run and operated by a local chapter of a national program. This particular program began in the 1930s and aimed at providing black children (between the ages of two and 19) various educational, social, and cultural experiences (Graham, 1999). The program enrolls professional parents and their children and simultaneously offers networking opportunities for both. It has been deemed, "one of the defining organizations for families of the black professional class" (Graham, 1999, p. 22). Its membership includes over 30,000 parents and children and is a non-profit organization that has a central national office with hundreds of chapters throughout the United States. The chapters sponsor numerous charitable events and programs such as the mentoring program discussed in this dissertation. While both mothers and fathers are members of the organization it is noted by Graham that mothers usually chaperone the events and run the programs (1999).

The Northern Star Mentoring Program is based on the Seven Principles of the Nguzu Saba, which, "represents an incorporation of philosophy and customs common among many African groups. These principles are the focus for the seven-day African-American Kwanzaa celebration, but also provide a guide for living throughout the year" (Northern Star Mentoring Program Handbook[7], 2012-2013, p. 7-1). Table 2 defines the Seven Principles of the Nguzu Saba. The definitions are taken directly from the 2012-2013 Northern Star Mentoring Program Handbook.

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[7] The handbook provided to the researcher was copyrighted and strictly prohibited from sharing. Therefore, the handbook will not be made available in the appendix of this dissertation.

Table 3	
Seven Principles of the Nguzu Saba	
Umoja (Unity)	To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race
Kujichagulia (Self-determination)	To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves, instead of being defined, named, created and spoken for by others
Ujima (Collective work and responsibility)	To build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together
Ujamaa (Cooperative economics)	To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together
Nia (Purpose)	To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness
Kuumba (Creativity)	To do always as much as we can in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it
Imani (Faith)	To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle
Note. Information was obtained from the Northern Star Mentoring Program Handbook.	
Table 3	

In addition to the seven program principles, there are seven 'program elements' and

mentoring is the first. The mentoring component is, "designed to provide Initiates[8] with a

series of exposures, contacts, and activities with African-American male mentors. This

---

[8] Northern Star Mentoring Program uses 'initiate' interchangeably with 'mentee'.

series of contacts with adult role models assists in providing guidance in responsible

adult behavior" (Program Handbook, 2012-2013, p. 7-2). Ideally, the mentee-mentor

relationship will continue after the program ends but the continuation of relationships

varies. At its inception, the program was intended to cater to African American males.

Over time, there has been a large increase in West African participants in the program;

however, as the handbook definition of mentoring suggests, the program is continuing to

focus on African Americans.

      Each year, between 15 and 25 mentors and mentees participate in the program.

The mentors range in age, careers, and academic level. However, all mentors are required

to have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

      The Northern Star Mentoring Program provides multiple workshops and

programs designed to give participants specific skills. Table 4 presents the titles of each

workshop and a brief description.

Table 4

Workshop titles and descriptions

Workshop Title	Description
Time Management*	This workshop is designed for the mentee to learn to use his time wisely. As a new college student, his life will change dramatically.
Financial Aid/Scholarship*	This workshop is designed to help guide the mentee through the financial aid maze and the scholarship application process. The presentation will focus on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) requirements, available financial aid and local and national scholarships as well as helpful hints in preparing for the scholarship interviews and writing essays.

Biography Creation	The Biography Creation Workshop is provided to allow time for the mentee to actually write the biography that will appear in the souvenir handbook and is [read] aloud at the Northern Star Mentoring Program Ceremony.
Tech Up*	The Tech Up Workshop is designed to allow the mentee to take a look at their Facebook pages and any other personal/social media and think about the image they want to portray to the outside world. Employers, professional organizations, and organizations that award scholarships are all connected to social media, and first impressions are extremely important!
The Law and You	The mentees will have the opportunity to visit a prison to see the grave consequences of making bad choices.
Business Etiquette	The purpose of this workshop is for each mentee to develop his own "Personal Plan for Success."
Note. Workshop titles with an asterisk indicate references to education and/or college. *Note.* Information was obtained from the Northern Star Mentoring Program Handbook.		
Table 4		

In addition to the educational-focused workshops, mentees are guided through goal-setting processes and one focus is specific to education. These characteristics and program foci are important because even though the program has broader goals, there is a direct focus on education. Moreover, there is an assumption that mentees will be enrolling in some type of post-secondary education. Therefore, it is intended, via workshops, engagement with mentors, and participation, that mentees will perceive education in a positive manner. I believe, and chapter two will illustrate, that there is insufficient research and literature that provides a theoretical frame for a program such as

this. In particular, there is insufficient research and literature for programs that serve racially similar but ethnically and experientially different youth.

In Minnesota, like the rest of the country, there are few studies that have been conducted on mentoring programs serving both African Americans and West Africans. Minnesota African Refugees and Immigrants Initiatives (MARII) is a school-based mentoring program and was evaluated by a well-known research organization in Minnesota. The evaluation tested whether or not there was an increase in communication skills among participants, whether or not positive relationships with peers, families, and other adults were fostered, if there was a reduction in delinquency, and if academic achievement and study skills improved (Mbilinyi, 2004). The evaluation found that academic interest was improved but did not find detailed improvements other than reductions in suspensions and expulsions for participants. This overview of one program in the metropolitan area of Minnesota highlights the gap in literature focused on mentoring and further illuminates the importance of my study. Liang and Grossman (2010) have pointed out in their review of same-race and cross-race mentoring studies that the existing literature, "fails to compare various combinations of dyads, such as minority mentor-White protégé[9] vs. White mentor-minority protégé and minority mentors paired with protégés from different minority backgrounds (e.g., Asian mentor-African American protégé)" (p. 247). Eshner and Murphy support similar studies by claiming that, "future studies should examine the differences among racial pairings of minorities

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[9] 'Protégé' and 'mentee' are often used synonymously within the field of mentoring.

with one another, such as an Asian mentor and Black protégés" (1997, p. 475). Chapter two will explore this literature further.

Organization of the following chapters

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter two reviews the existing literature on mentoring programs and relationships. Chapter three discusses the methodology that I used to conduct this study and also situates and illustrates the natural fit for a grounded theory study. In chapter four, I present the study's findings followed by chapter five in which I will discuss the major findings, study limitations, positionality, and provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Review of relevant literature

Introduction

Mentoring is a rapidly growing social intervention and estimates show that about 2.5 to 3 million youth are involved in formal one-to-one relationships (Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004; Rhodes & Dubois, 2008). Walker (2007) credits five primary factors for this momentum: (a) mentoring makes sense to most people, (b) mentoring fits neatly with dominant American cultural values, (c) mentoring has results, (d) mentoring has Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of America as its exemplar, (e) mentoring costs are not high (pp. 4-5). Mentoring is a young field and in need of more research. Rhodes (2002) states that, "although mentoring initiatives in the United States date back to the turn of the century, nearly half of all programs were established in the past five years, and only 18% have been operating for more than 15" (p. 1). Because the field is young, the literature suggests a need for more research. Keller (2010) summarizes the need for more studies, in general, and the need for more studies that seek rich qualitative findings:

> Although several theoretical perspectives have been incorporated into explanations for the beneficial effects of youth mentoring, few of the proposed mechanisms have been examined empirically. In fact, very little research has systematically investigated what really happens in mentoring relationships. The distinctive nature of each mentoring relationship, based on the individual characteristics and circumstances of mentor and protégé, poses several methodological challenges. As in other research on social support, for example, the type and extent of assistance provided by the mentor may be conditioned on

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the needs of the youth. Thus, research must account for a variety of individual and contextual factors and strive for specificity in linking particular mentor behaviors to conceptually relevant youth outcomes. In-depth qualitative studies will be valuable for identifying the range of development processes encompassed within mentoring relationships and evaluating the plausibility of theoretical models that have been proposed. (p. 41)

Keller paints a picture that calls for more studies such as the current one. The remainder of this chapter will identify and support this need as I guide the reader through existing literature related to mentoring. I have organized the literature review in a manner that shows the complexity of mentoring theory and illustrates the necessity for more qualitative research. I also establish the gap in mentoring literature centered on different ethnicities and experiences that suggest unique needs of mentees. Chapter one discussed the program components. I suggest there has not been sufficient theoretical development or exploration of the needs of individual mentees within the mentoring field for a program such as the one discussed in this dissertation.

Specifically, in this chapter I:

1. Provide an overview of common theoretical frameworks that have been used in mentoring studies
2. Discuss distinguishing characteristics of formal and natural mentoring
3. Review studies that focus on school-based mentoring (SBM) and community-based mentoring (CBM) in order to establish the context of this study
4. Review literature that is focused on different mentoring approaches and techniques and their effects
5. Discuss literature focused on differences that inform the mentee-mentor relationship
6. Summarize the literature reviewed in order to highlight the gaps in research and the need for this study.

Frameworks and theoretical underpinnings of mentoring

Scholars have attempted to research multiple facets of mentoring including why people volunteer, relational aspects related to mentoring, development of children, psychosocial behavior, and organizational behaviors (Keller, 2010). Recognizing the complexity involved with such a task is important for mentoring scholars and those participating in such relationships. Moreover, it is important to note that many of these theoretical perspectives are heavily influenced by the field of psychology and have been used by scholars trained in that field to investigate mentoring relationships. Youth mentoring frameworks have been explored by many and titled in numerous ways: (a) mutuality, trust, and empathy, (b) social and emotional development, (c) cognitive development, (d) identity development (e) psychosocial risk, (f) personal competence, and (g) social integration (Keller, 2010; Rhodes, 2002). The leading authors within the mentoring field have also attempted to provide examples of theoretical approaches that accompany the frameworks they outline. However, various theories could be applied to the frameworks identified. This section explains three of these mentoring frameworks that are most important for the current study.

Psychosocial risk

Keller (2010) identified psychosocial risk as a framework for mentoring. He describes this framework as assisting youth with decision making and diverting them from poor actions. The framework assumes that youth connect with mentors because they, "have experienced strains or losses in their relationships with parents or because they have been exposed to high levels of psychosocial adversity" (Keller, 2010, p. 38).

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Thus, this framework is a preventive approach to mentoring and is concerned with future actions of mentees. Accompanying psychosocial risk is attachment theory, which posits that youth suffering from poor relationships will attach to a positive adult and thus have potential to be heavily influenced. After multiple interactions with a caring adult the youth has potential for many positive transitions in his or her life (Keller, 2010).

Enhancing personal competence

Another framework identified by Keller (2010) is that of enhancing personal competence and he describes this happening when a mentor, "will introduce the youth to knowledge, skills, and practices that will enable the youth to pursue his or her interests and become a more effective member of society" (p. 39). This framework is focused on the future of youth. Keller identifies social learning theory as complementary for this framework noting that social learning takes place when a mentee observes a model and leads to promotion of self-efficacy, which then leads to higher standards, greater effort, and greater confidence.

Promoting social integration

Social integration is articulated as having an impact on the social networks of youth outside of the family. Keller (2010) explains that exposure of youth to different people and experiences can lead to an expansion of perspectives. Further, Keller associates social integration with the concept of social capital and explains social capital as youth accruing benefits, "by virtue of their participation in relationships or membership in groups" (2010, p. 40). The promotion of social integration is focused on the individual and the ways in which a mentoring relationship can provide an entry into

other relationships with adults, organizations, and programs that have potential for positive benefits on the individual. Of the three frameworks provided by Keller, social integration is the only one that mentions educational improvements as a potential outcome (2010).

Discussion of frameworks

The application of these theories within the frameworks is messy and not as neat as we might hope. For example, while Keller used social learning theory under the umbrella of enhancing personal competence, Rhodes (2005) applied social learning theory as a way to think about the role that mentoring plays in a framework of cognitive development. In addition, both scholars trace their literature to Vygotsky and discuss his theory "zone of proximal development" as the basis for different frameworks (Keller, 2010; Rhodes, 2005). Moreover, and as noted, Keller looked to a psychosocial risk framework to prevent youth from deviant behavior; however, Rhodes posits that mentoring plays a role in identity development of youth and thus impacts the decisions youth make. For Rhodes, identity development is rooted in the work of Freud and associates identity development with behaviors, attitudes, and traits (2005). Adding to the complexity is Rhodes and Keller's discussion of education within their frameworks. Rhodes discusses potential for positive educational outcomes within cognitive, social, and emotional development; Keller only discusses education within his frame of social integration. This further illustrates the complexities associated with mentoring, the potential outcomes, and the overlap of literature, theories, and frameworks.

Natural versus formal mentoring

An important distinction to explore for this project is natural versus formal

mentoring. Although formal mentoring maintains skeptics because the length of

relationships is shorter than natural relationships, Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007)

point out that formal mentoring can produce positive outcomes for mentees and should

not be dismissed. Parsing out the differences and literature for formal and natural

mentoring is useful because Northern Star Mentoring Program is a formal mentoring

program and while scholars have cited natural mentoring as a more effective technique,

there is potential for great returns from formal mentoring.

Natural mentoring

The working definition of natural mentoring by Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and

Behrendt (2005) is concise:

> Nonparental adults, such as extended family members, teachers, or neighbors,
>
> from whom a young person receives support and guidance as a result of a
>
> relationship developed without the help of a program specifically designed to
>
> connect youth and adults to form such a relationship. (p. 143)

Natural mentors have also been referred to as role models (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003)

or very important persons (VIPs) (Beam, Chen, & Greenberger, 2002), coming in the

form of extended family members (Scales & Gibbons, 1996) or nonparent significant

adults (Galbo & Demetrulias, 1996). No matter the description, natural mentoring usually

has no prescription and is unconstrained (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). A highly

recognized characteristic of natural mentoring is the unrestrained time frame in which a

relationship occurs. Natural mentoring will continue as long as the parties remain involved, and the nature of the relationship may change over time (Kram, 1983). Spencer (2007) illustrated that not only do natural mentoring relationships last longer but also any relationships that end abruptly could have potentially negative impacts on the mentee. In addition, the decision to form a relationship is usually a mutual one. Mentors may view a mentee as a younger version of self and will select high performing young people. Similarly, mentees will seek out people that they view as role models and people that can offer useful information, resources, and advice (Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

Formal mentoring

In contrast, formal mentoring programs often take place in settings that are confined by time and space. Such settings include schools that coincide with the academic calendar, after-school community-run programs that are also often confined to the academic calendar, and workplace settings. Scholars estimate it could take as long as three years for a mentoring relationship to fully develop (Chao & Gardner, 1992). Chao and Gardner (1992) performed a quantitative study within career mentoring that found that natural mentoring relationships can last between three and six years while formal mentoring often lasts for six months to one year, which is not long enough to establish solid relationships. This finding has led many to believe that formal mentoring cannot be successful at meeting the needs of mentees. However, a study of career mentoring found that formal mentoring within organizations could have positive outcomes, namely satisfaction with their organization and positive attitudes about their future with the company (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). This particular quantitative study tested

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whether or not individuals involved in formal mentoring relationships had more positive views and perceptions of their organization than nonmentored individuals. The characteristics of formal mentoring vary by program but are always structured and bound by guidelines.

Organizations sponsor all formal mentoring programs. Companies have used formal mentoring in order to develop young professionals by matching them with senior professionals (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). This is similar to formal mentoring for youth where the sponsor or organization is a school, corporation, or community organization that formally matches a young person with a nonparental adult. Whether work-related or in the community, formal mentoring programs have goals that are used to guide the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, which are usually predetermined by the organization. Moreover, formal mentoring programs are bound by specified meeting frequencies, sometimes include group meetings, and have predetermined content areas, which are usually determined by the organizations. In addition to these characteristics, formal mentoring programs can contain training for mentors and sometimes mentees. The duration and intensity of such trainings vary widely (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). While the characteristics of formal mentoring programs differ, the potential for positive outcomes is promising.

While it has been suggested that natural mentoring is more beneficial than formal mentoring, there are other studies outlining the benefits of formal programs relative to nonmentored persons. Because of these potential benefits, the current study aims to determine whether or not formal mentoring leads to positive outcomes for two separate

groups in the same program. It is important to note that all of the literature discussed within a context of a convening organization or program is considered formal mentoring. The following sections will discuss school-based mentoring (SBM) programs, community-based mentoring (CBM) programs, mentoring focused on differences of participants, and the various mentoring approaches, which are all considered formal mentoring.

Where does mentoring happen?

The practice of mentoring, and mentoring literature, is complex due to the multiple spaces (e.g. community, school, career) within which mentoring occurs. The issue is further complicated because mentoring can take place at multiple developmental stages of a person's life (e.g. children, adolescents, adults), and because the foci on populations varies (Keller, 2010). Mentoring occurs in multiple venues and contexts. For example, mentoring in the workforce, commonly referred to as career mentoring, has been utilized to assist with career and leadership development. Scholars have found that there are links between individuals obtaining a career mentor and work happiness, promotions, and compensation (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Byrne, Dick, & Chiaburu, 2008; Kram & Isabella, 1985). In higher education, there is a general consensus that a faculty mentor plays a large role in student lives (Legucha, 2011; Patton, 2009). Peer mentoring happens as early as elementary school, has a mutual benefit that is often missing from youth-adult mentoring, does not label a 'protégé', and consists of peers helping each other in a reciprocal manner (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001; Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2010; Kram & Isabella, 1985). Throughout this

literature review, I draw on mentoring studies focused on/in these environments, but I primarily focus on literatures that are directly linked to my study. To begin, I discuss school-based mentoring to establish a comparison of school-based and community-based mentoring, which are the most common environments formal mentoring is located and practiced for young people.

School-based mentoring (SBM)

The impacts of school-based mentoring often parallel those of community-based mentoring and, in many accounts, the popularity of SBMs stemmed from the positive outcomes seen in CBM programs (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, McKaken, & Jucovy, 2007). SBM programs are primarily focused on relationship building, as is often the case with CBM programs. However, there are almost always educational foci within SBMs, partly because of the physical location of meetings and programs (Herrera et al., 2007). This review begins with a large study testing the impacts of ten Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) SBM agencies[10].

Herrera et al. (2007) used BBBS agencies to conduct a yearlong study in order to unpack the understudied characteristics of SBM programs. While SBM has been investigated in the past, this study is the largest because of a partnership between BBBS and Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national nonprofit that was aimed at improving effectiveness of social policies, programs and community initiatives that affect youth and young adults (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). Using ten BBBS agencies in ten different states, a sample of over 1,500 students in grades four through nine, and 70

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[10] "Agencies" refers to the different sites within which Big Brothers Big Sisters operates.

schools, the researchers sought to test, "the extent to which BBBS SBM can, in fact, provide youth with measurable benefits" (Herrera et al., 2007, p. ii). Of the 1,500 youth, 1,139 participated with 565 in the treatment group and 574 in the control group. One major non-educational finding is that, on average, mentees in this study maintained a relationship with their mentors for 4.6 months although an average school year is 9 months. As mentioned earlier, mentoring relationships can take up to three years to fully develop (Chao & Gardner, 1992). Therefore, the length of school-based mentoring relationships is significantly shorter than some scholars would recommend. Educational outcomes were also tested in this study.

Herrera et al. stated, "because SBM takes place in school, it is likely that mentors and youth do talk more about school-related issues, such as homework and problems with school work, teachers or schoolmates, than matches in CBM programs" (2007, p. 33). Youth involved in the program only showed positive impacts in 9 of the 23 school-related outcomes that were measured. The nine outcomes were (a) written and oral language, (b) science, (c) quality of class work, (d) number of assignments completed, (e) absence without an excuse, (f) start to skip school, (g) engaging in serious school misconduct, (h) scholastic efficacy, and (i) overall academic performance. This study provides a large-scale overview of the BBBS mentoring program across a range of ages. The next study looked at a much smaller program serving a single grade.

King, Vidourek, Davis, and McClellen (2002) studied fourth graders involved in a mentoring program called Healthy Kids Mentoring Program over one year. The study sought to test the program's overall effectiveness in fostering high levels of self-esteem

and positive school, peer, and family connections. The scholars found that relationships between adults and fourth graders caused students to feel more connected to peers, family, and increased self-esteem. King et al. (2002) credit the increase in connectedness with family and peers to an intentional emphasis by mentors to encourage communication between parties. Another finding in this study was that school connectedness among youth increased. The authors found that, "compared to nonmentored students, mentored students achieved significantly higher school connectedness" (King et al., 2002, p. 297). They used five school connectedness subscale items: (a) my teachers are fair with what they expect of me; (b) I am usually proud of my report card; (c) school is as hard for me as it is for most others; (d) my teachers are happy with the kind of work I do; and, (e) most of my teachers understand me. For all of these subscales, the mean score increased from pre to post-test. King et al. performed a quantitative analysis and, while they found that mentoring relationships led to improved relationships within the family and increased feelings of school connectedness, they were not concerned with how those improvements took place.

Karcher (2008) conducted a quantitative study with 525 youth that were primarily of Latino descent to examine the effects of one hour per week of SBM in elementary, middle, and high school students. Although the students were primarily Latin, the researcher was not concerned with outcomes for the specific population, which I will explore later in this review. The youth were between 10 and 18 years old, attended 19 public schools, and at post-test the 525 youth had dropped to 468 with 313 girls and 155 boys. Two-hundred sixty-four youth were assigned to receive standard services while the

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remaining received standard services plus a mentor. For males, which are most important for my study, elementary students with a mentor had strikingly higher results in school connectedness than those receiving standard services and no mentor. For males in middle school who received a mentor, school connectedness was slightly higher than those not receiving a mentor. And, most important for the current study, Karcher points out that, "it is concerning that for boys in high school we found no positive effects of SBM and a decline in connectedness to teachers" (2008, p. 109).

Community-based mentoring (CBM)

As discussed in chapter one, the current study examines a community-based mentoring program in the metropolitan area of Minnesota. CBM has a long-standing history within the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program. It is focused on mentoring within a community and typically matches youth with a member of the community from which they reside (Herrera, 2004). CBM programs are often loosely structured and the goals can include building social capital, increasing academic success, building positive relationships between adults and youth, and job attainment. CBM has been vastly studied by leading mentoring scholars. This section is devoted to a review of studies focused on CBM programs and will discuss studies that have focused on many outcomes, some of which have focused on education.

Between 1991 and 1994 Grossman and Tierney (1998) conducted a study of a BBBS community-based mentoring program. The study sought to discover the impact of the mentoring program on youth between the ages of 10-16 years old. The total sample size was 961 young people with 489 treatments and 472 controls. This quantitative study

tested many effects including academics and school outcomes. They found that over the 18-month period, the treatment youths' grades (2.71 GPA) were slightly better than those of the control group (2.63 GPA). Moreover, the study assessed the number of days students in the program skipped school and found that overall days missed decreased. The number of students that skipped a single day was 30% less, and those that skipped at least one day in the previous year decreased the total number of days skipped. Lastly, within education, the study used a scholastic competence scale developed by Harter to determine the impact of mentoring on students' expectations of education. The authors found that treatment youths were more confident in their ability to complete assignments than their counterparts.

Another study of community-based mentoring by Beam, Chen, and Greenberger (2002) was conducted to test whether some adolescent and adult relationships are developed normatively (or develop naturally) as opposed to literature that suggests these relationships designed for the adults to have a compensatory role (Beam et al., 2002). The study sample was drawn from California schools and consisted of 243 students that participated in a survey while in the 11th grade. Of the 243 surveyed, interview data were collected from 55 youth. In addition, 58 adults that maintained relationships with the interviewed students were interviewed. The findings from this study show that of the 243 adolescents in the study, 199 (82%) reported having a nonparental adult that played an "important," "very important," or "truly key" role in their lives. Further, of the 199, only 23% reported that there was a significant event happening in their lives. Therefore, the formation of the vast majority of the studied relationships was a normative process.

Ultimately, the authors note that, "On the basis of this study of a community sample, it seems clear that a large majority of adolescents had an important relationship with a nonparental adult, indicating that this is a normative component of adolescent development" (Beam et al., 2002, p. 322).

Because CBM programs have broad foci on developing youth, not all studies and scholars have focused on educational outcomes. Spencer (2007) used participants in BBBS to conduct a qualitative study aimed at discovering potential negative impacts of unsuccessful mentoring relationships. She noted that mentoring literature within the realm of the workplace and higher education includes such relationships that exist between adults and claims that while different, "this body of literature highlights what could be learned through widening our lens to include a close examination of negative experiences in youth mentoring relationships" (Spencer, 2007, p. 333). This study sample included 31 male and female participants with 20 mentors and 11 youth. The definition of an "unsuccessful relationship" was one that did not last through the one-year time commitment that the program required. The major findings uncovered descriptive information about why mentoring relationships ended early and the participants' interpretation of the impact of an early termination. Spencer (2007) detailed six primary themes which include, "(a) mentor or protégé abandonment, (b) perceived lack of protégé motivation, (c) unfulfilled expectations, (d) deficiencies in mentor relational skills, including the inability to bridge cultural divides, (e) family interference, and (f) inadequate agency support" (p. 339).

Similarly, Jones and Perkins (2006) performed a study of a community-based mentoring program aimed at discovering differences in the level of involvement for youth working with programs led by other youth versus programs led by adults. The study included a convenience sample of youth and adults working with a national community service organization. Researchers used participants from ten states in the northeastern part of the United States. Of the total 98 participants, 55 were youth. A group activity rating scale was used to determine the progress of a group on a particular community project and to determine the type of youth-adult relationship based on the continuum of youth-adult relationships. The continuum of youth-adult relationships consists of youth involvement in coordinating projects, adult involvement in coordinating projects, and youth-adult partnerships in coordinating projects. Various statistical tests were performed. The first indicated that, "all participants had positive perceptions toward youth involvement, adult involvement, and youth-adult interaction" (Jones & Perkins, 2006, p. 99). However, researchers also assessed whether or not there were differences for adult perceptions of the different types of relationships. Although overall perceptions were positive, adults had significantly more positive perceptions of youth involvement in youth-adult partnerships than adult-led programs. Youth were also tested in these same ways, which showed youth-led collaborations had overall higher mean scores but were not statistically significant.

Philip (2008) conducted a qualitative study in the United Kingdom (UK) questioning how mentoring strengthens relationships within the family and academic outcomes. The researcher performed two rounds of interviews first with 18 participants

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and then with 15. There were three research sites including a housing project for homeless people, a befriending project, and an alternative education program for youth excluded from "mainstream" schools. One mentee credited his mentor with assisting his process to get back into mainstream school and eventually helping with admittance into a post-secondary institution. Philip also found that even in families with relatively positive relationships, strains are still apparent between children and parents. Of all the interviews, Philip highlighted the experiences of two participants. She pointed out that the mother of a mentee reflected on the relationship between her son, Scott, and his mentor, Bill. The mother, "had found it difficult to cope with Scott" and, "the continuing relationship with Bill helped offset some of the negative impact" (Philip, 2008, p. 29). Philip credits the positive impacts on the relationship with family to the effort by Bill to visit Scott's home in order to better understand the context within which Scott was living. Moreover, this is consistent with overall findings indicating that building and maintaining a friendship was important to mentees and helped with continuity.

Community-based mentoring has yielded broad positive outcomes in the lives of youth that reach beyond education. While many programs contain educational components, it is not a distinguishing factor of community-based mentoring. In fact, as the studies reviewed have illustrated, there are few limitations on CBM programs. The last two sections have shown that SBM and CBM often share similar aims with slight specifications. The next section provides an overview of studies that have looked at different approaches involved with mentoring.

Research on effects of mentoring: Which approach(es) work?

Thus far, this literature review has provided the context of the landscape within which the mentoring field resides. This section adds to the context and explores studies that have specifically attempted to uncover different ways that mentors approach their relationship with mentees and the effectiveness of those approaches.

Spencer (2006) interviewed 24 pairs of adolescents and adults that had participated in a BBBS program in order to, "begin to build an understanding of the processes at work in closer, more enduring mentoring relationships, those that have been found to be the most likely to have positive benefits for youth" (p. 290). All relationships lasted over one year and case managers selected participants. Twenty-three of the mentors were Caucasian and one was African American, while the mentees were from multiple racial backgrounds including: 11 white, five African American, three Hispanic, and five biracial. Mentees were between 12 and 17 years old. Spencer identified four mentoring approaches. *Authenticity* is described as the mentor and mentee being real with each other and they are able to express true feelings with one another. *Empathy* consists of the adults aiming to understand youths' perspectives in order to contextualize the difficulties that youth face. *Collaboration* develops different skills of mentees, for example, a collaboration of mentors and mentees studying together in order to foster academic skills. Lastly, *companionship* develops a friendship. Of the four approaches to mentoring, Spencer (2006) found that authenticity and empathy were the most important in fostering the relationship's development and longevity.

In a quantitative study using a total sample of 1,150 youth between the ages of 13 and 18, Philip (2000), drew on a subsample of 30 youth and 30 mentors to conduct a mixed methods study to, "elicit the perceptions and understandings held by participants" (p. 214). From focus groups and individual interviews in two phases of research, Philip (2000) found that mentoring was significant to many young people; however, significance was perceived in five different approaches used by mentors: *classic mentoring, individual mentoring, friend-to-friend mentoring, peer group mentoring, and long-term relationship mentoring*. Classic mentoring is where the adult takes on the more mature and experienced role in order to provide advice, challenge the youth, and act as a role model. Individual mentoring is one adult leading a group of young people, often through programs at community centers. Friend-to-friend mentoring shares similarities with the companionship approach (Spencer, 2006) and is effective in gaining the trust of youth. Peer group mentoring occurs when groups of friends naturally mentor each other in either private or social settings, and long-term mentoring is similar to classic mentoring except that long-term mentoring consists of mentors that have a history of "risk-taking" and can therefore relate to mentees with similar attributes (Philip, 2000, p. 217).

Langhout, Rhodes, and Osborne (2004) conducted a study in which the primary aim was to uncover youths' perceptions of relationship styles and evaluate how those styles influence youth outcomes. The study drew on the national evaluation of BBBS (Grossman & Tierney, 1998) and had 1138 children between 10 and 16 years old. Measures were used to discover general outcomes in four domains, which included

social, psychological, academic, and behavioral functioning. The authors developed three

scales based on the responses from participants categorized as *supportive, structured*, and

activity-based. The supportive category included unconditional support for mentees,

satisfaction with the relationship, and a lack of negative effect. The structured category

had a general positive effect, although had a low level of talking about goals,

relationships, or problems. Lastly, the activity-based category involved activities such as

sporting events and other entertainment. The data revealed groupings of youth in terms of

support and structure, which were *moderate*, *unconditional support*, *active*, and *low-key*.

The findings were robust and complex, but it is evident that the types of relationships that

youth maintained with mentors had significant impacts on multiple outcomes and the

authors make the claim that their study is the, "beginning step toward empirically

distinguishing a range of relationships and evaluating their differential influence on youth

outcomes" (Langhout et al., 2004, p. 303).

Morrow and Styles (1995) studied 82 BBBS matches to uncover, among other

things, the ways that relationships are classified and what activities are associated with

the relationships. Ages of youth ranged from 10 to 15. In order to study characteristics of

relationships and how these characteristics may change, the researchers selected matches

that were in existence for 4 to 18 months. Two categories of relationships were

discovered that were termed *prescriptive* and *development relationships* (Morrow &

Styles, 1995). Mentors that fell into the prescriptive category, "demonstrated consistent

reluctance or difficulty adjusting their already formulated notions about their youth and

the potential of BB/BSA's intervention to yield rapid, readily discernable and long-term

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changes in their youth's lives" (Morrow & Styles, 1995, p. 19). The authors identified

two prescriptive subcategories. In the first subcategory, mentors took on the role of goal

setting and took time to discuss goals. In the second subcategory adults required youth to

take equal responsibility in maintaining the relationship. In developmental relationships

mentors were described as being, "focused on providing youth with a comfort zone in

which to address a broad range of developmental tasks" (Morrow & Styles, 1995, p. 19).

Interestingly, 17 of the 28 prescriptive mentors had a similar intent to change the values,

skills, and accomplishments of youth. The remaining 11 struggled with taking

responsibility for maintaining the relationship with youth. Results indicate that

developmental relationships maintained positive environments where youth were able to

take ownership of the relationship, activities, and their own experience, while prescriptive

relationships had high levels of tensions experienced by both the mentors and mentees. It

was also noted that prescriptive mentors were perceived as pushy and demeaning by the

youth. Findings suggest that youth had positive perceptions of relationships that were

more bidirectional and youth-centered.

This section provided an overview of some of the studies that have attempted to

uncover different types of mentoring approaches taken by mentors. Some of the studies

were solely descriptive in that they attempted to show what is being done while others

have been more interested in identifying how different mentoring approaches lead to

specific outcomes. This section also illustrates more of the complexities associated with

mentoring, best practices, and the necessity to pay attention to the experiences of

mentees. The next section explores studies that are digging into differences of participants.

Do differences in the mentee-mentor relationship matter?

This section of the literature discusses studies that have focused on mentoring across differences. Numerous terms have been used to talk about this literature such as *multicultural* (Murrel, Crosby, & Ely, 1998), *diversity*, *religion*, *socioeconomic status*, *gender* (Allen & Eby, 2010), *race*, *ethnicity*, and *culture* (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Because of the difficulty in defining a term, for the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to use *difference*. Much of the research has given clout to organizations that are attempting to develop horizontal and vertical relationships, or peer and employee-manager relationships. Some studies have focused on immigrant populations. Mentoring research that considers cultural and racial differences between the mentor and mentee have also gained attention. I will primarily review mentoring scholarship related to race, culture, and ethnicity. The section will support the need for more research within this area of mentoring and that 'one size fits all' approaches to mentoring are insufficient. This section begins with a focus on immigrants, followed by studies that have focused on same-race and cross-race mentoring.

Mentoring immigrants

With the growing popularity of mentoring has come recognition of the need to mentor immigrant youth. Chapter one discussed the growing immigrant populations within the United States and Minnesota. Rhodes (2005) highlighted the difficulty that immigrants face when immersed in US schools and communities and made the case for

mentoring as a way to combat poor experiences of immigrants in school, as well as in a broader sense. Within three mentoring handbooks published in the past decade there is no mention of mentoring immigrants. While few studies have been done on mentoring immigrants, I will discuss two that are relevant to my study.

In one study of Latino Immigrants participating in a SBM program, Diversi and Mecham (2005) based their work in a critical theory framework that uses an empowerment lens. Diversi and Mecham referred to empowering relationships as promoting higher thinking, alternative cultural plots, and re-interpreting ethnic identity. In addition, the authors operated under the assumption that positive interactions within the realm of education and relationships would increase youth's engagement in school and youth would make better life decisions (Diversi & Mecham, 2005). The program served 50 students in the eighth and ninth grades and had 20 mentors that were primarily white female college students. The qualitative findings from mentor's views, youth views, and coordinators' views all suggest that positive outcomes were experienced by mentees. However, the authors express concern about the empowerment of youth. While the authors noted an increased awareness of students' bicultural identity, they also expressed the reality that empowerment heavily involves youth immigrants' ability to navigate their new culture and institutions, which they were not able to conclude as a finding.

Another study focused on immigrants participating in a school-based mentoring program. Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn (2009) used relational and academic engagement theories to assess associations between these theories, mentoring, and

academic outcomes. The researchers cited studies that show that successful school adaptations for immigrants are linked to quality relationships related to education and school. They also cited academic engagement as being related to students feeling connected to school (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). The study used data from the Longitudinal Immigration Student Adaptation study, which was a five-year study that used mixed-methods approaches to document patterns of adaptation among newly arrived immigrant youth from Central America, China, The Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico. There were 407 students involved in this study with an even gender distribution (53% female). By the fifth year, the sample decreased to 309 participants for unspecified reasons but likely due to natural attrition. Students ranged in age from nine to 14 years old. The study used multiple measures. Some measures were directly related to education while others had indirect relations. For my study, the most useful aspects of this particular study were the qualitative findings. The qualitative findings from the case studies of two participants show that peer, nonparental adults, and family relationships can have effects on academic outcomes. This study also found that, over time, for all of the immigrant groups, grade point averages declined. The decline in academic achievement is in line with research that suggests the length of time immigrants spend in the United States is associated with lower academic achievement known as the *immigrant paradox* (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). However, the rate at which this decline took place in this particular study varied for the various immigrant populations. This raises questions about diverse immigrant or minority populations and the associated academic

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achievement (or nonacademic), or decline in achievement. Mentoring scholarship has also focused on the matching of mentees and mentors based on race.

Cross-race versus same-race mentoring

Another area that has gained exposure within the mentoring literature is centered on differences in the matching of mentors and mentees. Much of this literature has gained popularity because scholars have identified that minority youth in today's society have a difficult time forming relationships with minority adults inside and outside of the family (Karcher, 2008; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). It is believed by scholars that minority youth face relationship challenges that are unique to recent generations. This is captured by the statement that, "Young people as a group have borne the brunt of the rapid pace of social change which has affected every area of social and family life" (Philip, 2008, p. 211), and positive relationships with adults are at the fore (Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco, & Camic, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). Therefore, minorities have frequently been matched with white mentors, leading to a debate between those in favor of same-race and those in favor of cross-race mentoring. Those in favor of same-race mentoring have argued that mentors with dissimilar cultural backgrounds cannot fully connect to mentees and further that identity could be tainted due to such interactions (Rhodes et al., 2002). Those in favor of cross-race mentoring have highlighted the importance of bidirectional relationships and claim that cross-race mentoring can increase the cultural and social capital of participants.

Salzman (2000) conducted a qualitative study of a mentoring program that matched graduate students with Native American youth that were between 11-15 years

old. The two-year study primarily employed interviews and participatory interactions between the mentors and mentees for data collection. In year one, there were seven mentors (six White and one Chinese student). In year two there were five pairs. All of the mentors were white and the mentees were Native American. Based on interviews with mentees, parents of mentees, cultural consultants, the program director, and a survey at the end of year two, several findings were discovered. Salzman (2000) found that mentor participation in Native American cultural events gave importance to the mentees' culture. Moreover, mentors had a desire to inquire about mentees' cultural influences and positionality. Lastly, the author noted that it is important for mentors of the dominant culture to, "understand the bidirectional nature of the learning experience and not adopt a missionary attitude of trying to 'save' or 'fix' Native Americans" (2000, p. 123).

Grant-Thompson and Atkinson (1997) used quantitative research to assess the effects of mentor ethnicity and cultural sensitivity on perceptions of a mentor's credibility and cultural competence. The study consisted of 74 undergraduate African American males attending community colleges. The researchers used multiple dependent and independent variables and cultural and ethnic inventory tests. The significance of the study centered on the low numbers of ethnic minority faculty in higher educational institutions and the growing numbers of ethnic minority students. The authors concluded that, "the results of the current study indicate that mentoring ethnicity, mentor cultural sensitivity, and student level of cultural mistrust all play a role in how African American male students perceive a faculty mentor" (Grant-Thompson & Atkinson, 1997, p. 131).

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This study, however, was not concerned with the ways in which mentoring relationships across race and culture could be perceived in positive ways.

Cohen, Steele, and Ross (1999) performed two studies in order to assess mentoring across differences through the lens of how critical feedback is received and perceived by black and white mentees. In order to test the reactions to feedback, the researchers presented 45 black and 48 white college students from the same higher education institution with three criticism scenarios. The scenarios were as follows: unbuffered criticism, criticism with a positive buffer, and criticism coupled with a discussion of high standards and assurance. One component of the assessment tested the task motivation of black and white students and its relationship to the type of feedback received. The findings from the study suggest that black students receiving unbuffered criticism tended to react more negatively than white students. However, when black students received criticism coupled with a positive buffer they reacted more positively than without a buffer. In the last scenario, students received criticism with an explanation of high standards and assurance that they could achieve the intended task. It was not until black students were presented with the last scenario that they had a higher motivation level than their white counterparts. Another part of the assessment was designed to decipher whether or not black students perceived negative feedback as racial bias based on the assumption that the person giving feedback was white. The black students perceived higher rates of bias for the first two scenarios than white students but lower perceptions of bias when receiving criticism with an explanation of high standards and assurance.

The second study consisted of 80 black and 73 white students from the same higher educational institution. It used slightly different scenarios from the first study. The scenarios consisted of unbuffered criticism, criticism with an explanation of high standards, and criticism combined with an explanation of high standards and assurance that the student could perform well (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999). The researchers predicted that black students would perceive more bias in the first scenario due to their race than white students but that the perception of bias involvement would dissipate with third scenario (criticism combined with high standards and assurance). Findings supported this prediction. For task motivation the findings were consistent with the first study. The authors discuss stereotype threat and self-efficacy theories and make the claim that mentors have to be strategic about the way in which they provide feedback to mentees in order to avoid the perception of racial bias. They also claim that the history of race in the United States is one that ignites perceptions of bias and make a call for "wise mentors" or mentors that combine criticism with high standards and assurance (Cohen et al., 1999).

Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, and Lee (2002) conducted research to specifically analyze same-race versus cross-race mentoring matches. The authors used data from a large evaluation of BBBS that has been cited in this dissertation, and was conducted by Grossman and Tierney (1998). Approximately half of the evaluation sample (476) in this study were minorities. There were 125 participants placed in cross-race mentoring relationships, 65 were in same-race relationships, and the remaining minorities were put in a control group. All of the cross-race mentors in the study were European Americans.

The dyads engaged in a wide variety of activities and discussions promoting youth's overall development. Data collection methods included assessments within the following categories: parent relationships, peer relationships, scholastic competence, behavioral outcomes, school value, self-worth, and mentoring relationships. The data uncovered few consistent patterns; although, one significant finding was that mentees in cross-race relationships reported being more likely to talk to their mentors when something was bothering them and perceived more unconditional support from their mentors (Rhodes et al., 2002). The authors were also clear about the difficulty in determining if race was the primary determinant in positive matches. They recognize that:

Matching is a very deliberate process in which the case manager considers the preferences and characteristics of parents, youth, and mentors. Thus, in addition to differences attributed to the racial configuration of the relationship, the differences that emerged between same- versus cross-race relationships could also be attributed to several other factors. (p. 2127)

Eshner and Murphy (1997) conducted a study of 104 interns working for one company that were matched with mentors. The 104 interns ranged from 16 to 22 years old and from multiple racial backgrounds with the majority being Latino/a, African American, and Asian. The average intern was a senior in high school at the time of the study. Of all mentors, 45% of were Caucasian, followed by African American (28%), then Latinos (15%) and Asians (4%). The mentees were assigned to same-race or different-race mentors. There were 26 same-race and 50 different-race pairs with Caucasian mentors being the vast majority of different-race mentors. Survey

questionnaires were distributed at the beginning and end of the eight-week program to mentors and interns. The study measured multiple aspects of the mentoring relationship including time spent together, perceptions about the quality of the relationship, and psychosocial support. Many of these measurements were tested in relation to same-race and different-race relationships. Findings from quantitative analysis show that mentors like their protégés more when they are the same race and the protégé reported more instrumental support when paired with same-race mentors than protégés paired with different-race mentors (Eshner & Murphy, 1997). Protégés did not report more contact or satisfaction with their mentors if they were the same race; however, perceived similarities other than race were associated with satisfaction and the amount of contact with mentors.

Summary

Because mentoring has only recently seen a spike in popularity, mentoring is still under-theorized, broadly defined, and underdeveloped (Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2010). The literature review illustrates that mentoring studies have shown positive impacts for youth when they are involved in mentoring relationships. What has been difficult to uncover is a set of standards for why and how they work and/or which types of programs (i.e. CBM or SBM) work better. The literature has not addressed the cultural underpinnings of mentoring perceptions for youth. One reason is because of the quantitative nature of many studies on mentoring; namely, large studies using BBBS as a data source. In addition, studies looking at CBM have struggled to figure out the reasons that academic success and other positive outcomes are increased due to mentoring relationships. In my view, the field has made attempts to find broad and generalizable

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ways to conceptualize mentoring. While this can be beneficial for youth, broad findings

do not lead to the most effective relationships between youth and adults and could even

be harmful to youth (Spencer, 2007). Now that the field has grown, it is time to find more

detailed accounts of mentoring relationships that will lead to significant leaps in the field.

In this literature review, I have demonstrated how the impact of this rapid growth

in mentoring, "has outpaced available research on key programmatic factors, such as

which young mentors to recruit and how to optimally match them with even younger

mentees" (Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2010, p. 212). One of the reasons for

the significant spike in mentoring support and interventions is the rise of studies that have

found positive outcomes. Scholars such as Levine and Nidiffer (1996), Philip (2008), and

Smith (2007) agree that the relationship between socially well-connected mentors in a

community and disadvantaged mentees is an important way for mentees to develop

relationships that may result in employment or further education. The work of Rhodes

and DuBois (2008), and Karcher et al. (2010) argue that individual psychological changes

are some of the most profound impacts of mentoring. While other scholars focus on

minority, gender, cultural, and social inequalities and have shown that mentoring is a way

to combat these inequalities (Bogat & Liang, 2005; Sanchez & Colon, 2005). These

scholars vary in expertise and are spread across disciplines. In addition, mentoring has

been studied in multiple venues such as the workforce, all levels of formal education, and

community.

As mentoring programs continue to be funded by federal governments and grow,

more studies will need to lend significant findings that are not found in today's literature,

like those that this project seeks to find. In addition, as Sipe (2005) has shown, mentoring programs will begin to establish more titles such as the ones we now see that include school-based mentoring, community-based mentoring, one-to-one mentoring, peer-to-peer mentoring, and natural and formal mentoring. Complexity is further added because of term misalignment. For example, some use both *cross-race* and *different-race* mentoring to refer to relationships where a mentor and mentee identify with different races. Moreover, Rhodes and DuBois (2008) have shown that because it is difficult to conduct large-scale studies due to insufficient samples and available data, studies sometimes combine more than one program, masking possible outcomes. They explain that, "For mentoring to fully realize its promise as a safe and effective intervention for young persons, programs will need to be informed by a deeper understanding of the processes that are the root of these differences" (2008, p. 255). The previous statement points out a striking gap in the literature. Rhodes and DuBois are claiming that there is not enough research that digs deep into the process, which is in line with Spencer's claims.

My research project looks deep into the process of mentoring, the perceptions of mentees, and outcomes from the process practiced by a mentoring program in Minnesota. While learning about the process and the goals of the mentoring program is important, the primary concern of this work is with the perceptions of youth and the outcomes and benefits of participating in this mentoring program, which I suspected would be different for the West African and African American participants.

The debate about cross-race and same-race mentoring has led the charge in mentoring literature concerned with what I have termed *difference*. Diversi and Mecham (2005) suggest that mentoring relationships need to be highly selective in their mentor selection process and provide bicultural training. In addition, the frequency of contact was noted as a highly important factor in empowering youth. Lastly, the authors suggest that the experience of success for youth is an important factor in the belief that youth must be a cornerstone of mentoring programs. They also note the importance of bidirectional training for mentors and mentees. This is in line with the other studies reviewed in the *cross-race versus same-race mentoring* section.

Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, and Milburn (2009) show that while educational declines were seen over time for five different immigrant populations, the rate of decline differed. Therefore, this supports my study's assumption that perhaps different groups of students have different and unique needs. Another contribution from this study is what is known as the *immigrant paradox*, or the high academic aspirations of newcomer immigrants that enter the United States that tend to decline over time. While my study is not a study about immigration, I worked with first, second, and third generation West Africans in Minnesota and understanding the immigrant paradox was useful throughout the research.

By working with African American and West Africans I aimed to understand the ways in which these youth view their relationships with mentors, and further, how those relationships assist in outlooks on education and other success factors. As the literature review illustrates, studies have looked at single cultural groups but have not sought to decipher intricate differences between ethnicities. In response to the educational

shortcomings of CBM, coupled with the declining education system in the United States, attention to SBMs has increased and consequently left CBMs out of the picture. However, because of the large number of CBMs we cannot ignore the potential positive impacts for youth across the multiple opportunity gaps discussed in chapter one.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed leading and relevant literature related to mentoring and the current study. The lack of studies concerned with the intricacies of mentoring, coupled with the call by mentoring scholars for more research, support the need for the current study. I aimed to answer this call by conducting a study aimed at uncovering the perceptions of mentoring for African American and West African males in a mentoring program. In order to do so, I approached this study using grounded theory methodology. The methods and methodology are fully discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Design

I used a modified Grounded Theory Method (GTM) to add to the underdeveloped mentoring literature. I entered my research with the assumptions that; (a) mentoring can have a positive impact on young people and (b) the Northern Star Mentoring Program does not account for the different perspectives of its mentees. These assumptions take into account the fact that the majority of mentoring programs have only surfaced in the recent past and that theoretical perspectives that have emerged may not be suitable for programs working with young people from different backgrounds.

This study took a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The constructivist approach emphasizes, "diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views, and actions" (Creswell, 2013, p. 87). In line with qualitative research approaches, Grounded Theory uses inductive reasoning. The inductive process involves researchers working back and forth between themes and the database until comprehensive themes are developed (Creswell, 2013).

As noted in chapter one, this study falls into an interpretivist paradigm, which complements the constructivist grounded theory approached. The interpretivist, "aims to reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions" and "interpretivists aim to reconstruct the self-understandings of actors engaged in particular actions" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193). Similarly, the constructivist grounded theory can be explained in this way:

Does not seek truth—single, universal, and lasting. Still, it remains realist because it addresses human realities and assumes the existence of real worlds. However, neither human realities nor real worlds are unidimensional … The constructivist approach assumes that what we take as real, as objective knowledge and truth, is based on our perspective. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 523)

Participants

In the mid-1990s, three African American fathers established the Northern Star Mentoring Program in a metropolitan area in the upper Midwest. Similar to many other programs that focus on African American males transitioning into manhood during their last year of high school, students are matched with an adult mentor (almost always a US-born African American), participate in a number workshops, and end their experience with a rite of passage ceremony. While the program has many objectives, it emphasizes academic excellence and fostering positive relationships between the mentors and mentees. Ideally, the mentor and mentee relationship will continue after the program ends but the continuation of relationships varies. At its inception Northern Star Mentoring Program was intended to cater to African American males. Over time, there has been a large increase in West African participants in the program. Each year, between 15 and 25 mentors and mentees participate. The mentors range in age, careers, and academic level; however, all mentors are required to have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

The Northern Star Mentoring Program is focused on creating a well-rounded individual and giving him life skills that will help each individual throughout life. In order to accomplish this goal there are multiple workshops and programs designed to

give participants specific skills, which are outlined in Table 4. Meetings take place once a

month for three hours between October and March, in a given year, with the exception of

a prison tour and weekend retreat, which take a larger amount of time.

Sampling

Particular prescriptions have been developed for sampling in Grounded Theory

studies. Morse (2007) outlines four sampling categories, which include *convenience*

sampling, *purposeful sampling*, *theoretical sampling*, and *theoretical group interviews*.

My understanding of, and experience with, mentoring allows me to use a modified

sampling strategy that focuses on purposeful sampling.

I sought participants that began the program between the years of 2010 and 2013

and finished between the years of 2011 and 2014. The program lasts from Fall to Spring

of the next year. My research questions guided the purposefully sampling as suggested by

Morse, "A targeted research question may also guide selection" (2007, p. 236). Patton

states that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to, "select information-rich cases

strategically and purposefully" (2002, p. 243). Research questions focused on the

individual experiences because a thick description aims to uncover participants' personal

interpretations of a phenomenon, and allow for the researcher to participate in the

interpretation process.

I conducted 16 in-depth interviews. The sample consisted of six African

American males, five West African males, and one East African male who were mentees

in the program within the time frame outlined above. Of the West and East African

participants, some were born in the United States and others on the continent of Africa

and all of them have spent most of their lives in the United States. In addition, I interviewed four mentors from the program who had varying lengths of participation. Two of the mentors were African American and two are originally from the Caribbean islands, but all have been in the United States for a significant portion of their lives. One mentor was in his late 20s, one was in his early 30s, and two were above 60 years old. This total sample size is consistent with GT standards (Creswell, 2013).

Procedures

The Northern Star Mentoring Program coordinator shared the contact list of former mentors and mentees. I made several attempts via email to contact mentees from the time period identified. This part of the process was significantly more challenging than expected because of outdated contact information and slow response times. After conducting my first interview, I was able to get the correct contact information for other past mentees. Between February of 2014 and June of 2014, I conducted 12 interviews in person and in four cases, over the phone, due to geographical limitations. I followed semi-structured interview protocols (Appendices B and C) that consisted of 12 questions for mentees and 15 questions for mentors. All participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix D). All interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Upon conclusion of the interviews, I began in-depth analysis of the data.

Data analysis

The first step in the analysis process was to transcribe the interviews. Between June 2014 and October of 2014, the interviews were transcribed. The four mentor interviews were outsourced to a transcriptionist. Each transcription took the researcher

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between six and ten hours depending on the clarity of the recording, the flow of the interview, number of filler words, and whether or not participants had an accent.

Coding is a core process in GT (Holton, 2007). There are multiple types of coding that have been developed in qualitative inquiry. The first coding technique is *substantive coding*, which is when the researcher works with the data directly, analyzes the data, and locates core categories. During the coding process, I performed line-by-line coding in which I printed all of the interviews, read each line, and provided codes next to the various sentences and passages (Holton, 2007). My academic adviser participated in this stage whereby he blind-coded an interview and we compared our codes. In addition, my adviser reviewed several drafts of the results chapter. During the coding process I took extensive notes and wrote memos where themes appeared to be emerging, which was useful in the next phase of analysis: developing themes.

After coding, I began identifying themes and used NVivo computer software. Through an iterative process of transferring the coded interviews into NVivo, 16 themes emerged. NVivo was useful to help organize the data and draw connections between interviews and identifying relationships between themes in order to create the four domains that are discussed in chapter four.

Throughout interviews, transcription, coding, and theme development, memo writing was used. Lempert (2007) notes that the act of memo writing is simple; however, the analysis using memos can be difficult. She provides multiple tips for memo writing, explaining the importance of not forcing data and ensuring that one does not begin with theory in mind. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) provide helpful advice to avoid that which

Lempert has warned, "The iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis makes the collected data progressively more focused and the analysis successfully more theoretical" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1).

Positionality and researcher bias

Within this work, it is important for me to explore my biases (Patton, 2002). These include: being male, having participated in the mentoring program during high school and later as a mentor, and having African and Middle-Eastern descent while also being considered African American. I entered my research with the assumptions that: (a) mentoring can have a positive impact on young people and (b) the Northern Star Mentoring Program does not account for different perspectives of its mentees. Peshkin (1988) explains that subjectivity is inert in researchers and is informed by a researcher's qualities and experience. Further, it is present during the entire research process and project and, therefore, must be discussed by researchers and made known to readers during the entire research process.

I am Kenyan and Jordanian by blood. I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and spent the majority of my life in the same city. While born in a household with immigrant parents from two different countries and having two different religious beliefs, beyond the walls of my home I am considered African American by most and I often identify with African Americans while still acknowledging my diverse background. I have traveled to West Africa but have no known bloodline or direct links to that part of the world. Therefore, I am only familiar with cultural and ethnic norms by nature of travel and interactions. In acknowledging this limitation, Patton (2002) points out the

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importance for qualitative researchers to get as close to the experience of research participants as possible, which is why my participation in the program was important.

In addition, there is a gender dynamic worth discussing. The program targets males, yet is funded by a national organization primarily composed of females (discussed in chapter one). I am unaware of the level of involvement and influence the organization has around planning the curriculum and foci of the program. As a male, I recognize that this dynamic may or may not be apparent but it was important for me to keep in mind while conducting research.

It is also important to explore my confidence in the idea of mentoring. My confidence stems from the many positive experiences I have had with mentors. The majority of my mentoring relationships have been natural. For example, I am a minority graduate student at a predominantly white institution and therefore have developed many relationships as a mentor with minority undergraduate students that are interested in graduate school. Further, I am a member of an African American fraternity and I have developed natural relationships as a mentee and mentor with other members in the organization. I have gained and sustained relationships with multiple mentors throughout my life who have had large impacts on my development. In fact, my only formal mentoring experience was with the Northern Star Mentoring Program. My relationships with mentors have led to scholarships, jobs, academic assistance and encouragement, different perspectives on romantic relationships, and generally helped with my maturation.

I must also explore my positionality as it relates direct to the program and mentoring more broadly. I carry firsthand impressions and perspectives about the program and its effectiveness. My relationship with the program was helpful as I attempted to gain, "the actors' definitions of the situations", which, "is a powerful central concept for understanding the purpose of qualitative inquiry" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192). However, as stated earlier, my interpretations of the data are external ones and therefore I had to toggle between an insider and outsider during data collection and analysis. My impressions and perspectives are informed by my time as a mentee and mentor with Northern Star Mentoring Program as well as other experiences I have had with mentoring relationships. Not only do I bring a critical lens from which I view the program but I also recognize that it has had a substantially positive impact in my life and the lives of friends and colleagues. The positive experiences I have had cannot be generalized nor assumed to be true for everyone.

My in-depth knowledge of the program and of mentoring forced me to be aware of the multiple lenses through which I view mentoring. Geertz says the researcher must have, "a continuous dialectic tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way to bring both into view simultaneously" (Geertz, 1974, p. 43). Further, and perhaps more important, is the notion that a thick description must be provided for readers to decide whether or not a case is transferrable. In a single case, as is mine, researchers, "describe their samples in so much detail that readers can decide whether or not to generalize conclusions to similar cases observed by other researchers" (Hood, 2007, p. 153). Therefore, while my research study will not be

generalizable in the same way that survey research might be, theoretical rather than statistical findings in this grounded study will be used to draw comparisons (Hood, 2007). Moreover, participants that have been involved with the Northern Star Mentoring Program bind this study. This constricts the data by only reflecting the experiences and development of the selected participants, who are not necessarily a representative population of the entire mentoring landscape.

Summary

This chapter provides the methodological approach of this dissertation. I employ a constructivist framework that uses a modified grounded theory method of research. Purposeful sampling guided my sampling process. In addition, interviews were the primary data collection method.

Chapter Four: Results

From the 16 interviews conducted, 55 individual codes were identified, and 16 themes emerged that were categorized under four domains. In total, there were 18.6 hours of interviews amounting to 271 pages of transcribed interview data. The four domains that emerged are: (a) Programmatic components of the mentoring relationship; (b) Dimensions of difference; (c) Fostering the relationship; and (d) Impacts of the mentoring relationship. In this section, each domain and its subordinating themes are explained with representative quotes from the interviews. The majority of the quotes below were taken from the interviews with the 12 mentees. Following each quote will be an indicator noting if the quote is from a mentor or mentee. The characteristics of the mentees are provided in Table 5. In addition, this chapter will continue the use of masculine pronouns because all of the participants were males.

Table 5

Mentee characteristics

Age 18-21	Age 22+	African American	West African	Working full-time (not in school)	4-year public	4-year private	In-state univer-sity	Out-of-state univer-sity	Military	*n*
11	1	5	6	0	5	5	2	8	1	12

Note. All demographics reflect information at the time of the interviews. One mentee is East African, one mentee was enrolled in school through the military, and one mentee had some college but was not enrolled at the time of the interview.

Table 5

The first theme, *varying definitions of mentoring*, is not categorized under a domain. Theme One spans the mentoring conversation and landscape should always be at the forefront of conversations and practice.

Theme 1: Varying definitions of mentoring

This theme illustrates the ways in which participants define mentoring. Each participant was asked directly his definition of mentoring; however, there were also instances where participants provided definitions without being prompted or directly asked. This first definition provides a broad view on mentoring. The participant was asked directly how he defines mentoring:

> …It's filling a void…it's filling a void for something. It could be indirect; could be anything really. Trying to help out. That's how I look at it. (*Mentee*)

Another participant also gave a broad, but different, definition by saying:

> Just being the person that can really help someone and give them their knowledge to… Live a better life. Whether it is good or bad knowledge. (*Mentee*)

Another participant, very concretely, provided his definition of mentoring:

> I'd say my definition of mentoring is… helping another reach their goals and trying to guide their development in whatever they're doing… whether it be just social aspects or professional development. Just trying to encourage the prosperity of whatever the person is trying to pursue. (*Mentee*)

This participant was less focused on goals of mentees and more about development of a relationship:

> Definition of mentoring…obviously he's gonna teach you things but I think it goes past that. It's building a relationship that will last. (*Mentee*)

Another component of definitions provided by participants highlighted the importance of transference from mentor to mentee:

You definitely - you can get a sense of mentoring as happening if you're gaining

or you're learning from the person. (*Mentee*)

The same participant discussed transference in terms of implementing change:

But it's definitely a two-way thing. You would notice the mentee listening and

trying to implement changes or heed the advice of the mentor. (*Mentee*)

Another participant wrestled with the definition in this way:

Oh that's a tough one… I would say a mentor would be somebody who tries to

put them self into the life of the mentee and try to steer them through obstacles of

life that otherwise…Could be potential pitfalls that could negatively affect them

into the future. (*Mentor*)

Domain A: Programmatic components of the mentoring relationship

Domain A describes situations when participants commented about mentoring in

relation to programmatic components and programmatic responsibilities.

Theme 2: The important and challenging role of matching mentors and mentees

This theme highlights when participants talked about the matching process of

mentors and mentees.

Participants commented on the matching of mentors and mentees with varying

perspectives. In multiple interviews, mentees suggested that the matching process should

be a reciprocal choice between both parties and/or be treated like 'speed dating'. One

participant discussed it in the following way:

I think it would be cool to sit down with all the mentors like a whole speed dating

thing. Express some interest, conversation, a little give and take and then you

could probably [identify] three that you would want. (*Mentee*)

When another participant was asked how he would structure the matching process if he

had his own mentoring program he answered in this way:

It kinda ties back into my whole getting to know each other "sit down." That first

meeting because I feel like in that first meeting we find out about each other and

we find out who we are and [at] that time to say that we're opening up about

stuff…you can kind of figure out what kind of person someone is within

that…first meeting. Those first couple of meetings you get to know each other,

you understand each other…And so through that I'd assume that a mentor and a

mentee could find each other if they needed. (*Mentee*)

One participant distinguished matching between a formal relationship and a natural

mentoring relationship in this way:

My other mentors have been great…my informal mentors since you have picked

them yourself and they picked you. Again it's a two-way thing. If I ask

somebody, "let's get coffee", they have to say, "yes." They have to—most of

these times they are taking me to lunch or taking me out to here or there so it's

definitely a closer bond because you both gravitated towards each other as

opposed to something, I won't say superficial but as opposed to something more

contrived than just you know, brought together. (*Mentee*)

The same participant suggested that the mentee choose his mentor and should be careful about who he picks:

> Trying to pick the right mentor and gaining acceptance of the mentor. Like having the mentor accept you as a mentee is crucial. (*Mentee*)

And another participant discussed matching in relation to a programmatic function in this way:

> The matching process should…take place a little bit later on down the line because I think that as more weeks went on with mentors that were continuously not only there but that you made more connections with the different…workshops and exercises you could end up gravitating towards different mentors and people start gravitating towards different mentees and I think that allows for…a more natural selection process than just handing somebody a mentor. (*Mentee*)

Here, a mentor reflected on his experience with a mentee and suggested that the matching process should be more data-driven:

> I don't want to say psychological survey, but maybe just some kind of personality survey…on file so that they use that to pair it up as opposed to just randomly pairing people. You try to pair up with similar interest and different things like that. (*Mentor*)

In this passage, a participant suggested a unique approach to matching mentees and mentors:

> There's a good way to do it…being able to shadow a mentor for a day, maybe see the life they're living and if they don't like or not interested…maybe I shouldn't

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have that mentor…maybe if you just had 1-2 people, venture out and see what they do with their life, you can get interested in what they're doing and kind of wanna be their mentee. (*Mentee*)

Theme 3: Two mentors are better than one

This theme highlights instances when participants talked about having more than one mentor. In some cases, the participants discussed multiple mentors within a program and in other cases it was discussed outside of a program context. In this first passage, a participant picked up on the fact that he connected with a mentor other than his assigned mentor. He explained it like this:

> So [Northern Star] was definitely something I can say where I had a mentor. And the experience was different because with [Northern Star] kinda selected someone for you that could be a good mentor for you. But for me, I kinda gravitated towards someone that I could sense. So I ended up really talking to two mentors. (*Mentee*)

This same participant went on to highlight the benefits of having multiple mentors in this way:

> For me, having different mentors that are like, "if you need help —let me know. If you need help, I got you covered. These are the different things I'm connected in, so let me know." (*Mentee*)

Another participant explained that having multiple mentors is good and elaborated that multiple mentors in different areas of life is also effective:

I had a lot of mentors through, like, different aspects of my life. It's, like, kinda like with your friends. You have the friends you can talk to about girls, you have the friend you kinda do your grind with… That's kinda like my experience with mentors. (*Mentee*)

A mentor described the importance of having multiple mentors in this way:

I would say that as one that's going to go through and seek mentors you should always generally have a different mentor for each aspect of…some area that you're trying to improve on. (*Mentor*)

When asked about the matching process, a participant took the opportunity to talk about multiple mentors working together with a single mentee. A mentor was explaining past situations when he was not well equipped to help his mentee with some of the challenges he was facing. He explains that he had to lean on other mentors in the program, which was fostered by an environment where no one laid claim to their mentee. Instead, it was a collaborative environment where everyone helped when needed:

You ran into some challenges, you can always lean on another mentor. So it wasn't really, "This is [just] my [mentee]." (*Mentor*)

At the end of an interview the interviewer asked if there was anything the participant would like to add to his interview. He chose to discuss the importance of having multiple mentors:

An individual needs a couple of mentors, two or three mentors at all times because if you are…trying to advance and trying to grow you're going to need support. (*Mentor*)

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In this passage, a mentee was asked to reflect on his experiences being in a mentoring relationship. He discussed his experience within a program where he was able to interact with more than one mentor:

> …And just go to a bunch of different mentors. Not just having one mentor but having multiple mentors who I could ask questions…and get some insight from different individuals. (*Mentee*)

After expressing the impact of mentoring, one participant was probed about how a program was part of the impact. He reflected that:

> It was like being around that many professional black men. It showed me all the ways I could go. (*Mentee*)

He went on to give an example of a mentor other than his assigned mentor giving him direction on his college choices and working to help him with admittance:

> I feel like if I hadn't went to [Northern Star] I probably wouldn't be here. I remember [name of mentor] he told me I was coming here. It was an issue and he helped me get in. (*Mentee*)

Theme 4: The need to determine expectations

This theme highlights the expectations for a mentoring relationship and/or being in a program. Some of the passages express the various expectations of participants and other passages highlight instances where participants discussed the importance of ensuring that the expectations are clearly communicated. One mentee explained his expectations of mentoring here:

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What made me interested in having a mentor before [Northern Star Mentoring

Program] was the different perspective I would get from another middle-aged

African American male. Basically, I'm sure my dad taught me well, but I'm sure

high school kids react better to the perspective of other middle-aged African

American males that are doing well. (*Mentee*)

He went on to say:

Outside perspective and also connections. I left that out. 'Cause that was really

important for me. Networking. It wasn't solely my goal, but it was up there on my

list. I wanted to expand my network and my connections – which I did. (*Mentee*)

Another participant discussed being transparent and clarifying different expectations by

declaring his excitement about being around peers and not having a mentor:

To be honest, when I first entered the program I was not that interested in having

a mentor actually. I was more interested in the camaraderie and the brotherhood.

(*Mentee*)

When asked about the process of mentoring, one participant explicitly stated that setting

expectations is a component that should happen early on in the relationship:

Set those ground rules…in the beginning so…there's no miscommunication about

what the relationship is going to be. (*Mentor*)

When asked the same question, a different participant also identified the need to set

expectations by creating common ground and establishing responsibilities:

… Developing… Some common ground. Sort of making sure that both parties

understand the roles and the responsibilities and some expectations are

established. (*Mentor*)

In this next passage a participant was asked about the core components that are required

for a mentoring program. He expressed the seriousness of mentors knowing the

expectations of the program up front. He explained in this way:

They have you go through the list of expectations. This is what's expected of you.

You need to maintain contact with your mentee at least once a week. You need to

know what's happening in their life…so just to kind of say, "Hey, these are the

expectations. If there are any problems, reach out to the coordinators as early as

possible to discuss the situation." (*Mentor*)

The same participant went on to mention the importance of discussing expectations with

a mentee's family early in the relationship:

It would be really important to get to know the family as well as the kid… Up

front… Have a conversation of…what the expectations of the program are going

to be…I think that would be important to at least do that up front so that you guys

are both on the same page in what you're going to be doing. (*Mentor*)

Domain B: Dimensions of difference

This domain discusses the dynamics of difference within the mentoring

relationship. I conceptualize dimensions of difference to include culture, race, ethnicity,

social class, sexual orientation, religion, experiences and other forms of difference that

impact how a person experiences the world. Participants discussed multiple forms of

difference, specifically and broadly, at times suggesting solutions to complexities due to differences between mentors and mentees.

Theme 5: The role of paying attention to details and knowing one another

This theme introduces the idea of mentors and mentees paying attention to details, including life experiences and exploring ways that the mentee and mentor can get to know one another. One mentee described this theme in terms of he and his mentor knowing one another and how that did not happen for him:

If my mentor and I showed up as much as we were supposed to, I still don't feel like I would've learned that much about him. Because at first, I was like, this is just this dude telling me how to live life and I don't know him and he doesn't know me. (*Mentee*)

When asked how frequently meetings should take place for them to get to know each other he answered in this way:

Two, three times per month. That's a good number to be with somebody to learn about them. And if you become friends, it wouldn't seem as a chore and you might be meeting, maybe on the weekend…if the mentor and mentee become friends. (*Mentee*)

The following quote highlights the importance of treating each mentoring relationship differently due to the individuality of each person. After being asked about how he would approach a mentoring relationship in which his mentee was of a different ethnicity he said:

I feel like that depends on the individual. I feel like I won't be able to give you [the interviewer] that much information because it's case by case. I can't assume things about the mentees. If they have a lot questions or concerns about their race, he may need someone with the same ethnicity to help through the things he's experiencing. But some people don't need that; they don't feel like it's a big deal. (*Mentor*)

Another participant talked about how his mentor interacted with him in a way that complemented his personality:

The way he would do it, mentor me, was really good… Encouraged my natural qualities and habits. For example, [I am a] passionate person, when I was younger I always wanted to argue with anybody about anything…He noted [that] this could be a very good quality to have. He helped me point out the pluses and negative aspects that came out with it. He showed me how to control it a little better and actually go about it. (*Mentee*)

In reference to an experience in which a mentor immersed himself in his mentee's life by visiting his high school, he discussed the experience by highlighting the benefits of this approach:

I got to just learn so much about him and his background just by visiting his high school and seeing where he spends most of, most of his days. (*Mentor*)

When asked to elaborate on what makes a 'good' mentor, this participant discussed being mindful as a characteristic. He highlighted listening as a vessel for gaining details that assist in fostering the relationship:

So it's about being your authentic self, expressing interest in what that young

brother has to say. They may come from a point to where they're not allowed to

talk… Talking about subjects that are taboo. (*Mentor*)

In another instance, this same participant talked about being mindful in relation to

culture:

Culturally, I need to be aware of what some of the cultural nuances are. I would

learn some of those from him as well as from his parents. (*Mentor*)

Theme 6: Managing differences and cultural complexities

Participants were not shy about the challenges they faced when exploring their

personal identities and cultures. West African and African American mentees, as well as

mentors, discussed some of those challenges. In this first passage, a participant

articulated the goal of mentoring while complicating the ways in which the goal is

reached for people with different backgrounds:

I feel like mentoring as a whole all falls under the same category. But for different

ethnicities I feel like the approaches for that common goal would definitely vary. I

think it should be based off of where you came from because that's the way I

think you would be able to understand where you're going. I don't think it will

change for different ethnicities; however, it will be different… But the

information obviously for each mentor to mentee would be different than

someone who is Egyptian and someone who is Asian. The information they

discuss, the upbringings, the questions asked, the experiences encountered will all

be different; however, in the end they are all trying to better themselves and impart knowledge and insight to one another. (*Mentee*)

He then gave a second example related to social class:

Example: Let's say me, I grew up in a low-income household and I'm trying to better my life and make money and have financial stability to support my family. My questions might be different than someone who is already in that situation. (*Mentee*)

Another participant was asked how mentoring should happen for different ethnicities. Here is what he had to say:

Different ethnic groups maybe require different advice. Like if you have a Caucasian mentee, he is going to require similar but sort of separate or altered advice I guess because of the cultural differences. Like I guess a Caucasian mentee would have to be aware of what am I thinking of like being prejudice and stuff like that. They don't have to worry about Christian privilege and stuff because you know some people have different religious backgrounds and they're just unaware of Christian privilege. They don't have to worry about that. I don't know just little things like that. (*Mentee*)

Another participant was asked about putting cultural knowledge into action and was further probed about how cultural knowledge is acquired. He asserted that acquiring cultural knowledge could be done in this way:

One, is just listening to him…to their background. Then kinda trying to apply to what you already know because if they tell you I have strict traditional

values…the parents are the head of the household. You could kinda fill in the blanks…okay so the mother and the father are the ones who come down on him. They're responsible for discipline…you need go through them for anything you wanna do…Maybe even…spending time to research the culture…find out what it is and where they're from. I know particularly for [Northern Star] it would probably be very good…you have a lot of African kids that come through. West Africans, Nigerians, Liberians, Cameroonians… So getting to know their culture is always a good thing. (*Mentee*)

One participant reflected on the challenge of relating to a person from a different background, after being asked if ethnicity plays a role in mentoring:

I think it plays a pretty big role…nobody can tell me that they know what I'm going through if someone called me the N word…And so it would really help to have somebody who would know about your people and their culture and what they have gone through to be a mentor. (*Mentee*)

And when asked specifically about West Africans and African Americans he responded in this way:

Honestly, I just don't know what Western African customs are or what the culture's like. So I'll say I don't know what that would be like… I would probably do some research on Western Africa and their culture and how they fit in America right now. I would have to do some research because I'm very unclear about that. And I would probably reach out to some of my friends who are from

that area so they could give me some insight on how I go forward from here on

mentoring. Cause I couldn't just do it blind. That's not fair to him. (*Mentee*)

When asked about the importance of culture in the mentoring relationship one participant

picked up on the role culture can play in creating a connection:

I guess it would impact your actions in the sense that…it helps you better relate to

your mentee. It could possibly help you…guide them…into a direction that they

may not have thought. (*Mentor*)

When probed about the importance of culture, he went on to say that:

Because of the fact that I think it's important…whether or not they…realize it or

not, their culture, to some extent, has to mean something to them… It's got to be

important because…you want to be cognizant of certain things of their culture and

so…when you're giving them advice…you're putting it in the context that they

can use it within their culture. (*Mentor*)

He went on to give this example:

Maybe their culture says don't have sex until you're married. Let's just use that

for example. And that's not something that you personally believe and you don't

want to tell him, "Hey man, have sex before you're married." But maybe you

want to say, "Hey…there's a lot of positives that your culture talks about when it

talks about no sex before marriage. One of the pitfalls I'm aware of and I've seen

people fall into is that they get to college, they completely disregard it and then

now they have no idea about protective sex and things to be aware of." (*Mentor*)

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One participant talked about the importance of gender differences within different cultures. He was asked about approaches to mentoring when people are from different cultures and said this:

> If you've got a group of ten Asian kids… There may be way more emphasis on… Let's say that the mom plays a key role in the family and the father is kind of minimized. If all of a sudden you've got a bunch of…mentors…talking about the importance of being a man and, "the man has to do this, the man has to do that," it's going to directly conflict with what they've kind of grown up around. And so…you have to know certain key things about that cultural background to know how you're going to approach your mentoring. (*Mentor*)

Domain C: Fostering the relationship

This domain illustrates the importance of building and fostering the mentoring relationship after it has begun. Instances where participants identify different components of fostering relationships will be included in this section.

Theme 7: Searching for the 'right' approach

This theme brings to light mentoring approaches and techniques that were discussed by participants. One participant talked about his relationship with his mentor as a friendship:

> After the cabin trip it felt like it was somebody I could actually talk to and share my life and get to know his. If I had any questions about how he got to where he ended up I'd ask him. That was also the time for him to ask questions to me cause he felt like he was the homie. (*Mentee*)

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This passage was also quoted in Theme Five. It shows how a mentor can use information previously gathered to better connect with his mentee:

> The way he would do it, mentor me, was really good… Encouraged my natural qualities and like habits. For example, passionate person, when I was younger I always wanted to argue with anybody about anything… He noted this could be a very good quality to have. He helped me point out the pluses and negative aspects that came out with it. He showed me how to control it a little better and actually go about it. (*Mentee*)

Balance was also identified as an approach to mentoring. One participant explained the challenge of reaching a balance by saying that:

> It was a struggle of when to show them something versus when…the line of trying to be their dad and more of a mentor figure. (*Mentee*)

Another participant talked about balance because it fostered an equal environment, while still maintaining the mentor-mentee roles. He explained the balance in this way:

> He put me on his life level. He was able to put me on his level…while still being a mentor by establishing that respect for the two of us where he saw me as equal and at the same time I still saw him as the mentor in the relationship. (*Mentee*)

The next participant explained that having a mentor always asking questions will turn him away and discourage him from wanting to continue the relationship. Therefore, he suggested balance as an alternative:

> If it's someone that who asks interview questions you're probably not going to want to hang out with this dude… It's cool but I just want to chill sometimes…

Having a good balance of chilling and playing video games or basketball…doing

something…fun. That's a relationship you're going to enjoy. (*Mentee*)

Another participant describes the way in which a mentor's balanced approach to

mentoring can lead to mentees being autonomous. He explained it in this way:

Another part of mentoring is providing certain life experiences…that will help

develop them. And then kind of talking about it and, in a way, explaining what's

going on and what it can mean but leaving enough room open for the mentee to be

his own… To think about it for what he sees it as but allowing for his own

perspective, allow freedom for that person to be an individual. (*Mentee*)

A mentor suggested that learning about the mentee might be an effective mentoring

approach. This is a different excerpt from an earlier quote about visiting a mentee's high

school:

I went to see his high school. He took me on a tour of his high school. I met a

couple of his teachers. And that was really good to know what's his environment

been growing up. He was telling me all about his high school. (*Mentor*)

Theme 8: The phases of the mentoring relationship

This theme captures the sentiments of participants that suggested mentoring

develops in phases. The participants identified different phases and various roles played

within each phase. It should be noted that this theme is directly related to the *mentor*

versus mentee responsibility theme. This connection will be further explored in chapter

five. One mentor captured phases of mentoring in this way:

So for me, mentorship happens in…phases…you have a starting point and you lead someone along the way and at this particular milestone, say, "Ok this is a period where the mentorship could stop." The person's graduated. Graduation, to me, is both a beginning and an ending. A beginning of a new phase and an ending of another phase. (*Mentor*)

After expressing that communication is key to the first phase of mentoring, which I will call the 'commencement phase', this participant built on the development of the relationship in this way:

Staying in communication, being able to not only communicate but be there as a friend, then it would have to be somewhat of a breaking point…has to be the moment where you break through the barrier between I'm your mentor and you're the mentee. It's more like we're friends and…we're here to both gain something. And the steps after that is just prosper, prosper, prosper. (*Mentee*)

Another participant highlights the commencement phase by discussing communication as a key component during that time. He defined this early phase as an important one where communication is a key component:

You always gotta be in touch. You always gotta be able to communicate with your with your mentor… You always gotta be able to reach out to them…in the early stages. Cause not too many kids are gonna reach out to somebody that they just met. So that's really part of the job of the mentor…to reach out to the mentee. (*Mentee*)

Questioning the process of mentoring caused this participant much pause. He finally

summarized the mentoring process in this way:

> And so I think that type of relationship with the mentee asking the mentor can
>
> have that beginning, when the mentee asks, and then the middle, as the mentee
>
> kind of is given that information. And then an end, when they kind of execute.
>
> And I think that can…harbor the beginning, middle, and end to the relationship.
>
> However, with a mentor trying to bring the mentee along, I think it allows for
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> almost, I wouldn't say a co-existence, but it allows for those people to
>
> almost…kind of allow for those people to move forward. (*Mentee*)

Theme 9: Mentor versus mentee responsibility

Throughout the interviews, participants identified various responsibilities for

those involved in the mentoring relationship. This theme captures some of the

responsibilities that are important for fostering the relationship. Here, a mentor explained

a key mentee responsibility that can help ensure the relationship works:

> But if they're being strung on to be here or forced to be there, then it wouldn't
>
> work. The first essential ingredient must be a willing participant… So if you're a
>
> willing participant they will at least be aware of what they get into, the purpose of
>
> the mentorship program. If they're a willing participant…then I think that's more
>
> than half the battle. (*Mentor*)

In another instance, a mentor explained how both the mentee and mentor have mutual

responsibilities in making a relationship work:

In my mind, mentoring is about a two-way relationship… The mentor cannot be

the only one extending, giving, asking, pushing. I think neither can the mentee be

the only one pushing, asking, requesting. It really is a mutual thing. (*Mentor*)

One participant stressed the responsibility of the both mentor and mentee to take the

relationship seriously. This passage captures his sentiment:

I think anyone engaged or thinking to do it should approach it seriously. And by

that I mean the responsibility that comes along with it… I approach it to where I

am going to invest my time; I want you to invest your time. (*Mentor*)

The responsibility of mentors and mentees can shift at different times. Here, a participant

delineates the responsibility of the mentor in the commencement phase of a relationship.

The participant claimed that the mentor should contact the mentee early in the

relationship:

I think the mentor, you make an initial connection.

Here, the same participant discussed the shift of responsibility to the mentee:

You have something that I'm trying to attain, or you have been through the next

couple of steps along the process that I see for myself, and I'd like to pick your

brain or ask you for help when it comes to those things. (*Mentee*)

After being asked about the matching process within a mentoring program, this

participant touched on the responsibility of the mentee to trust the program and its

matching decisions. Here is how he explained it:

I don't really remember how they did that, I think they just picked for us, it's like

ok, we just went with it. (*Mentee*)

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After a mentor explains how he helped his mentee navigate the college application process and transporting his mentee to college he discussed the shift in responsibility. He commented that:

> We got you set up… It's on you. We did everything we could do to get you to where you wanted to be. This is what you said you wanted…you just need to perform. (*Mentor*)

Theme 10: The perception of reciprocity within the relationship

This theme explores reciprocity within the mentoring relationship. Reciprocity can include benefits for all parties involved in the relationship or the commitment from the parties. It follows the notion that one individual cannot solely drive or benefit from the relationship. In this first instance, a mentee talked about the importance of reciprocity in fostering the relationship and also highlights the responsibility that both the mentor and mentee have in fostering the relationship:

> It is, to an extent, a two-way street…as a mentee you're watching this person but for that person to know they're your mentor they kinda have to…understand like, "Okay this guy's doing what I'm doing." Once they kinda accept that, "Hey, this person is looking for me to what I do" …they begin offering that advice and…there's kind of a there's a give and a take. (*Mentee*)

A mentor discussed the importance of asking the mentee what he wants to get out of the relationship in order to ensure reciprocity. He would ask this question in order to begin the conversation:

"What do you think you'd like to get out of this relationship?" And what I think I

could offer to the relationship and could we get some synergy or some symbiosis

between us? So we could see…what would be mutually beneficial to us both.

(*Mentor*)

In the next quote, a mentee explained reciprocity in terms of the mentee and the mentor

learning from one another when he reflected on his experience as mentor. He was asked

to expand on his explanation of the mentoring process and touched on reciprocity by

explaining how he learned from his mentee:

You just gain so much information…I'm gaining knowledge from the mentee and

there is no end point. You just keep going through life and eventually you're

gonna be the mentor that's gonna be leading someone else. (*Mentee*)

The following participant elaborated on reciprocity as he discussed, at length, the things

he learned from having a Native American mentee:

He's president of Native American Association and I know he's big on the whole

movement. Which is something that never really crossed my mind until I met

him. About the whole…using Native Americans as mascots. I've played Madden

forever. Redskins…Chiefs…I've never really double-crossed my mind but

then…after he mentioned it I thought about it like, "oh, this is kinda

crazy"…mentoring is definitely a two-way thing. He definitely taught me…his

views and then I'm not thinking like, "Oh he's younger than me he doesn't know

anything." I thought about it and he's definitely right. (*Mentee*)

Another participant picked up on a slightly different aspect of reciprocity. This participant discussed the reciprocal nature of connecting and entering a space of vulnerability from both parties:

> And say, "Hey what's going on? Tell me something that is happening in your life. Let's catch up and vice versa" …being open and honest with each other because a mentee cannot really learn that much if the relationship is one sided… I have opened up to a mentor about something in my life and they have opened up about something in their life. They try to relate by saying, "Hey, we both are going through a hard time." (*Mentee*)

When asked about the process of mentoring, this participant pointed to reciprocity as a component that drives the mentoring relationship. Reciprocity drives the benefit for both parties and can foster improvements in the mentor's approaches to mentoring when the mentee is fully engaged and comfortable providing feedback:

> It's a two-way street…it's not necessarily one-way…the older person passing knowledge on to somebody else but sometimes the younger person has some knowledge to help each other learn. For example, the mentor might ask how is he doing and how can he better help you out with what he's doing or how…can I change my advice…how I approach situations…I feel like it's a two-way street. It goes back and forth and just two people really exchanging ideas…showing compassion for one another and really just showing interest in each other's lives. (*Mentee*)

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Here, a mentor was asked the best part of being a mentor. His answer explains the idea of reciprocity when a mentee provides joy to the mentor:

> The best part about being a mentor…you're having a crappy day and then [the] phone rings…the best part about being a mentor is seeing the growth in the young man. (*Mentor*)

Another participant talked about a mentoring relationship as being permanent, by highlighting the importance of longevity, and suggested that a relationship can last forever if reciprocity exists:

> You hope that the relationship that you build can last…forever until they go off to school, they graduate, they have families and kids, and you just want to stay a part of their life for as long as possible. As long as the relationship is beneficial to both of you guys. (*Mentor*)

Theme 11: Authenticity and altruism

This theme highlights the authentic and altruistic nature of mentoring. In this first passage, the participant was asked what makes a 'good' mentor:

> I would describe a good mentor as someone who listens to you and genuinely wants to listen to what you have to say. They care about [your] well-being and they don't want to be your parent or a big authority figure necessarily. They do not have a…personal end game. (*Mentee*)

When asked how an individual's experiences play a role in the mentoring relationship. Another participant talked about authenticity as being unconditional and nonjudgmental:

> I think…the mentor first and foremost has to always come from a nonjudgmental place… No matter what… If someone senses they're being judged then they're immediately going to…take a step back and reevaluate the whole situation… Especially if you're younger…if you're being judged…coming in as a mentor, I feel like you're that one person that's…coming from an angle where it's like…I'm here to hear your point of view. I'm here for you. (*Mentee*)

When asked what experiences stick out the most as a mentee, a participant talked about experiencing care:

> I guess I experienced extra care. Somebody else watching out for me. Something else I didn't feel before. Before, I felt like I was figuring things out on my own. This way, I feel like someone is actually looking out for me. Something I actually liked about the program. (*Mentee*)

After being asked the same question another participant had this to say:

> I would say getting these random calls from [name omitted]. He would just be like, "Hey, what are you doing?" "Nothing just watching TV." He's like, "You got that paper done yet?" It's like, you know, "I thought about doing it blah blah blah." Those random check-ins type of deals, it shows that you actually care about the life that that person's actually living. (*Mentee*)

Altruism is expressed in this next passage. It is important to note that there is a difference between responsibility and altruism. In this passage, a mentor described his optimism that his mentees will become altruistic and be the future mentors in the world. However, he

described his mentees' obligation to be future mentors as a duty and expectation being given to them:

> That's an important time because that's another step up for them. Because, how often have we heard, "It wasn't too long ago I was doing the same thing that you're doing." And that's kind of an indication to me that that former initiate is…understanding his role in the village. Because…you're five years away, you're six years away; it's a different perspective now. And those brothers are definitely looking at you guys. (*Mentor*)

In this next quote, a participant identified the complicated desire to mentor, even if an individual may not have the time to do so. He suggested that a program must be able to dig deeper than the altruism associated with the desire to mentor and also take into consideration the practicality of committing to a mentoring relationship:

> I think you need to really put in the time to find…mentors who are willing to put themselves into young people's lives. I think some people say they want to be a mentor, but do they really have the capacity or the ability to really immerse themselves into someone's lives? Maybe not all the time. So figuring out…how do you find the best people possible to be mentors and then those people that are willing to volunteer? (*Mentor)*

In another interview, a participant talked about the authentic act of his mentor when he had to report back to college but did not have a ride:

It was just awesome…my parents were scheduled to work the weekend I had to

go back to school and we packed up his car with my stuff and we drove up

together. (*Mentee*)

Theme 12: The role of mentee buy-in

This theme explores the importance of the mentee accepting and believing in the

mentoring relationship. In some instances, participants discussed the point where a

mentee bought into the relationship and in other instances they explored the things that

are necessary for the mentee to 'buy in'. Here a participant discussed how the credibility

of a mentor is a recipe for buy-in:

Like those people who never really got their own life together…someone who

truly doesn't seem happy with how their life is set. I don't think they would be a

good mentor. If they don't set good examples of themselves, I don't think they

would be a good mentor. So how can they teach any other person? (*Mentee*)

Here a participant expressed a similar notion of credibility when he was asked about how

his personal life experiences impact his approach to mentoring:

I can relate to the young men that I'm dealing with because I know what the

system is saying you are. And it's not something I read, it's something I've

experienced. (*Mentor*)

For this participant, mentee buy-in occurs at the point where a mentee begins to

experience results based on the guidance of the mentor:

Over time, once the mentee sees that the mentor is there to, like, support the

mentee, and things start to happen that the mentor told the mentee would happen,

or, like, what's right or things of that nature. Once the mentee sees that the mentor

is right and they see success in their teachings and their lessons. (*Mentee*)

In this passage, the participant explores the idea that a mentor is trying to win over the

mentee before he begins to take on a mentoring role. He suggested that there is an

inherent role for the mentee to play in deciding if the relationship will advance:

Then they try and give you something…they try and give you something you're

interested in…something that will make you wanna have em…make you wanna

be around em… They'll usually take you out to dinner or something… And then

seems like they move something on you, like knowledge. (*Mentee*)

Theme 13: Dispositions, relatability, and likeability

This theme identifies where participants discussed the notion that there are

individual dispositions, characteristics, interests, and/or similarities that lead to a

relationship between a mentor and mentee. The traits vary widely but the following

passages will highlight some of the reflections from participants. A striking reflection

from a mentor about the matching process referenced having a 'good' mentee:

One of the mentors had said, "Man can we—can you guys give me a good mentee

this time? The past one I had wasn't very talkative or wasn't very engaging." You

know just, "Okay can I get someone who is way more engaging and sort of like

that?" (*Mentor*)

He went on to stress the importance of personality in the relationship:

So you've got personality, interest in sports, and I mean it makes me seem kind of

frivolous but, like, seriously at a majority of the [Northern Star] events half the

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time they're talking about football, baseball…I'm just usually sitting there like I

don't even know or care. (*Mentor*)

Here a participant discussed how a mentor that can relate to his mentee impacts the

initiation of the relationship:

The mentor kind of sees this as somebody they can relate to, somebody that's

similar to them. (*Mentee*)

The following reflection highlights a matched pair in which there was a lack of common

interests, similarities in personal characteristics, and identity between the mentor and

mentee. It led to a significant struggle within the relationship:

My sophomore year…was my first time being a mentor. It was definitely

interesting 'cause I got paired up with a student who wasn't of the same ethnicity

or major. We had NOTHING in common. When I say nothing, I mean, I would

say, "Oh do you wanna go play basketball or go lift," just…some stuff that I like.

He would go, but I could tell that he didn't like it. (*Mentee*)

When another participant was asked about his own experiences with mentoring young

men on his athletics team, he candidly responded that liking the men was a key

component for his mentorship:

I was just looking out for people's best interest because I want them to succeed.

Mostly because I like the person. (*Mentee*)

Another participant discussed the recognition of potential in a mentee resulting in a desire

to help:

First, I always feel like they seek you out…because they know there's some type

of potential in you. Like something they like…that they think is worth

development. (*Mentee*)

Domain D: Impacts of the mentoring relationship

Domain D explores the many impacts mentoring relationships can have. First, the

section explores the multiple and various impacts of mentoring and then digs deeper into

two specific themes that emerged as high impact areas within mentoring.

Theme 14: The various impacts of mentoring

This theme highlights broad ways in which mentoring relationships affect

participants. Participants reflected that there could be negative and positive impacts.

After expressing his skepticism in the beginning of his mentoring relationship, one

participant described the impact of mentoring in this way:

It turned out to be one of the best things that I ever did. It helped me. If I hadn't of

did that… Probably after football lord knows what would have happened. I

probably would have just been sitting around not doing nothing. (*Mentee*)

One participant expressed that an increase in confidence was an impact from his

mentoring relationship:

You always feel like your parents are supposed to be there. They're supposed to

care about you… But when someone else is doing it it's really reassuring cause it

means someone else sees potential in you, besides your parents. And it's not just

because you're their kid, you know? (*Mentee*)

Some participants talked about the impact of mentoring in terms of averting risk in their futures. One participant explained it in this way:

> They told me how they would've done things a little differently. So I feel like all that really helped me out and if I came to a situation like that it allowed me to think and know what might happen. It gave me a little more insight on what to expect. So, it definitely helped me out by just giving me knowledge on what might incur. It allowed me to think ahead, to plan ahead, and to know what to do if something like that were to happen. (*Mentee*)

Not only did participants talk about impacts in a positive light, but they also described situations where adverse impacts were experienced. When asked about his experiences as mentee, one participant explained a negative outcome when he viewed his football coaches as mentors:

> Well negative. They just wanted me to play football. They didn't care about shit else… I got free grades. I didn't do nothing at that school. Once I realized and got it into my mind… These people are just taking advantage of me, and it was a black thing, I was like, "that's not right." (*Mentee*)

Another participant talked about being deflated and let down because of his high expectations for a mentoring relationship that did not turn out to be a positive experience. His experience caused him to disassociate with future opportunities to become a mentee:

> I first met him… I was just like man, "This is gonna be a tight experience" and he ended up just blowing me off… This is another dud… At a point I had a couple good ones… But all the ones before and him just seem to be failure and it kinda

made me close-minded a little bit to it. I didn't even wanna be close to even

having another type of mentor. (*Mentee*)

In this next passage, the participant talked about how he uses what he learned from his

mentor to help out his mentees:

[H]e's always preaching, like, making connections and expanding your

network…while giving off your best personal brand. And that's trickled down…I

just gave a speech about…giving off your best personal brand. And I also talked

to my little homies about that as well. (*Mentee*)

Theme 15: Negotiating critical life events

This theme indicates instances when participants talked about things happening in

their personal life, which were often critical events, and mentoring helped. When asked

which experiences stick out the most, one mentee discussed a problem he was having due

to his first year college grade point average:

I had a ROUGH first year of college. My freshman year. And my parents weren't

sure if I…should go back the second year. And my mentor, I'd been in contact

with him the whole year. And he came back and…basically talked to my parents

about… And…they had a dialogue about it and I just kinda listened to what

everybody was saying. (*Mentee*)

Another participant commented on his personal life and how having a mentor helped in

this way:

I kinda felt my dad was always the golden child in a sense. He had no flaws… He

was always trying to do right. My parents met at a Christian organization, so I

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didn't think he would understand sexually active and all that kind of stuff. So I

was looking for someone I could talk to about something like that. Who was older

and who could do it but I wouldn't feel judged in a sense. (*Mentee*)

One mentee gave an in-depth look into his struggles during his freshman year of high

school. He had an ongoing, but at times sporadic, relationship with a mentor. Below, he

picked up on reconnecting with his mentor:

I didn't do good at all. I ended up finishing the semester with a 1.7 [grade point

average]… Then there came a point where I got back in contact with [mentor

name]… We started sophomore year where I was…at his house…and at the end

of that year I got a 2.7. (*Mentee*)

A critical moment identified by one participant had to do with his struggles around

identity and not trusting people that were not African American. He also explained how

being around African Americans from different neighborhoods was a struggle until the

mentoring program helped him view people differently from the way in which he did in

the past:

As time went on they made it…easier for us to fit in. And that helped me in the

long run. I didn't like white people. I'll admit it. I hated them. I felt like they

looked down on me, but now my best friend is white. I hang out with everyone

now. My wife is from Asia. I never thought I'd date an Asian in my life. It helped

me expand, broaden my horizons and look past the racial barriers. (*Mentee*)

The same participant talked about reaching a time when he had to make a choice about his future and commented that being in a mentoring relationship influenced his choice to attend college:

> Before it [mentoring program] got started I wouldn't think about college. My mom wanted me to go, but I didn't care. I hadn't touched a single college application packet. Scholarship. Nothing. I didn't touch nothing. So [mentor name] assertive attitude helped me. Like I said, I don't know about everyone else, but that made me want to work. (*Mentee*)

Another participant discussed a critical moment in his life when he was going through the college application process. He expressed his skepticism about getting into the schools he wanted to attend and was encouraged by his mentor to apply. He described how it played out in this way:

> I was talking to one of the mentors…I wanted to apply to [university name] but…they were much more competitive…he said, "well just apply to [university name] anyways and I applied and got in…For me, it was just an eye-opening moment…There's gonna be a lot of things in life where if I don't try or if I count myself out too early then I'll miss out. (*Mentee*)

After getting to college and experiencing life as a student-athlete, one participant talked about the struggles he had with balancing his academics and athletics. He noted that this critical moment in life could have led him in one direction or another. Here is how having a mentor that was a former student-athlete helped:

He was really good for I me…telling me what he did. The years that he struggled

a little bit…He just told me what he did…as far as discipline. Trying to avoid

trouble. "There's gonna be a lot of distractions." Definitely told me that like there

are gonna be a lot of distractions. (*Mentee*)

Another instance where a mentor helped his mentee in a critical moment is described here

when a participant was trying to decide on his major during his senior year in high

school. He credited his mentor with changing his perspective:

I'm in my senior year and…I was all about athletics. But he kinda changed my

perspective of what I should do…he knew what type of kid I was, he knew I was

smart but at the same time he knew I was gifted with being able to communicate.

You know, "I know you had your mind set on psychology and you want to help

people like that but why don't you think about PR?" I was like, "PR?" He was

like, "public relations."…I was like, "You know, that seems pretty reasonable."

(*Mentee*)

Theme 16: Mentoring during life's transitions

Participants explored the times in a person's life in which they believe mentoring

is and can be most effective. These times were frequently noted as transitions in a

person's life. The most frequently mentioned transition was between high school and

college.

One participant talked about having a mentor when he first arrived at college and how it

impacted him:

I can give an example of this within [university name]. When I first got here, I had a mentor originally that kinda helped me get acclimated with the entire university and get to know what type of things to get involved in to help you further your experience. (*Mentee*)

Another participant talked about his struggle with transitioning from high school to college because his parents did not have the same experience. He discussed the importance in this manner:

My parents weren't brought up in this country so asking them questions is a little more tough as far as…the transition from high school to college. And you know college to high school. So, having a mentor…able to answer all of the questions that I had…what's the real world really like? What is it like going from high school to college? (*Mentee*)

When asked if mentoring should happen along the educational journey, a participant answered affirmatively that the transition from high school to college was an important time to have a mentor. He articulated the importance of mentoring throughout the educational journey and in times of transition by explaining that a mentor can help prepare mentees for the new level of academic demands and difficulty once in college:

I think it's necessary…with the transition I think it's cool to have [Northern Star] because in that transition from high school to college is very important to understand how things are going to change. I think it's important to know that…psychology in high school is not gonna be the same [as] psychology in college. (*Mentee*)

Another participant talked about the importance of mentoring along the educational journey in this way:

> I think that a critical time is that senior year or that late junior year of high school when somebody's trying to decide…where am I gonna go for college? And then…applying for scholarships…taking the ACT and standardized testing. All those types of things that a mentor needs to let a mentee know. And that time is very critical to education. However, I think maybe after…a student that is already graduated from college would also be…a critical time. (*Mentee*)

Upon being asked if there were struggles that mentoring helped overcome, a participant highlighted the important transition that comes after high school:

> I feel like everybody, once they graduate high school, a lot of people need…a breaking down of reality. And that was definitely one of the parts of that in my life. (*Mentee*)

Summary

In this chapter the research results of this study were presented. There were 16 interviews conducted in an attempt to answer 3 research questions. The research questions were as follows:

- How do West African and African American males define and describe mentoring?

- How do West African and African American males perceive their relationship with mentors in Northern Star Mentoring Program?

- What do African American and West African males identify as characteristics of effective mentoring relationships?

There were 16 themes that emerged and are categorized under four domains. In chapter five, these results will be discussed according to the research questions for this study, along with implications of the results, and recommendations.

Chapter Five: Discussion

First, this chapter discusses the results of this study in relation to the three research questions that guided this work, followed by a discussion of intra-domain and inter-domain findings. Then I will explore the role of Cultural Intelligence, as a theoretical framework within the mentoring relationship followed by research and practical recommendations. In addition, I will briefly discuss the study's limitations before the conclusion.

Findings

Research question 1: How do West African and African American males define and describe mentoring?

Each participant was asked directly how he defines mentoring and, subsequently, was asked to describe the process of mentoring. Results illustrated that there were many individual definitions of mentoring and the process of mentoring. Findings did not suggest that there is a stark line between West Africans and African Americans in their definitions of mentoring and descriptions of the mentoring process. This is consistent with Keller's (2010) call for more qualitative research that troubles the perspectives of mentoring relationships by seeking to understand those perspectives, including something as simple as defining mentoring.

The definition used throughout the study was: A mentor is someone with knowledge and skill, able to empower another through instruction, reflective dialogue, affirmation, example, challenge, and support (Hatfield, 2012). Based on the results, it is challenging to exercise a single definition when working with people from various

backgrounds, experiences, needs, and conceptualizations of the relationship. However, it is apparent that mentoring programs should establish a definition, which guides mentors and mentees throughout the relationship.

As mentioned, definitions of mentoring varied widely. Participants defined mentoring as filling a void in a mentee's life, transferring some sort of knowledge or capital from a mentor to a mentee, helping a mentee accomplish goals, and simply as the development of a relationship. A key component of mentoring involved the importance of reciprocity as a key tenet of the relationship. The definitions spread across a spectrum of loose conceptualizations to extremely minute details that could be captured in a single sentence.

Many participants discussed mentoring in phases and related the definition to time. For example, some participants noted that a mentoring relationship is not established until a mentor and mentee become friends, which happens in later phases of the relationship. Throughout the literature, scholars have found that a sense of friendship can be important for mentees and mentors (Philip, 2008). Morrow and Styles (1995) talk about relationships maintaining an equal level of responsibility for planning events, which is similar to the notion of friendship. And Spencer (2006) talks about *companionship* while Philip (2000) termed *friend-to-friend* as an approach to mentoring, both of which capture the idea of establishing a friendship. Moreover, the literature about *peer mentoring* captures the notion of friendship (Philip, 2000; Spencer, 2006; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009).

What was harder to identify is how and when participants know that a friendship is formed. In the interviews, participants hinted at ways to identify when a friendship is forming. For example, one participant talked about feeling comfortable asking his mentor questions and said he was, "like the homie." This refers to him being a close friend. Even within this example, it is hard to decipher the 'how' and 'when' friendship truly occurs or can be identified. What we do know is that getting to the point of friendship takes time.

Studies have dug into the length of time required for mentoring relationships to fully develop, which can be as long as three years (Spencer, 2007; Chao & Gardner, 1992). Combing the friendship approach to mentoring, the time it takes to for authentic relationships to develop, and a shortage of minority male mentors provides a significant dilemma. A program such as the one discussed throughout this dissertation would face significant challenges providing mentors if it decided the commitment for mentors were to be longer because most of the mentors are matched with new mentees over several years. Therefore, if the previous year's relationship continues (as is intended) the mentor may have two or more mentees at any given time, which could lead to fatigue. In addition, this assumes that the mentor does not mentor informally outside of the program or is not associated with any other mentoring programs.

Participants also defined mentoring in terms of transferring knowledge, advice, information or experience. This notion is highly consistent with what has been called *classic mentoring* (Philip, 2000) where a mentor is the knowledgeable person in the relationship and is responsible for leading the relationship. This was in contrast to participants discussing the importance of balance in a relationship. The inconsistency of

the two provides insight into the fact that participants do expect a mentor with credibility that can transfer something of value. However, mentees also expect a balanced approach to the relationship where mentees are also given power and the opportunity to drive aspects of the relationship.

Entering this research, I hoped that my first research question would lead to a uniform definition of mentoring. However, according to participants, mentoring is messy and is not compartmentalized. Thus far, the literature has identified areas in which mentoring takes place as well as begun to identify what mentoring within those areas might look like. My study supports literature identifying that mentoring can take place in specific locations and areas, such as school, work, or community, while adding that within those relationships there are multiple overlapping needs of mentees that might not fall neatly into the space of a program or area (school, work, community). For example, within a higher education mentoring program for college students, the areas of desired mentor support may not be solely related to education. In addition, within different compartments or areas of life where mentoring takes place, there may be different definitions of mentoring and the ways in which a relationship begins, develops, and ends. Participants offered wide-ranging definitions leading to the notion that mentoring takes place in multiple forms, areas of life, and circumstances; therefore, mentors have to be prepared to take on a role that can often change or be unclear.

Research question 2: How do West African and African American males perceive their relationship with mentors in Northern Star Mentoring Program?

Throughout the interviews, participants were asked several questions that offered the opportunity to describe and reflect on their perceptions of mentoring relationships. In this section I will discuss several ways mentees perceived their mentoring relationship at various points during the relationship.

A major finding was the variation in skepticism with which mentees began their relationships. While this is not a quantitative study, it is worth noting that many African American mentees expressed skepticism regarding the relationship. This perception was primarily towards the commencement of relationships. Although skepticism was a factor early in the relationship, another finding was that participants generally described their experiences as positive in the program that anchors this study, some of which will be discussed later in this chapter. These positive experiences are consistent with literature that tends to reflect positive outcomes for formal mentoring programs (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000; Jones & Perkins, 2006).

Another perception of mentoring was the notion of 'going with the flow'. Many mentees talked about joining the program because their parents forcefully encouraged them to participate or because a friend or sibling was a previous participant. I hypothesize that the nature in which mentees are recruited plays a role in this attitude toward the program and relationship. Frequently, mentees are identified by word of mouth or a connection through parents. In fact, my participation as a mentee in the program was due to a good friend in high school who participated the year previous to me joining. This nonchalant attitude often continued throughout the duration of the program and ultimately, and fortunately, led to a positive experience. However, as Spencer (2006,

2007) has pointed out, this can sometimes lead to negative impacts. For example, Spencer identified a perceived lack of motivation from the mentee as one reason for relationships ending abruptly. Therefore, a nonchalant mentee attitude toward the relationship could offer that same perception from mentors and lead to a short-lived relationship. Because of potential negative impacts, clearer expectations would serve a mitigating role by allowing mentees to see the seriousness of the relationship and program. One participant mentioned the idea of mentors approaching the relationship seriously; however, this was not discussed in relation to mentees. The notion of clearly identifying expectations will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Participants frequently perceived and included reciprocity as a component within mentoring relationships. Not only did participants define mentoring as reciprocal, they also clearly perceived the relationship in this way, as was presented in chapter four. In addition to mentoring relationships being reciprocal, mentees perceived responsibilities for mentors and mentees as varying throughout the relationship, which adds reciprocal engagement. When reflecting on the process of mentoring, mentees expressed that both mentors and mentees must play an active role in making a relationship successful. This perception supports literature that suggests mentors and mentees perceive relationships as more successful when there is a shared responsibility or reciprocal engagement (Morrow & Styles, 1995). For example, both parties planning events or outings are perceived to be successful when involved in a mentoring relationship.

Mentees also expressed the perceived inevitability of having future risk in their lives and perceived the mentoring relationship as being able to assist with averting risk.

The perception of being helped by mentors came in the form of averting future problems or being advised on how to deal with the problems that would arise. For example, one mentee reflected on his mentor offering input about how to avoid distractions when he arrived at college. Another participant talked about his mentor helping him think about future issues in intimate relationships that could occur. In addition, there were broad reflections where mentees explained that mentors shared decisions that they would have made differently in retrospect. This future-oriented perception of mentoring supports two frameworks that have been identified within mentoring literature (Keller, 2010). *Psychosocial risk* can assist with future decision-making. *Enhancing personal competence* is different from avoiding risk. It is, however, future-oriented because it is aimed at providing young people with information that will help them pursue their interests effectively.

Coupled with the perception of needing to avoid risk, came the perception that the mentors would be qualified to give such advice to the mentee. This perception is in line with mentoring literature and traditional mentoring approaches where the mentor is considered the driver of the relationship and helps the mentee with his needs (Philip, 2000; Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004; Morrow & Styles, 1995). While this demand of mentors is a reality, it begs the question of whether or not this is a realistic demand. For example, if a mentee is facing mental health challenges, it cannot be expected that his mentor is a trained therapist. Moreover, if a mentee expects help with identity challenges, it may not be realistic to assume that his mentor is equipped to fulfill the expectation. That said, Cultural Intelligence is a useful and practical way in which mentors can

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strategically gather and provide helpful information even when he may not be an expert in the area of need.

Research question 3: What do African American and West African males identify as characteristics of effective mentoring relationships?

A long-standing question about mentoring revolves around the characteristics that positively impact a mentoring relationship. This was demonstrated in chapter two of this dissertation where the mentoring landscape and literature was explored. I have chosen to talk about specific techniques used by mentors as *approaches* to mentoring. Approaches to mentoring that have been explored include *authenticity*, *empathy*, *collaboration*, *companionship*, *classic mentoring*, *individual mentoring*, *friend-to-friend mentoring*, *peer group mentoring*, *long-term relationship mentoring*, *supportive*, *structured*, *activity-based*, *prescriptive*, and *development relationships*. Because these have already been explored in mentoring literature, I will highlight findings that identify approaches to mentoring that extend the current literature. In addition, I will identify one impactful experience that the mentoring program provided, which could serve as a model for other programs.

Balance. Within this study, participants identified effective approaches to mentoring throughout the interviews. A common approach discussed by participants was balance. Thus far, literature has discussed balance in terms of both the mentee and mentor driving the relationship and activities undertaken by the two parties. This study reveals three types of balance that can be used by mentors. According to participants, balance came in the form of asking questions, followed by listening, providing advice, and then

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allowing mentees to make choices without pressure from mentors. When balance is used in this way, it can lead to autonomy, which is something that mentees also desire. Autonomy can be thought of as mentees being able to make their own choices. Another participant talked about balance as establishing a level of equality between the mentor and mentee, while maintaining the classic (Philip, 2000) mentee-mentor relationship where there remained no questions about the hierarchy of the relationship. In other words, mentors created a friendly environment but not enough to blur the lines of who was in which role. Lastly, balance was expressed by the need for mentors to sometimes approach mentoring seriously and at other times foster a more relaxed environment. One participant expressed being turned off from a mentoring relationship where his mentor only asked him tough questions and did not offer time for the two of them to have fun.

Complementing parents. Another effective characteristic of mentoring that participants identified was the need for mentors to complement parents and guardians of the mentees. This came in the form of mentors communicating things on behalf of a mentee and acting as a mediator. For example, a West African mentee explained that his parents did not understand the United States higher education system because they were educated in their home country. Therefore, his mentor was able to give a contextual explanation that garnered a sense of hope for the mentee's parents. In another instance, a mentee talked about going through the college application process and not receiving help from his parents because they were unfamiliar with the process. However, his mentor was able to provide assistance. This was also discussed in terms of mentors providing mentees with a narrative that was different from that of their parents or home environments.

Complementing parents is also useful when mentees are not willing to receive or accept the advice or teachings of their parents. Participants talked about messages from parents being received as paranoia or over-protection. However, if the same message is being delivered from a mentor, it may be received more positively or seriously. Another way in which participants identified mentors complementing their home life was how a mentor's personality may be different from someone at home. One mentee talked about this extensively. He discussed having mostly women in his household and explained that his mother and grandmother were not firm with him. When he entered this mentoring program, his mentor had a resolute manner and it had a profound impact on his future success.

Communication. Participants also discussed the importance of communication as a component of effective mentoring. Communication was brought up in relation to the frequency of meetings between mentors and mentees. Some participants identified the frequency they believed a matched pair should meet in person and/or talk over the phone, text, or email; however, there was little uniformity. While communication, broadly, was a thread throughout interviews, there were differences based on the phase of the relationship. For example, some participants identified the commencement phase as being important for more frequent communication, while not as important in later phases. The phases of mentoring were briefly discussed previously and will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The cabin trip. An overwhelmingly positive experience for participants within this study was a weekend-long trip to a cabin outside of the metropolitan area within

which most participants lived[11]. Interestingly, this experience had three large positive

impacts. First, participants talked about the value it added to relationships with their

peers. Second, they discussed the positive impact the experience had on the relationships

between assigned mentors and mentees. Third, this experience impacted the relationships

between mentees and mentors that were not assigned as a match. The activities include

hands-on and physical tasks, in addition to mentor presentations on different areas of

their expertise and opportunities for the mentees to experience public speaking. Many of

the activities focus on improving group dynamics. In addition, there is an intentional

effort by the program to give the mentees their own space in the evenings at the cabin.

This is designed to give the mentees an environment for reflection, conversation, and fun.

The relationship with peers was deepened because they participated in activities

coupled with the intentional allocation of time for critical thinking and conversation. The

relationships between assigned and unassigned pairs were deepened because of the group

activities, topics of discussion, and the team environment, which required open

conversations and dependence on other mentors to complete a specific task. For example,

one activity was about financial planning. A mentor, who is a financial advisor, prepared

various scenarios for all of the mentees that required them to balance their income and

the bills they needed to pay each month. All of the mentors played a different 'entity',

such as the bank holding a car loan. In order to complete the activity, the mentees needed

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[11] It is important to point out that participants lived in various cities and suburbs of a metropolitan area. While the two largest cities share a border there has been rapid growth in a seven county region, which held 2.9 million people in 2010. The local metro council estimates that by 2020 the population will be 3.1 million and 3.6 million by 2040 in a seven county region (Metropolitan Council).

to have conversations with each of the entities and figure out ways to balance their budgets. This type of activity was significant in that it was practical and relevant for individual mentoring relationships and programs. This could serve as a model for successful mentoring activities.

Intra-domain findings

In this section I will discuss the findings within each of the four domains that were not directly associated with the research questions. There were multiple noteworthy findings within each domain and later I will discuss inter-domain findings, which are findings that cross and intersect with more than one domain.

Domain A: Programmatic components of mentoring. Within Domain A, *Programmatic components of mentoring*, three major findings emerged. First, the importance of successfully matching mentors and mentees; second, the desire for an environment in which mentees are allowed to interact with other non-assigned mentors; and third, the need to clearly articulate expectations.

Several scholars have attempted to identify successful matches in a mentoring relationship (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999; Eshner & Murphy 1997; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002). While the importance of matching is not a new finding, what is crucial is that, within the debate of cross-race versus same-race mentoring, nuances exist. One pillar of this project was to determine if populations grouped together by race or ethnicity experience and perceive mentoring differently. The findings uncovered situations where African Americans and West Africans experienced mentoring in different ways, and therefore, the match should be intentional, even when dealing with

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two populations that are grouped together in data collection systems such as the United States Census.

New findings about the matching process were uncovered during the interviews. First, several participants discussed their minimal knowledge of how they were matched with their mentor or mentee. Second, participants described ways in which matching processes could be different. The idea of *speed dating* was mentioned by participants and captures the feeling that all mentors and all mentees in a program should have the opportunity to get to know one another and a program should create environments where both parties can exchange information about themselves prior to being paired. Speed dating has commonly been used as a way for people to be matched with a date. Typically, groups of people sign up for a speed-dating event and have short 'dates' with a designated amount of time to talk to each person from the opposite sex[12]. At the end, everyone writes down the names of people with whom they would like to share their contact information. If there is a match between two people, the organizers exchange the information and the two people can proceed however they see fit. The idea of speed dating as a way to match mentors and mentees raises a practical consideration about the timing of the match. Participants discussed a delay in the matching of mentors and mentees that would allow for the speed dating format and the ability for mentees and mentors to get to know one another better before committing to the relationship.

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[12] Within the speed dating context, one group must remain in his or her seat. For example, with heterosexual speed dating the women usually stay in their seats throughout the event and the men rotate. Within the mentoring context the mentor or mentee would remain in his seat while the other party rotates to ensure that every mentor and mentee talk to one another.

Second, participants identified the desire and/or importance of having contact with multiple mentors within a program. This is different from an individual having multiple mentors in various areas of his life. Participants suggested that within the container of a mentoring program there should be opportunities and openness for mentees to interact with several mentors. For example, the American Psychological Association (APA) offers 'open mentoring' at its annual conference and its Minority Fellowship Program Summer Institute. For the duration of the conference, mentors are assigned two graduate student mentees with whom to interact, followed by a designated day where graduate students can sign up for meetings with any other mentors to engage in conversations about various topics. Philip (2000) discussed a similar model called *group mentoring*; however, she conceptualized this as a single mentor engaging with multiple mentees over an extended period of time. For example, a mentor could lead an after-school program that occurs weekly and act as a mentor to several students at once. In contrast, my findings suggest that a mentoring program should allow for engagement with other mentors outside of the mentoring matches, such as APA has begun to do.

The third finding in Domain A highlights the need to determine and articulate expectations. This consists of three levels. First, the program should clearly explain its expectations, including a definition of mentoring, to mentors and mentees. Second, the mentee should articulate his expectations to the mentor. And third, the mentor should discuss his expectations with the mentee. Mentees discussed blindly entering into a mentoring relationship and not knowing what to expect. In addition, in several of the interviews, participants talked about their own expectations and there was little coherence

between participants. Noting that they all participated in the same mentoring program within three years of one another, the lack of consistency was striking and shows few shared expectations and a lack of understanding of the various expectations. Whether or not there should be shared expectations is a question that arises from this finding. While I do not think all expectations will be shared, I do think there may be some common expectations. Identifying the congruent expectations and strategizing around meeting those— and other unique expectations of mentees that may not be shared, would be beneficial for future relationships and programming.

Domain B: Dimensions of difference. Domain B, *dimensions of difference*, described the components of culture[13] and other forms of difference that are important within mentoring relationships.

The first finding in this domain deals with the ways in which participants discussed a need to gain information about one another when in a mentoring relationship. Participants talked about the importance of this reciprocal process of acquiring nuanced information about one another, how this information could be acquired, and the amount of time and meeting frequency it could take to acquire this knowledge. One of the differences discussed by participants was social class. One participant expressed his sense of not belonging with the other mentees in the program because he was from a poor neighborhood and went to a less affluent school, while other mentees were from the suburbs, drove their parents' nice cars, and went to schools with more resources. While

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[13] As noted in chapter one, I think of culture beyond race and ethnicity. My working definition includes gender, ability/disability, age, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation.

there is the assumed likeness based on 'being black' in the program, there are other relevant differences among mentees and mentors that should be explored.

Second, this domain explored how mentors approach situations where differences are present. There was little agreement about how to approach a situation where differences exist. However, participants agreed that the approach is an important element to consider within mentoring relationships. In addition, some said that they would approach all mentoring relationships in the same way, while others said they would alter their approach. Moreover, some participants expressed that every individual is different; therefore, all relationships should be approached in a unique way. These findings are relevant in program settings for matching processes and program designs where time should be allowed for matches to learn about the interests, backgrounds, and cultures of their match. For natural mentoring relationships, or relationships not bound by a program, this is important for individual mentors to ensure that there is time to learn about their mentees and for their mentees to learn about them. In the section about Cultural Intelligence and the recommendations, ways in which these tough situations can be overcome will be explored.

Domain C: Fostering the relationship. Within Domain C, *fostering the relationship*, the various phases of mentoring, responsibility of mentees and mentors, mentee buy-in, and authenticity were described. I will discuss each in this section.

The phases of mentoring primarily arose when participants were asked to describe the process of mentoring and how mentoring works. When discussing the phases of mentoring, many participants identified a beginning, middle, and points where a

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relationship may end, naturally or abruptly. For example, one mentor discussed milestones in a person's life, like graduating high school or college, as times when a relationship may end naturally. However, these milestones could also serve as a new phase for the relationship. A mentor says, "The person's graduated. Graduation, to me, is both a beginning and an ending. A beginning of a new phase and an ending of another phase." While there was not explicit agreement on the different components within each phase, that there are phases of a mentoring relationship is a noteworthy finding. This is worth further exploration because both natural and formal relationships could benefit from the formation of a common language about the phases of mentoring relationships. Related to the phases of mentoring are the various responsibilities of mentors and mentees in fostering the relationship.

This study uncovered findings about the responsibilities of mentors and mentees throughout a relationship. Interestingly, some participants discussed responsibilities in relation to the different phases of mentoring. For example, participants described that it is a mentee's responsibility to initiate contact with his mentor in the beginning of a relationship. In contrast, in later phases of the relationship, initiating responsibility becomes that of the mentor. In another contrasting point of view, a different participant viewed the responsibility of initiating contact in the beginning of a relationship to be that of the mentor. Another example of a shift in responsibility coincided with a mentee entering college and becoming independent. A mentor explained the situation where he had met his responsibilities by setting his mentee up for success and providing guidance

along the path to college. However, once the mentee was admitted and arrived at college, it became the responsibility of the mentee to perform and succeed.

Another finding within Domain C was the need for mentees to buy into the relationship. I have discussed how mentees frequently stepped into the relationship because they were forcefully encouraged by parents or entered blindly based on recommendations from friends or family. For example, one mentee's older siblings and a cousin participated in the program before he did and his younger brother was a mentee the year after him. This is a situation in which a mentee's decision to apply for the program may not be a well thought-out choice. In addition, some mentees expressed doubt and skepticism at the beginning of the relationship. A way to overcome these realities is by creating mentee buy-in. Participants discussed mentee buy-in as being necessary for the relationship to truly develop beyond superficial encounters in a matched relationship. One ingredient that can lead to mentee buy-in is when mentees experience positive results from the mentoring relationship. For example, if the advice of a mentor is implemented and positive results are yielded then it could create mentee buy-in. While the forms of buy-in discussed by participants primarily address the issue after a relationship has begun, there may be interesting ways in which to create buy-in before the program or relationship begins; this may welcome skepticism as a healthy and positive feeling before the start of, and in the beginning of, a program. For example, prospective mentees could meet with and learn about the program from former participants that extend beyond someone they might already know, lending to more program validity and a decrease in skepticism.

And lastly, the credibility of a mentor also creates buy-in from mentees. Mentees frequently talked about wanting mentors that have had similar life experiences as their own and a mentor who has gone through things that might be relevant to the mentee's future. In other instances, credibility was related to perceived life stability, wealth, and success. Troubling credibility with loose definitions of mentoring creates a tough task from a programmatic perspective. A program faces significant difficulties because of these complex variables when it comes to recruiting mentors and ensuring a positive relationship. However, it is important to keep in mind that mentees are looking for a mentor to meet certain standards.

Authenticity and altruism have also been part of the mentoring conversation and research (Spencer, 2006). Spencer found that the feeling of authenticity by mentees was the most effective in developing and fostering mentoring relationships. Altruism is frequently talked about in terms of selflessly caring adults and mentees feeling that someone cares for them. Throughout this study, participants frequently articulated the importance of not being judged and having a mentor that selflessly cares for the mentee. The idea of non-judgment and caring for mentees can be hard to identify in mentors, especially before a relationship commences. However, because of its importance, it will be worth exploring. This could be done by conducting scenario-based interviews with prospective mentors, having reference checks, interviews, and applications.

Domain D: Impacts of the mentoring relationship. Domain D, *impacts of the mentoring relationship*, describes the multiple areas where mentoring can be impactful and specifically calls out the impact mentoring can have during critical life moments and

during life's transitions. Many of the various impact areas have been discussed in previous literature such as education, relationships, home life, confidence, risk aversion, as well as negative impacts based on bad experiences. Therefore, I will focus primarily on the impacts specific to critical life moments and life transitions because it provides an addition to existing literature.

Different people define critical life moments in different ways. However, participants discussed instances where having a mentor was useful during particular challenges in their lives. Challenges were related to school performance, identity development, living up to exemplar parents, and balancing responsibilities. While these challenges could appear to be isolated moments at a single point in life, the participants discussed them as moments where there could have been lasting impacts on their futures if they had not had the guidance of a mentor. For example, when one person talked about his challenges of balancing school and football, he discussed his inability to excel in either, which could have led to being expelled from school or kicked off the football team. At this critical moment, it was necessary for him to have a mentor and receive the guidance and advice to overcome this obstacle.

There is no doubt that this finding asks a lot of mentors and may lead some to pose that someone other than a mentor should be providing some of these kinds of guidance and counsel to young people. A therapist could be one such person. While this is a valid suggestion, Satcher (2001) outlines the relationship between black people and authority figures in the United States. This relationship includes a history of mistreatment that has led to a continued lack of trust within the mental health field, and beyond.

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Because of this unfortunate history, mentors working with this particular population (and others) have had to act in multiple capacities that may have been better suited for an expert.

Critical life moments are not necessarily bound by a certain time or age in a person's life, but rather are spread out and potentially random or sporadic. The idea of life's transitions is related to critical life moments but differs slightly.

While life's transitions could be a sub-theme of critical life moments, I chose to leave it as a stand-alone theme because transitions may be more applicable to a wider audience and may have the potential for more finite definitions bound by age and time in a person's life. Further, critical life moments may not be related to a transition in a person's life as was discussed above with the example of balancing academic and sports. Examples of transitions were described as graduating from high school and entering college or after college and entering into the workforce. Participants discussed positive impacts of having mentors during these transitions and went as far as suggesting that individuals should have mentors during all transitions in life.

This section contributes two impactful times mentoring should happen. First, the participants revealed that mentoring during critical life moments could have far-reaching impacts on mentees. In addition, participants talked about mentoring during life's transitions. In order to assist mentors in identifying the emergence of a critical life moment, training is a practical recommendation. I also recommend that transitional periods be a target for mentoring relationships. These recommendations will be explored further. Next, however, I will discuss major findings that cross two or more domains.

Inter-domain findings

Thus far, I have presented this study's findings that align with the research questions that guided this work, followed by a presentation of findings that fall solely within domains (intra-domain). As suggested earlier, mentoring is not always neat and does not lack complexity. In this section I will discuss some of the complexities by revealing findings that cross and intersect more than one domain.

The first inter-domain finding highlights the relationship between the phases of mentoring, the various responsibilities for mentors and mentees, and articulating expectations. As discussed previously, participants articulated phases of a mentoring relationship, which included a beginning, middle, and points when a mentoring relationship could end. In addition, participants identified different responsibilities for mentors and mentees, which sometimes change, as the relationship grew deeper. Lastly, participants illustrated a need for mentoring programs, mentors, and mentees to openly express their expectations of the mentoring relationship. While none of these three findings have a universal description or definition, they overlap significantly. For example, because there is no universal description of the phases of mentoring and the responsibilities associated with a specific phase, it is critical for participants and programs to clearly articulate the expectations of what should be taking place within a certain phase of the relationship. If this is done, everyone involved will have the opportunity to be on the same playing field, and therefore, lessen the chance for unsuccessful relationships based on needs and desires not being met. Further, the responsibilities for mentors and mentees were articulated as being fluid during the length

of a relationship. This supports the need to discuss these expectations. Lastly, an exercise in determining expectations would provide programs a chance to self-evaluate based on its mentor and mentee needs, conceptualizations of a mentoring relationship, and the role of a program.

A second consideration that involves more than one domain revolves around the notion that mentors are expected to provide advice for mentees that will avert future risks. This finding was coupled with the reality that some of the risk aversion desired by mentees would be directly related to culture, race, and ethnicity, although not limited to those characteristics. For example, if a mentee wants to avert the risk of having an angry reaction to future race-related issues, he may desire having a mentor who is a person of color who may understand such a situation because he has had to deal with something similar. Having said that, there is a substantial amount of research that has suggested a lack of mentors from specific backgrounds (i.e. black males). Taking these into consideration, solutions for such a quandary will need to be explored. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) could provide a framework for addressing the scenario presented here. For example, a cross-race match (a match between a mentor and mentee with different racial makeup) could benefit from a mentor using CQ to better serve the needs of a mentee. I will explore this more fully in the coming sections.

A third inter-domain finding is found at the intersection of critical life moments and having multiple mentors within a program. The convergence of these findings is solution-oriented. For example, if a mentee is faced with a critical life moment and his mentor is unsure of how to help, he may seek advice from another mentor to provide

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guidance. In addition, in an environment where having multiple mentors is encouraged, a mentee can independently seek guidance from several mentors in order to receive that which he needs.

Cultural Intelligence

The guiding theoretical framework in this dissertation is Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and was introduced and reviewed in chapter one of this dissertation. For review, I will briefly summarize CQ here. Cultural Intelligence, "is conceptualized as a set of malleable capabilities that enable an individual to effectively function in and manage culturally diverse settings" (Ang, Dyne, Koh, Ng, Templer, Tay, & Chandrasekar, 2007, p. 494). Cultural Intelligence consists of four elements. Motivational (drive) CQ is one's ability to direct attention to learning about and functioning in situations where cultural differences are at play. Cognitive (knowledge) CQ, "reflects knowledge of norms, practices and conventions in different cultures acquired from education or personal experience" (Ang et al., 2007, p. 338). Metacognitive (strategy) CQ refers to mental processes that a person uses to understand and gain cultural knowledge and view things from higher-order cognitive processes. Lastly, behavioral (action) CQ is a person's capability to display appropriate verbal and non-verbal actions when interacting with people from various cultural backgrounds. In addition, mindfulness has emerged as a successful strategy for a culturally intelligent person because it requires that he reflectively practices awareness of his own feelings, thoughts, and actions as well as those of other people when in cross cultural situations (Teluja, 2014; Thomas, 2006).

While participants' descriptions of the mentoring relationship and process reflect aspects of the four factors of CQ, the framework did not provide a seamless approach to make sense of mentoring. However, aspects of CQ did lead to positive results in mentoring relationships and further exploration is warranted. The participants made suggestions where aspects of CQ were previously used and others uncovered where CQ could be used. Participants commonly described what appears to be metacognitive CQ and CQ knowledge.

On several occasions participants described ways in which individuals did or could gather cultural knowledge during a relationship. Examples included personal research, visiting the home and parents of individuals, spending time with individuals in their school, and listening. The strategies of visiting a mentee's home and parents, spending time in a mentee's school, and listening were proven to be successful ways to gain cultural knowledge and to begin, or further develop, a mentoring relationship.

The cognitive aspect of CQ (CQ knowledge) was reflected in areas where mentees discussed the expectation that mentors would be able to provide information or advice based on situations that they were currently facing or would face in the future. For example, one mentor described the fact that he could relate to mentees because he had lived the same experiences of mentees. CQ knowledge provides a good way to view the notion of credibility previously discussed. Because credibility is something that mentees identified as a need within mentoring relationships, CQ knowledge is complementary. Under the description of this aspect that people know 'what they know', an opportunity is provided for programs to ask questions and think deeply about what they want mentors to

know or think is important for them to know. Conversely, CQ knowledge shows that people 'do not know what they do not know', which is a primer for mentors to gain the knowledge in areas that their mentees desire and thus create credibility. Moreover, cognitive CQ intersects with findings about authenticity. Authenticity was identified as an important approach for mentors to use. Mentors with CQ knowledge may practice authenticity and be slower to judge mentees because of their intimate knowledge or experience with situations faced by mentees.

Another aspect of CQ discussed in the interviews was motivational CQ. Participants discussed instances where attention was directed to learning and functioning in different cultural settings, but it was not a major highlight. For example, one mentee talked about how he would do research if he were in a mentoring relationship where he did not know much about his mentee's culture. In another example, as discussed previously, a mentor visited the school of his mentee to learn more about the generational culture within which his mentee existed. Others discussed visiting the homes of mentees and meeting parents. I want to briefly discuss a potential barrier to positive mentoring relationships as it relates to motivational CQ and what I would refer to as an 'assumed goodwill' of mentors.

If mentoring programs operate under the assumption that mentors want to be good mentors, then motivational CQ should be inherent and could be taken for granted because of an assumed existence of motivation. My experience suggests that many mentoring programs operate under such an assumption. For example, a mentee talked about the challenge that could be faced if he had a mentor that benefits from white, male, and

Christian privilege. Under this example, an assumption of altruism and a basic desire to be a good mentor could hinder a relationship from fully developing and maximizing its benefits because the mentor may not want to uncover and admit his privilege. Instead, mentoring programs might attempt to attract mentors with international experience and previous volunteer or work experience where cross-cultural exchanges were present. This could inform the level of motivational CQ a mentor carries at the commencement and during the various phases of a mentoring relationship.

There were few descriptions from both mentors and mentees in which behavioral CQ (CQ action) was identified in the mentoring relationship. When behavior was discussed, it focused on ways in which appropriate CQ action could be used. For example, one mentor discussed a situation of a mentee being raised with values that misaligned with those of his own. In an effort to provide his mentee with advice about potential future obstacles, he suggested a way that he might go about having a conversation with his mentee that does not discredit the mentee's values. However, he offered a way that he could still provide what he thought to be useful advice. The quote helps to explain the way CQ action can be used:

> Maybe their culture says don't have sex until you're married. Let's just use that
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> for example. And that's not something that you personally believe and you don't
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> want to tell him, "Hey man, have sex before you're married." But maybe you
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> want to say, "Hey…there's a lot of positives that your culture talks about when it
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> talks about no sex before marriage. One of the pitfalls I'm aware of and I've seen

people fall into is that they get to college, they completely disregard it and then

now they have no idea about protective sex and things to be aware of."

Another participant talked about CQ action when he was asked his thoughts on the role of

culture within the mentoring relationship. He stated that culture is important because it

would directly impact his actions and the types of advice he gives to his mentee. This

suggests that the mentor would take the cultural knowledge he maintains and use it to

guide his actions, which aligns with CQ as a process of learning and then re-learning after

reflecting on experiences (Tuleja, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the emergence of mindfulness within the CQ framework

related to strategizing is important to mentoring and this dissertation. Kabat-Zinn (2003)

recognizes that mindfulness is not a new phenomenon and has roots in Buddhist

meditation. He uses the working definition that mindfulness is, "the awareness that

emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and

nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (p. 145). Tuleja

says mindfulness, "indicates that the transformational difference in crossing cultures is to

actively pay attention to the subtle cues in cross-cultural circumstances—then to tune into

one's prior knowledge, thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions to what is going on"

(2014, p. 10). Both Kabat-Zinn and Tuleja highlight multiple aspects of mindfulness.

First, they note the fundamental act of paying attention and having a heightened level of

awareness. Second, is the importance of being in the moment and focusing on the 'here

and now' or 'what is going on'. The third aspect of mindfulness is the intentionality

required of individuals. Mindfulness is an intentional reflection of energy, thoughts,

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reactions, and experiences. Theme 5, *the role of paying attention to details and knowing one another*, complements mindfulness well. Theme 5 captures the aspects of mindfulness including paying attention and being aware, in addition to the intentionality needed from individuals.

Participants related mentoring to mindfulness several times during the interviews. In one particular case, a mentor captured the importance of mindfulness when he discussed his attention to cultural nuances of his mentees. He also mentioned the need to decipher what topics are off limits for discussion because of cultural nuances. Another aspect of mindfulness captured in the interviews was the need to listen. Furthermore, an important feature of mindfulness is inward reflection and being in-tune with self. At various moments in the interviews, participants openly admitted things of which they had little or no knowledge and experience. This inward reflection is core to CQ knowledge and mindfulness.

Recommendations and implications

In this section I will suggest five research recommendations and three practical recommendations.

Research recommendation 1: Further explore the relationship between mindfulness and mentoring

Mindfulness appears to be inherently at the core of mentoring. *The role of paying attention to details and knowing one another* emerged as a theme and is a direct complement to literature around mindfulness. Approaching the mentoring relationship from a place of mindfulness offers the opportunity to have a mentee-centered mentoring

relationship. A mentee-centered approach to mentoring would draw upon the key components of mindfulness such as being aware, in the moment, intentional, and as Teluja expressed, 'nonjudgmental'.

Research recommendation 2: Continue to explore Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a framework for mentoring across cultures

Several aspects of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) were evident in the interviews and CQ would serve well in mentoring relationships. Based on the interviews, Cultural Intelligence is worth further examination in mentoring relationships. In addition, Cultural Intelligence has been successfully adapted in multiple areas and fields, which leads me to believe that it could be well suited for mentoring. For example, CQ has been implemented in teaching, counseling, cross-cultural work teams, and global leadership and management. Throughout this dissertation, there have been references about cross-race and same-race mentoring as well as the quandary presented in this chapter about the need for more mentors from specific backgrounds in order to provide mentoring relevant to the needs of specific mentees. CQ could provide a lens through which to view mentoring across cultures, if explored further. In addition, when dealing with groups that are considered the same, such as West African and African American, more research may yield an even better fit than this project has identified. Lastly, I have attempted to illustrate that mentors will be faced with situations, questions, and experiences that they might not have the expertise to address. In such cases, CQ would serve as a way to respond appropriately and may lead to better mentoring perceptions and outcomes.

Research recommendation 3: Future research should explore taxonomy of the phases of mentoring

Sipe (2005) called for a typology for the entire mentoring landscape claiming that it would be useful for several reasons. First, a typology would provide, "a way to organize and make sense…of mentoring." A second benefit is that, "a classification system may facilitate communication among both researchers…and practitioners." And third, "a typology may be useful for both predicting and increasing our understanding of the different types of benefits of different types of mentoring programs and relationships" (pp. 65-66). My recommendation is to move deeper into taxonomy related to the phases of mentoring because participants clearly expressed that there are phases of mentoring, but there is not agreement on the characteristics of each phase. I believe taxonomy would provide the same benefits that Sipe outlined.

Various scholarly fields have developed taxonomies and classification systems. The development of taxonomy discussed here could learn from human and child development, cognition taxonomies, and varying education taxonomies including educational advising and the ways in which teachers teach. In addition, the counseling field has researched the phases of counseling relationships. Another benefit of creating taxonomy of the phases of mentoring relationships is that mentors and mentoring programs will have to begin identifying appropriate behaviors that are associated with the different phases of a relationship. Identifying such behaviors may lead to better outcomes in the development of mentoring relationships and overall impact of the relationships.

Such research could have implications for the length of programs. For example, if research uncovered that the beginning phase of a mentoring program could take longer than expected, programs may need to reevaluate their overall length and assess whether or not shorter programs are worth the investments. Based on the interviews, the development of taxonomy related to the phases of mentoring would likely force mentoring programs to extend the time frames within which they operate. Based on literature, this would benefit the development of authentic relationships. Moreover, this could have implications for mentoring fatigue and the ability to find committed mentors if programs were to extend time frames.

Research recommendation 4: Explore the theory of unconscious bias and its impact on mentoring relationships

Unconscious bias (Ross, 2014) has been explored in various fields and practice including higher education, hiring practices across sectors, police enforcement, medical providers, psychology, and sports. Scholars (Easterly & Richard, 2011; Lee 2005; Mahaffey, Bryan, & Hutchinson, 2005) have identified over ten types of unconscious bias, some of which were evident in this study. Below are three that maintain relevance within the context of mentoring and this study. *Stereotype threat* is when a person has anxiety/concern when he has potential to confirm a negative stereotype about his group. One mentee did not feel he they belonged in the program and did not feel as if he could reflect his true self because he was from a different neighborhood and came from a lower socio-economic class. *Optimism bias* is when individuals are overly optimistic about the future. This was apparent when mentees expressed their blind entrance into the mentoring

program and were optimistic about the outcomes. And *confidence bias* comes to light when a person becomes attached to a particular point of view. This emerged when mentors expressed confidence in their own experiences to inform what mentees needed in the relationship.

Research recommendation 5: Explore the theory of *covering* in relation to mentees and mentors and mentoring programs

Covering is a theory developed by Yoshino (2006) and describes when an individual reveals some component of his identity and later hides it because of an unwelcoming or non-inclusive environment. One participant expressed that he frequently covered his interest in theater and dance because mentees and mentors overpowered dialogues with sports talk. Of course, talking about sports is not inherently a bad thing. In fact, many participants discussed sports at length, which means that sports could be a way to connect with mentees. However, if a mentee is forced to cover within a mentoring program, there are large implications about the lack of and need for a more inclusive environment. This is another example of how mindfulness would be useful in discovering where someone may be covering and when to redirect conversations in order to foster an inclusive atmosphere. Covering has also been identified as a way for organizations to evaluate and/or redevelop its core values. Therefore, covering could also be used as an evaluation tool while ensuring there are welcoming spaces for all of its participants.

Practical recommendation 1: Create new approaches for matching mentors and mentees that postpone decisions until mentors and mentees have a chance to get to know each other better

The findings in this study suggest that mentees desire an opportunity to get to know their mentors more intimately before being matched. Further, there is a desire to have a role in the matching process. Therefore, I recommend postponing matching processes and providing opportunities for mentors and mentees to get to know one another, in addition to creating a process by which both parties can identify who they think would be a good match.

There are two challenges for this recommendation. First, because most formal mentoring programs are bound by a time period, this presents a limitation in the feasibility of postponing matches. For example, the mentoring program binding this study operates for five months with large group meetings once per month. Therefore, postponing the matching of mentors and mentees would significantly decrease the amount of time available to build authentic relationships. While postponing the matching process by one month may not appear to be a significant length of time, five months is already an inadequate amount of time to develop a relationship according to some research. Second, there will likely emerge popular mentors and mentees and this may lead to an uneven distribution of perceived good matches. For example, if one mentor is a news anchor on a local station, it is likely that many mentees would be drawn to the mentor and the mentees would therefore identify him as a good match.

Practical recommendation 2: Aim to provide mentors to people during various life transitions

This study uncovered the notion that mentoring can be most impactful during transitions in a person's life. Participants frequently discussed educational transitions;

however, transitions could be expanded to include relocation, relationship transitions such as marriage, and career transitions. While the ideal situation would be for people to have mentors at all times throughout life, targeting important life transitions may be more realistic.

This recommendation implies that a set of life transitions can be identified and will be shared among people from various backgrounds. First, there are some transitions that could provide 'quick wins' for this recommendation. For example, transitions within education may include going from elementary or middle school to high school, from high school to college, and college to graduate school. Other intuitive transitions might include leaving high school and entering the workforce and leaving college and entering the workforce. These 'quick wins', coupled with a quantitative evaluation aimed at finding important life transitions, would be useful. It is important to be clear that this recommendation does not suggest that current mentoring efforts should be stopped and reallocated; but rather, that there may be positive outcomes if life transitions are targeted in the future.

Practical recommendation 3: Provide multiple areas of ongoing mentor training before and during mentoring programming and one-to-one interactions with mentees

Throughout this chapter and dissertation I have explored the complex nature of mentoring while also highlighting the extremely challenging nature of being a mentor. In order to ensure that mentors are prepared for the many situations they face when engaged in mentoring, various trainings should be implemented. Reiterating that every mentor will

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not be a trained therapist, mentors would benefit from baseline training, highlighting

techniques used in therapy as well as ways in which to identify concerning behaviors or

where critical life moments might be surfacing. Baseline training does not suggest that

mentors will be able to provide the necessary one-to-one support, but would allow for the

mentors to identify and then provide resources for mentees in areas that they are not

familiar. In addition, training about Cultural Intelligence (CQ) would be beneficial and

would complement baseline therapy training. If CQ training is provided mentors will be

better equipped to respond to the challenges, needs, and desires of their mentees.

Limitations of the study

While the aim of this project is to inform mentoring programs and mentoring

relationships by providing perceptions of mentoring, the findings are not generalizable.

Instead I have attempted to provide enough details about the findings so that the readers

can decide whether or not to generalize the findings and conclusions (Hood, 2007). In

addition, it is impossible to generalize across all of West African and African Americans.

However, the majority of West Africans in Minnesota are from Anglophone countries.

Participants had roots in multiple Anglophone countries including Nigeria, Liberia, and

Cameroon and I acknowledge the fact that this study does not sufficiently account for the

many differences that exist within the West African context.

I also acknowledge the potential limitation around sampling. My study was

optional and while not every participant had positive reflections of mentoring, overall,

most participants did have a mostly positive experience within the program. Moreover,

while there was a sufficient sample to reach saturation (Creswell, 2013) a larger number

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of mentor participants may have provided more opportunity to triangulate the data. Other steps could have included focus groups, more intensive member checks, and document analysis. The logistics of further data collection and analysis were beyond the feasibility of this study.

Black manhood

While this study is not a study about black manhood, it is important to acknowledge that there are major undertones and notions of these topics throughout this dissertation. Therefore, it is important that I provide, while brief, an overview of literature related to black manhood in the United States. This section will review the historical nature and underpinnings of this topic.

Scholars have argued that black men have been emasculated in the United States since slavery. First, during slavery, black men could not protect their families; second, absent fathers (for numerous and complicated reasons) has led to a matriarchal black family; and third, black families have long suffered economic oppression, deeming men unable to provide for the family while living in a society that traditionally has equated manhood and being a provider (Bush, 1999).

One reason for the constant attack on black males hinges on sexuality. Ferber (2007) writes about white supremacy and draws links between the need for white supremacists to rely on the black male body as a justification for their ideologies. For example, there has been an ongoing depiction of black males as hypersexual, animalistic, and responsible for most of the crime in the United States (Ferber, 2007). The fear of interracial sexual activity (mostly thought of as rape) has led white males to 'protect'

their white daughters and women from black males. Ferber suggests that, "interracial sexuality threatens White masculinity and privilege" (2007, p. 18). This last point is the driver of the attack and construction of the narrative about black males in the United States.

Plagued by a history and narrative of black males being violent and sexual beasts (Collins, 2005), this study uncovered an unwavering desire for mentors and mentees, alike, to push back against this narrative. This was evident in the interviews where participants openly discussed wanting to be around positive black males and the importance of being prepared for manhood. The program handbook is sprinkled with the term 'manhood'. Considering the dire career outlook illustrated in chapter one, it is no surprise that the participants are highly aware of their standing in society and that they have a desire to change the trajectory.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, important perceptions of mentoring for African American and West African males emerged. First, there are various definitions of mentoring, descriptions and experiences with the mentoring process, and what are considered to be effective characteristics of mentoring. Second, there are large intersections between various mentoring components that should be taken together. For example, scholars have researched matching, length of time it takes to develop positive relationships, and effective mentoring techniques; however, few studies have looked at how all of these components intersect and interact. This study showed the need to make sense of several overlapping components of mentoring. This was discussed as 'inter-

domain' findings and is illustrated by aspects of mentoring that cross and intersect in various ways and complex natures. For example, communication was an important aspect of mentoring and it crosses all areas of a mentoring relationship. Third, mentors and mentees perceive a need for more than one mentor and recognize the effectiveness of having more than one mentor. Mentoring programs should pay close attention to this finding. In addition, individuals seeking natural mentoring relationships would benefit from having more than one mentor. Fourth, all mentoring relationships should be approached from an emic yet fluid perspective and assume that they all have unique dynamics and individual nuances. Finally, while there is an overwhelming need for mentors in multiple areas of a person's life, participants perceive that mentoring during transitions could be the most impactful.

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Appendix A

Initial invitation to participants

SUBJECT: Northern Star Mentoring Program alum request

Dear Northern Star Mentoring Program alum,

My name is Abdul M. Omari and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota in comparative and international development education. I was a Northern Star Mentoring Program initiate in 2003-2004 and had a valuable experience with Northern Star Mentoring Program. I received your contact information from the Northern Star Mentoring Program coordinator and I'm hoping that you would participate in my dissertation study about mentoring relationships. Your participation would consist of one face-to-face interview and the potential for short follow up discussions.

Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating and feel free to email or call me with any questions at [researcher contact information].

Best,

abdul

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Abdul M. Omari, MPP
PhD Candidate – College of Education and Human Development
Instructor – University of Minnesota
Board of Regents – University of Minnesota
Board of Directors – Red Cross
Founder – AMO Enterprise

Appendix B

Interview Protocol – Mentees

African American and West African males' perceptions of mentoring:

Exploring the role of Cultural Intelligence

1. What made you interested in having a mentor and particularly being in ROP?
    a. What challenges were you facing?
    b. How did ROP help with those challenges, if at all?
2. Tell me about your experience(s) as a mentee. Help me distinguish if you've been a mentee before ROP.
3. What is your definition of mentoring?
    a. Subsequently: Tell me about a time when your mentoring relationship changed your actions.
4. How does mentoring work?
    a. From start to finish - What's the process?
    b. How do you know mentoring is happening?
5. How would you describe a good mentor? A bad mentor?
6. What role should you as a unique individual play in a mentoring relationship?
    a. Cultural knowledge is important… I think mentors and people in relationships should discern cultural knowledge and then decide what to with it. What do you think about that?
    b. How should cultural knowledge impact actions in the mentoring relationship?
    c. i.e. Your race, age, socio-economic status, experiences, traveling, etc.
7. What experiences as a mentee stick out to you the most?
8. What reflections do you have as a mentee in the ROP program?
    a. What about ROP was meaningful?
9. What was the matching process like for you?
    a. How would you suggest creating a matching process?
    b. Did sameness play a role in your relationship? Explain.
    c. Did difference play a role in your relationship? Explain.
10. How do you think mentoring should happen for different ethnicities?
    a. For example, West African and African Americans
11. If you were to create your own mentoring program how would it look?
    a. What essential components would you include?
    b. Does a relationship with a mentor reflect or impact your educational goals and motivation?
    c. Given your experience, should mentoring happen along the education journey?
12. Given your reflections about mentoring tell me about your experience(s) as a mentor.

Appendix C

Interview Protocol – Mentors

African American and West African males' perceptions of mentoring:

Exploring the role of Cultural Intelligence

1. What made you interested in being a mentor and particularly being in ROP?
2. Tell me about your experience(s) as a mentor.
3. What is your definition of mentoring?
4. How does mentoring work?
    a. From start to finish - What's the process?
    b. How do you know mentoring is happening?
5. What made you interested in becoming a mentor?
6. How do you approach mentoring?
    a. Is it situational?
    b. Please give a few examples.
7. If you were to create your own mentoring program what essential components would you include?
    a. Ages, race, gender, meeting frequency, recruitment, training, etc.
8. How do your life experiences (Your race, age, socio-economic status, experiences, traveling, etc.) inform your mentoring approach?
    a. Please provide an example(s).
9. What is the best part about being a mentor?
10. What reflections do you have as a mentor in the ROP program?
    a. What about ROP was meaningful?
11. What role should you as a unique individual play in a mentoring relationship?
    a. Cultural knowledge is important… I think mentors and people in relationships should discern cultural knowledge and then decide what to with it. What do you think about that?
    b. How should cultural knowledge impact actions in the mentoring relationship?
    c. i.e. Your race, age, socio-economic status, experiences, traveling, etc.
12. What other reflections do you have about the ROP program?
13. What was the matching process like for you?
    a. How would you suggest creating a matching process?
    b. Did sameness play a role in your relationship? Explain.
    c. Did difference play a role in your relationship? Explain.
14. How do you think mentoring should happen for different ethnicities?
    a. For example, West African and African Americans
15. Tell me about your experience(s) as a mentee.
    a. Subsequently: Tell me about a time when your mentoring relationship changed your actions.

Appendix D

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

African American and West African males' perceptions of mentoring:
Exploring the role of Cultural Intelligence

You have volunteered to participate in an interview exploring the perceptions of mentoring for past participants of the Rites of Passage program. You have been selected because you were formerly a mentee in the Rites of Passage program.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before participating in the study.

This study is being conducted by Abdul M. Omari, PhD Candidate, Comparative and International Development Education, Department of Organizational, Leadership, Policy, & Development, University of Minnesota.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study to discover the perceptions of mentoring relationships for past participants in a mentoring program.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate in this study I will ask of the following: participate in this interview lasting up to 90 minutes; and to be available throughout the research process so that I can contact you to ensure that the information you shared has been interpreted and analyzed accurately.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that might be published, identifiable information will not be included. I will maintain sole access and confidentiality of all audio or video recordings. Research records will be stored securely and only I will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Rites of Passage. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without personal impact on you.

Risks and Benefits:
There are no known risks or direct benefits from participating in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Abdul M. Omari. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me at: 126 Coffman Memorial Union 300 Washington Avenue SE Minneapolis,

MN 55455, [researcher contact information] or contact Dr. Michael Goh at [adviser contact information].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed name_____

Signature_____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator_____ Date: _____