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A Study of Mentors' Perception and Level of Satisfaction with Elements of Effective Practices within Girl Mentoring Programs

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORK

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A STUDY OF MENTORS' PERCEPTION AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AMONG GIRL MENTORING PROGRAMS

Committee Chair: Roslyn Harper, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2017

This study examines mentors' perspective and level of satisfaction with the elements of effective practices among girl mentoring programs in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. The sample consisted of mentors who served at-risk girls. The variables analyzed included the following: recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring, support, and closure. Explanatory design was used to generate the study and the purposive and snowball sampling was utilized to gather the analysis. A total of 125 respondents participated in the study. The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that mentors are overall satisfied with their experience with mentoring girls. Among the best practice elements the screening, matching, and monitoring and support were the greatest predictors of mentor satisfaction.

A STUDY OF MENTORS' PERCEPTION AND LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AMONG GIRLS MENTORING PROGRAMS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

GABRIELLE F. STARR

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR. SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Show me a successful individual and I'll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don't care what you do for a living—if you do it well—I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing you the way.

— Denzel Washington, *Guideposts*

In the above epigraph, Denzel Washington shares his perspective on success and offers comments that can be read as a kind of roadmap to achievement. In almost every way, his remarks are rooted in notions that are fundamentally philosophical, although they may not initially appear as such. Washington's commentary infers that one cannot achieve success in isolation. In this way, his comments are akin to the wisdom one finds in the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child," which emphasizes the sort of communitarianism that is requisite for success.

Throughout the life of a child, parents have the responsibility of caring, nurturing, and teaching their children how to be productive and successful individuals. However, each child's future successes, regardless of the healthy relationships he or she might be able to develop with his parents (Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, & Lewis, 2011), depends on the interactions forged with individuals outside of his or her immediate

Research indicates that, although a parent might be capable of providing a child's most essential needs, the child is emotionally best served when he or she can create additional relationships with mature adults who care for him (Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, & Lewis, 2011). Many political figures understand the import of such relationships and have tried to encourage this rather collaborative approach to child rearing.

President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Colin Powell created a national mentoring program in 1997 to encourage American citizens to offer their time to mentor at-risk youth. Other efforts include President George W. Bush's solicitation of volunteers to become involved in the lives of children by mentoring (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002). These presidents and political figures understood the social utility of communal children rearing. Much like the previously described African proverb, these individuals, by encouraging mentorship in America, realized that it takes a village to raise a healthy child.

Youth are in critical need of intervention methods due to delinquent behaviors and unhealthy decision making, especially young people in urban environments. Particularly, girls within these environments are in dire need of positive role models to aid in the creation of young women who might make a lasting contribution to their communities and the world. Many girls face an astronomical number of adversities and are increasingly becoming the victims of shame and embarrassment because of pernicious decisions. Unfortunately, these girls are engaging in sexual activities to validate their

self-worth. The extreme but not unusual consequences to these activities include human trafficking, teen pregnancy, gang involvement, and domestic violence.

Today, the experiences urban girls undergo are overwhelming and cause unfortunate issues that reinforce the need for supportive mentors. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (2009), 1 of every 7 victims of domestic violence is young girls under the age of 18. During the 1990s, an influx of juvenile crimes sparked noteworthy attention throughout the United States. Sadly, girls accounted for 30% of these juvenile arrests (Chiancone, Hawkins, Whitworth, & Zain, 2008). Indeed, these are alarming statistics.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2013), 1 out of 4 teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease and 23% of females, who experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking experienced it between the ages of 11 and 17. Additionally, the common age of entry into commercial sexual exploitation in the United States is 12–14 years old. Females account for 85% of these sexually exploited youth. As a result of these privations, girls are sometimes taken advantage of, and become involved in dangerous situations.

Interventions could increase the safety and encourage healthier behaviors and lifestyles for these young women. There is a vital need for support systems to challenge the difficulties girls face. Mentoring can provide an essential support system for these girls and allow them to open up and obtain support through available resources that will accommodate their future needs. Mentoring provides a way for youth to enhance skills,

knowledge, and inspiration as they shift into adulthood (Moccia, Schumaker, Hazel, Vernon, & Deshler, 1989).

There are variations of the term mentoring, and it is described in many ways. According to Jean Rhodes (2008), mentoring includes a connection between an adult with more insight and experience and a younger person in need of ongoing support, inspiration, and coaching to improve morale. In “Elements of Effective Practices,” mentoring is described as a “structured one-to- one relationship that focuses on the needs of mentees and encourages them to meet their full potential” (Bordon, 2009, p. 2). Based on studies provided by MENTOR, the national partnership for mentoring, there is approximately three million youth in formal one –to- one mentoring relationship in the United States. Mentoring is an innovative approach to building a continuum of support and encouragement for children who are the most vulnerable.

Mentoring has such a rich and creative history. According to DuBois and Rhodes (2006), over a century ago, juvenile court systems structured programs to intervene and provide opportunities for delinquent youth. Due to the judicial system’s on-going commitment to the reformation of delinquent youth, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS), which is one of the most recognized mentoring programs in the country, was developed. Big Brothers Big Sisters began in 1904 catering to business professionals, community advocates, and philanthropist who committed their time to youth involved in the juvenile court system in New York City (Blakeslee & Keller, 2012).

According to Blakeslee and Keller (2012), Big Brothers Big Sisters has made incredible strides since its inception. The movement includes more than 375 agencies that

reach nearly 210,000 at-risk youth in diverse communities. Many of these vulnerable youth experience living in impoverished communities, have incarcerated parents, undergo foster care involvement, are teen parents, endure developmental disabilities, and face the risk of academic failure.

Positive relationships evolve from mentoring and have great influence on the growth and development of youth. They provide a significant approach that meets the needs of at-risk youth in order to model a life of success and achievement. Youth who participate in mentoring as teenagers demonstrate higher productivity by graduating high school, attending college, entering the workforce, and increasing their self-worth and value. Also, they decrease explosive behaviors such as fighting and gang affiliation (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention indicated that mentoring reduces the hazards at-risk youth face every day. Research conducted in a study by Big Brothers Big Sisters indicated that 86% of mentored youth are more likely to attend college and pursue post-secondary options. Also, research indicated students who met regularly with their mentors were 52% less likely than their peers to skip school (Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013).

Mentoring has made a broad impact since its humble beginnings and continues to expand in efforts. The majority of mentoring studies focus on the participant's advancement and measurable outcomes. Research shows youth who participate in mentoring relationships experience a number of positive advantages. These benefits include better attendance and attitude toward school, less drug and alcohol use, improved

social attitudes and relationships, and more trusting relationships (Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013).

In 1995, studies were conducted regarding the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program which suggested favorable results such as improved school attendance and functioning, enhanced relationships with parents and friends, and a decrease in substance use (Tiemey & Grossman, 1995). Later research identified other positive results regarding youth safety and social connectedness (Jekielek et al., 2002). Youth testaments revealed progression in confidence, success in school, better relationships with parents and peers and greater motivation to attend school after participating in mentoring programs (Cavell et al., 2009).

Throughout this research, the efficacy of mentoring programs and the effective elements of mentoring practices will be discussed. This discussion produces a guide, which was adopted by a study conducted by MENTOR, intended as a criterion for evaluating mentor programs. The purpose of this discussion is to explicate the trajectory and sustainability of mentoring programs for girls in metropolitan, Atlanta, Georgia. It is vital to understand the efficacy of such programs, especially since their effectiveness contributes to the health of young girls in this community. Understanding the demands and necessities in implementing mentoring programs will continue the success and expansion of mentoring programs universally.

Statement of the Problem

While there is significant research focusing on the success of mentoring programs, there are significant gaps that have been identified that lead to the failure of

meeting the needs of the youth. If proper strategies are in place to guide the mentoring programs and identify best practices, more resources would be available for use to enhance mentoring programs overall.

There are countless issues regarding mentoring practices and mentors perception level. One problem regarding effective mentoring is the lack of available mentors. There are currently 9 million youth in the United States without a mentor (MENTOR, 2017). There is a dearth of information regarding the availability of mentors. Mentor recruitment can be very challenging but retaining volunteers can be very problematic as well. In a survey involving Big Brothers Big Sisters, 11% of the respondents reported interest in volunteering and 42% indicated they would be willing to mentor at a later date. Within the same study, it was concluded that only 43% of the likely volunteers actually completed the application and screening process. Of the same group, less than half formulated a relationship and was matched with a child (Garringer, 2006).

For individuals who actually complete the process of becoming mentors, there are undeniable rewards that come along with the deed. However, once a relationship ends abruptly, it could potentially cause toxic harm and detrimental effects on the mentee (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Best practices affirm and support the understanding that mentors should make a minimum of a one-year commitment to the mentee and a relationship should not begin until this is guaranteed (Garringer, 2006).

Another problem mentor's face is not being fully cognizant of the potential behavioral and emotional extremities involving the participating youth. Prospective mentors are not provided with the reality that mentoring can bring about evident

challenges. Researchers such as Jean Rhodes, suggested a blended approach, giving potential mentors the full scope of advantages and disadvantages to prevent any misinterpretation of the experience (Garringer, 2006).

Furthermore, mentors lack knowledge of the agencies process and infrastructure. Leadership, administration and personnel play a vital role in the orientation and longevity of mentoring relationships. Whether the organization is recently established or more experienced, there are additional goals that must be addressed in order for mentoring to operate efficiently. When certain measures are not in place, it creates challenges in the overall success of the organization and relationship (Cerpas & Portfolio, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the mentors' perception and level of satisfaction with effective practices among girl mentoring programs. Evaluating these influences allowed one to understand the significance of mentoring programs and determine if the outcomes are valid based on the perception of the participating mentor. This study also contributed to youth mentoring literature.

The standards used to assess the best practices among mentoring programs was adopted from a study provided by MENTOR entitled *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™*. There are six standards which depicted the foundation of designing and maintaining quality youth mentoring programs with current mentoring research and trends (MENTOR, 2015). For purposes of this study, the mentors' level of satisfaction and perception of the program were assessed to determine if there were particular variables in place such as recruitment, screening, training, matching and initiating,

monitoring and support, and closure. The participants in this study are adult mentors who currently participate in formal mentoring programs for girls.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions (RQ) of this study are as follow:

- RQ1: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the recruitment process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?
- RQ2: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the screening process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?
- RQ3: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of training and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?
- RQ4: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the matching and initiation process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?
- RQ5: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the monitoring and support process and their level of satisfaction with the program?
- RQ6: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the closure process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

As a result of these questions, this study tested the following hypotheses (Ho).

- Ho1: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the recruitment process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

- Ho2: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the screening process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.
- Ho3: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the training and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.
- Ho4: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the matching and initiation process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.
- Ho5: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the monitoring and support process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.
- Ho6: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the closure process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

Significance of the Study

This study was essential to the development of youth mentoring research and social work knowledge in many ways. This study sought to expand the capacity of program success by identifying the critical elements of effective mentoring practices. Determining the effectiveness of mentoring programs could enhance the potential for recruitment and retaining additional mentors, collaboration, and an overall standard of best practices implemented within all programs. The findings from the study will potentially enhance funding opportunities, create awareness of mentoring and its benefits, establish affordable solution focused training, and augment the quality of services for

participants and staff. This information is vital to the sustainability and longevity of mentoring programs universally.

This study also sought to expand social workers knowledge regarding practice and policy. Social workers can advocate for favorable policies that support mentoring efforts and provide proven strategies to build capacity, obtain funding, and accommodate youth within the juvenile detention or school system. The evidence-based framework is substantial to cater to the different trends and demands for this specific population.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The available literature offers a cogent argument regarding the necessity of mentoring programs in America and an understanding of the scope of such programs. This literature review provides a discussion of the literature's most influential arguments. It focuses on the history of mentoring, the relationship of mentoring to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the various types of mentoring models and settings, the strengths and challenges of such models and settings, and the elements of effective practices of mentoring programs. This literature review also explores essential stratagems employed by mentoring programs to encourage sustainability and success.

This literature explored the aforementioned topics related to mentoring programs by using a number of theoretical frameworks. To begin with, this dissertation utilizes Social Learning Theory in order to ascertain the degree to which mentors gain satisfaction from the mentoring experience and how this theoretical basis guides practice. Additionally, this dissertation employs an Afrocentric Perspective in order to make certain conclusions about mentors' perception and level of satisfaction regarding mentoring. Empowerment Theory and Strengths Perspective are two other theories which form the theoretical grounding for this dissertation's discussion of mentoring.

Historical Perspective of Mentoring

Mentoring has a few variations and the definition has developed throughout the years. According to Dubois and Karcher (2005), mentoring is portrayed as a relationship sustained and developed between a more youthful individual and a more developed, sharp individual driving them to accomplishment through direction and support. Rhodes and Dubois (2008) later developed the importance of mentoring including an association between a more seasoned adult and child giving consistent guidance, preparation, and consultation from the adult to improve the demeanor of the child. The definitions appear to be the same yet researchers plan to be more particular and purposeful in the importance.

Another researcher compared the concept of mentoring as an illustration described through the story of Homer's *Odyssey*. The story depicts the king of Ithaca having to leave and fight in a war. As a result, he has to leave his son, Telemachus, with a friend by the name of Mentor, who is responsible for caring and nurturing him. Based on the outcome of the relationship the term *mentor* is signified as a confidante, trusted adult, teacher, and counselor (Gordon, 1997).

According to Gordon (1997), other historical examples of mentoring exist in relationships with others such as Socrates and Plato, Hayden and Beethoven, and Freud and Jung. Through these relationships, it is noted how one individual has significant influence and persuasion over others by simply giving of their time and effort in the development of others.

Beyond establishing the meaning, the concept of mentoring has a very extensive and progressive foundation. Dating back to the late 1800s, mentoring was a form of intervention utilized by probation officers to impact the lives of youth instead of having them arrested. Chicago represented the first city to implement this strategy in juvenile court for youth offenders charged with illegal crimes. This concept provided alternatives that would change behaviors long-term (Blakeslee & Keller, 2012).

According to Mahini (2000), for the research, 30 states adopted the same model over the next ten years which influenced legislatures that youth should not be sentenced to the same punishment as adults. The study stated if youth were faced with the same level of judgment, youth would become hardened and tough. Therefore, reformers advocated for an unconventional juvenile justice system for the youth. However, by 1925, juvenile courts existed throughout all but two states in the country.

As the impact increased, the federal government observed the approach and decided the same concept would benefit youth who disobey federal law. Congress realized the alternative of rehabilitation was advantageous for youth committing federal crimes and as a result in 1932 authorized United States attorneys to relinquish federal suits against juveniles (Mody, 2009).

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

At the start of juvenile justice reform, adolescents were the victim of severe reprimand and punishment. Youth offenders were tried as adults in various circumstances. Law enforcement sought to summon juveniles with the same charges as adults (Pasko, 2010). Unfortunately, there was youth who were falsely accused of crimes

they did not commit and forced to serve years in jail. Berkovich (2015) indicated youth were forced to confess to egregious crimes. In New York, for example, five juveniles were arrested for beating a woman and charged with rape, attempted murder, and assault. Due to the parents or attorneys not being present after hours of interviews, the youth admitted to the crimes. After serving six years, the youth were released from prison only after DNA results confirmed they were not criminals.

In the 1800s, a rise in poverty became the norm, and youth was living in such conditions were often led into criminal behavior. The delinquent behavior continued despite the level of retribution (Pasko, 2010). A huge quest was developed to detach youth offenders and separate them from the adult population and prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors. Several individuals, particularly women of high prestige and honor, were asked by the courts to formulate groups to seek out any abnormal behaviors in the community. As a result, girls who were identified as having very promiscuous behaviors were institutionalized more than boys.

Pasko (2010) indicated girls were treated differently regarding accusations in the judicial system. Established in 1899, the first juvenile court defined delinquent as an individual, under the age of 16 years old, who infringed the law. When applied to females who infringed the law, the court's language was altered and included terms of hopelessness related to female offenders. According to Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, and Rosenbaum (2002), girls were primarily unnoticed and often only recognized as having demeaning behaviors that needed rectifying by the court. This legal distinction between male offenders and female ones were in keeping with the court's thoughts of separating

youth from the adults. In other words, this separation was in line with the court's general separation of offender populations by gender and age.

According to Shubik and Kendall (2007), preventive measures such as rehabilitation established exclusive formalities for juvenile delinquents to enhance their lifestyles and change negative behaviors. As a result, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) was instituted in 1974. The JJDP created a policy that allowed underage offenders to participate in prevention programs that would enhance their behavior and skill set.

Shubik and Kendall (2007) additionally noticed a distinction between youth with lesser allegations compared to those with extreme criminal behaviors. Adolescents were termed "status offenders" being charged with crimes such as truancy and runaway. Unfortunately, numerous states institutionalized these youth causing an astonishing number of youth being arrested. While being incarcerated these youth were housed with more criminalized offenders. The JJDP concluded there was an issue and found a less costly approach to intervene by providing programs for the youth instead of detainment.

As indicated by Shubik and Kendall (2007), there were a few who challenged the JJDP of 1974 passing. In 1980, this Act was changed by judges because of guilty parties persistently rehashing the same unlawful act and made it appear that the model was ineffectual. Rivals contended the demonstration infers adolescents who are guilty are better able to settle on choices with respect to their best interest instead of the court. As a result, it appears as if the youth persistently spurn the legal framework. The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act was updated due to these observations.

There has been a significant improvement in the lives of youth through mentoring as a result of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (2010), mentoring helps prevent at-risk students from engaging in harmful activities and redirects the lives of those already involved in criminal activity. Mentoring connections have positive outcomes that have improved the youth overall regarding self-worth, scholarship, and conduct.

According to Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, and Rosenbaum (2002), federal dollars increased for local and state initiatives to provide services for at-risk girls in 1992. The Bureau of Justice Assistance provided funding for gender-based programs within several states. Unfortunately, many states did not take advantage of the opportunity; therefore, reducing the potential impact. National efforts determined the need for revision of the JJDP A to target states to assess the gaps and vulnerabilities within gender specific programs fully.

In 1992 the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 was amended and included the following language:

To develop and adopt policies to prohibit gender bias in placement and treatment and establishing programs to ensure female youth have access to the full range of health and mental health services, treatment for physical or sexual assault and abuse, self-defense instruction, education parenting education in general, and other training and vocational services. (Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, & Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 39)

This amendment mandated any state requesting federal funding must adhere to the guidelines to address any insufficiencies in services and develop a proper a plan of action for gender-based programs (Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, & Rosenbaum, 2002).

The Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention Act continues to develop as current programs, and research is evaluated. It serves a valuable purpose as it continues to generate funding for prevention work. According to Barnes, Miller, and McKinnon (2012), the U.S. Department of Justice has made a long-term agreement to expand the foundation of youth mentoring toward strengthening evidence-based practices as a major form of delinquency prevention and reduction. In 2010, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention recompensed approximately \$100 million in youth mentoring funds to bolster national and community programs directly serving at-risk students through mentoring and enabling other organizations to build capacity, provide training, and oversee the participants (OJJDP, 2010).

Mentoring Program Models

As the quantity of children engaging in negligent behavior rises so does the need for more innovative encounters to address them. Children are not equipped with proper role models, and the need for mentoring programs is critical. The idea of mentoring incorporates various definitions and implications. For example, youth mentoring programs promote positive relationships (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima 2004).

Current literature depicts a number of mentoring relationships, such as customary or formal mentors and natural mentors. Natural mentoring relationships begin genuinely without matches being created by formal partnerships such as community organizations,

faith-based groups, schools or any other entities. The relationship develops innately but has significant influences on youth over time (Ahrens, DuBois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano, 2008; Munson & McMillen, 2008).

According to McDonald and Lambert (2014), studies suggest 80% of youth have encountered a natural mentor that has made a significant transformation in their life. The relationships evolved in various settings and at significant times in their lives. The impact resulted in positive outcomes which allowed youth to redirect negative behaviors and even gain access to employment opportunities for the future.

Researchers Munson, Smalling, Spencer, Scott, and Tracy (2010) asked 189 foster care youth transitioning out of the child welfare system to describe the nature of their relationship with natural mentors during their time. The youth reported the overall relationship being effective. Youth responses indicated mentors being approachable and understanding. The mentors were also described as being reliable, loyal, and trustworthy.

Furthermore, the authors discovered most youth met their mentors through governmental agencies, schools, and mental health facilities. Positive characteristics of mentors and components of the relationship within these studies, the nature of the relationship was analyzed (Munson, Smalling, Spencer, Scott, & Tracy, 2010).

Other studies suggest natural mentoring research limited in educational advancement specifically in the Latino community. The U.S. Department of Education indicated Latino youth have the highest dropout rate in the country compared to other ethnicities. Few studies indicate if mentoring relationships are advantageous in their

educational endeavors and the overall quality of the relationship making a difference in the life of the youth is not determined (Sánchez, Esparza, & Colón, 2008).

According to Sánchez, Esparza, and Colón (2008), more emphasis should be placed on educational outcomes since several mentoring programs are developed specifically to improve grades and prevent dropout. Unfortunately, there are limited gaps in the information in the Hispanic population determining if mentoring actually works. Other studies prove adolescents with natural mentors were more likely to complete high school and attend college compared to youth who do not have a mentor. Limited data are determined in the Latino community.

In contrast, according to Barnes, Miller, and McKinnon (2012), mentoring relationships can be more structured and formal as a result of being organized through actual agencies versus informal connections where the relationship organically develops. An example would consist of a coach and athlete or teacher and student. A reputable organization known as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS) is a formal mentoring program founded in New York City in 1904. The purpose was to solicit professionals, philanthropists, and community leaders to serve as volunteers for the youth engaged in the criminal justice system.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), is the largest example of a formal mentoring program in the United States which pair youth with other mentoring agencies. Other programs with similar concepts pattern themselves after this established organization. An expansion of similar programs has evolved over the past decade to

address issues for at risk youth. Approximately three million youth are in formal one-to-one mentoring relationships in the country (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awards as much as \$2 million for programs of this magnitude. For example, the Multi-State Mentoring Initiative provides funding for organizations currently operating student mentoring programs to expand or enhance the capacity of their initiatives. These initiatives strive to reduce student delinquency and gang participation, improve academic performance, and reduce school dropout rates (OJJDP, 2010). According to The National Mentoring Partnership listing, there are more than 5,000 mentoring programs existing serving approximately three million youth (Blakeslee & Keller, 2012).

A variety of other mentoring programs exist, including Mentoring Children of Prisoners and Amachi. Amachi was founded in Philadelphia as a partnership between BBBS and faith-based organizations specifically targeting youth whose parents were incarcerated. The program was developed in 2000 and today approximately 350 Amachi mentoring programs across the United States exist, serving more than 300,000 youth. Research evaluations of Amachi found participating youth who were involved 12 months or longer were more secure in their academics with grades and attendance and several mentees reduced substance use (Matz, 2014).

According to Matz (2014), several other programs have existed of this type. For example, Adoption and Foster Care Mentoring in Boston, Mentoring USA in New York City, and The National Foster Care Coalition. The National Foster Care Coalition

promotes a peer mentoring program, called Fostering Healthy Connections, where an older adult who is a former foster youth is matched with a youth currently in foster care.

Other forms of mentoring models exist including one- to -one, group, team, peer, and electronic mentoring. One-to-One mentoring is the most traditional model found and was birthed under the Big Brothers Big Sisters movement. The standard allows for adults to meet with their mentees weekly in the school setting and up to four weeks in the community. A substantial number of similar sites have imitated this model with success (Moodie & Fisher, 2009).

Another mentoring type that exists is called group mentoring. Group mentoring allows two or more youth in a small setting to participate with one mentor. Herrera, Vang, and Gale (2002) conducted a study of three group mentoring programs and found the average number of participating youth is 10 per group. Group mentors meet on an average of 21 hours throughout the month most regularly in a school setting. It is noted that the typical mentor within this model are low-income African-American women.

Research suggests smaller groups settings are more beneficial than larger groups because it allows a more intimate rapport (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002). MENTOR (2009) indicated groups with four youth or less paired with one mentor are more successful in community settings and groups of five or more youth paired with one mentor are primarily successful in enhancing socialization skills. Team mentoring is another model derived from group mentoring. It involves mentors who work collectively to meet the needs of youth.

Even though there are advantages to this model, there are critics who disagree with the concept. Challengers question if group mentoring constitutes for actual mentoring compared to the one-to-one model. It appears as if lasting relationships are not developed due to being surrounded by others involved. Some also believe this concept does not work due to the fact that youth can be influence and impacted by other mentees in a negative manner (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002).

According to MENTOR (2009), researchers suggest peer mentoring as favorable as it allows individuals within the same age range or who show common characteristics to connect and build a relationship. Peer mentoring works well in school settings and has the capacity to strengthen academic performance. Tutoring is also a component within peer mentoring which gives incentives for the mentee such as extra credit and service learning hours.

A study was conducted in Australia indicating the need for universities to establish peer mentoring programs. James Cook University founded a peer mentoring program in 1991 which assisted non-traditional students with adjustment in school after not attending is several years. Findings suggested an increase in academic performance, university retention, and graduation (Treston, 1999).

The most recent form of mentoring is electronic mentoring or e-mentoring. E-mentoring allows for correspondence through email. Many suggest e-mentoring diminishes the nature of the relationship since there is no face-to-face contact. However, there are advantages to this method of mentoring. E-mentoring considers the convenience of both the mentee and mentor. This approach works best with youth who

have experienced living with a disability. Mentees are not obliged to share any barriers and can freely express themselves without any feelings of shame or embarrassment (Shpigelman, Reiter, & Weiss, 2008).

Mentoring Program Settings

Based on the establishment of several formal mentoring programs being developed, it became vital to note how the organizations were structured. The traditional mentoring approach commonly reported in the literature involves formally connecting a youth and an older adult who meet on a regular basis. The outline of the mentoring approach varies as to who it serves, however these interventions have to be classified either as a school-based or community-based mentoring program according to where services are delivered from (Collins, Smashnaya, Spencer, & Ward, 2010).

Researchers distinguish the two in order to understand clearly the purpose of community-based or school-based programs. Community-based programs tend to concentrate extensively on psychological, socialization, and personality improvement results. School based mentoring programs are geared towards enhancing grades, school participation and conduct, passion for learning, and pursuits for secondary education (Rhodes, 2008).

According to Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, and Rhodes (2012), approximately 15 years ago school-based mentoring programs were nearly non-existent; however, over 50% of mentoring programs collaborate with the school systems now. In contrast, traditional community-based mentoring primarily happens within the neighborhood throughout the year. Within the school systems, there is more diversity pertaining to

mentors and volunteers as compared to community based. The objectives of the two may differentiate but there is evidence if conducted with fidelity, the programs will become successful. Best practices indicate a blend of both settings can deliver change (Anastasia, Skinner, & Mundhenk, 2012).

According to McQuillin, Smith, and Strait (2011), school-based mentoring programs represent the nation's largest collaboration of mentoring relationships and signifies an important distinction between community-based mentoring. On average, mentors within a school-based program meet approximately 1 hour a week with the mentor and within community-based programs, participants can spend up to 4 hours per week meeting with their mentees. Structured exercises and activities within the school are restricted by the duration of time and the physical limitations of the setting. Additionally, associated with community-based mentoring, the length of the relationship in school-based mentoring is reduced according to the school calendar year.

School-based mentoring programs developed in the 1980s when continued support was needed for youth who struggled with academic achievement. In school-based mentoring programs, students were referred by teachers and counselors because of behavioral problems which affected their coursework. School-based mentoring programs make up approximately 70% of formal mentoring programs in the country (Randolph & Johnson, 2008).

Many school based mentoring programs are able to take advantage of having access to employees within the school such as paraprofessionals. Paraprofessionals are individuals with limited postsecondary training or education in the teaching profession

who can serve as mentors. Studies indicate this act as being beneficial as programs rely on educators. As a result, it exposes more youth to mentoring services in one setting (McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011).

According to McQuillin, Smith, and Strait (2011), there were two meta-analyses of mentoring programs including 55 studies evaluated by Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper in 2002. The studies were sampled from academic, career and youth mentoring. Dubois found that youth mentoring generally resulted in small effects. However, the study also revealed those mentoring programs that depended on evidence based models had greater impact.

Critics indicated even though much commentary has been delivered concerning school based mentoring programs there is little research on best practices. A small amount of literature exists on the effectiveness of this specific type of program. Three peer review studies were experimentally examined with paraprofessionals within school-based mentoring programs. Overall, the conclusion of the matter highlighted the same response as the previous study conducted by Dubois. The effects were small and no vital impact was made in regard to self-worth, changed attitude toward community, education or setting goals (McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011).

According to McQuillin, Smith, and Strait (2011), the studies on school-based mentoring concluded that the impact of this approach is relatively small. Effectiveness is limited in order to promote change in the life of a child. In order for this model to be effective within the school system and rid potential threats, school-based mentoring must be thoroughly assessed and proven.

Additionally when implementing school-based mentoring programs with evidence based practices and fidelity, it is important to expound on positive outcomes as well. Mentoring is often associated with a term called, “school connectedness.” School connectedness illustrates a student’s motivation and thoughts regarding school and how well they respond to the school such as with the environment, relationships with others, and the motivation to continue (McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011).

Research suggests that school connectedness is an invaluable tool in determining the effectiveness of school mentoring and should be utilized. The term has been linked to behaviors. For example, if youth are affiliated with bullying, substance abuse, and defiant behaviors there may be a small level of school connectedness. If positive behaviors are mimicked there is a higher level of connectedness exhibited (McQuillin, Smith, & Strait, 2011).

School-based mentoring programs seem to have made significant progress, however research studies show they are less effective pertaining to issues with substance abuse amongst adolescents. It appears substance abuse treatment needs various components to offer treatment for clients including other community-based initiatives. School-based and community-based programs have collaborated and formulated partnerships to undergo substance abuse treatment and other issues youth face (Adelman & Taylor, 2003).

The outcomes of this intervention range from reducing truancy and dropout to changing the mindset of youth regarding grades, behaviors and motivation. However, research studies indicate there are no true results as it pertains to this method actually

working. There is more of an impact from mentoring regarding student attitudes, school engagement, school-related behavior problems, and attendance (Converse & Lignugaris-Kraft, 2009).

Strengths of Mentoring

The impact of mentoring has become very popular and prevalent over recent years. Mentors are friends, teachers, and role models. They open doors of opportunity, convey values, and help provide the stability and encouragement that young people need to be successful. By spending time with a child and showing compassion and guidance, a mentor can profoundly affect a young life (Sipe, 2002).

There is a substantial amount of research found regarding the benefits of participating in mentoring programs. Results concluded from evaluations indicate mentoring programs provide evidence of positive influences on adolescent developmental abilities and improvement in academic achievement. It is also found that adolescents who have an adult mentor are far less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors (Sipe, 2002).

According to de Anda (2001), there are approximately five million youth that are involved in school-and community-based volunteer mentoring programs across the United States. Providentially, programs are designed to target at-risk youth in the effort to bring about change in their behavior patterns.

Formal youth mentoring programs have been distinguished as a vital social intervention for supporting at-risk youth. Youth who participate in these programs have increased scholastic accomplishments, reduction in truancy, positive cognitive thinking, healthy relationships, decrease in substance abuse, less aggressive behaviors and

improved relationships with parents. It has also been noted mentoring programs are effective due to providing continuous support and training to mentors, including a holistic approach involving parents and having a proven systemic framework (Farruggia, Bullen, Solomon, Collins, & Dunphy, 2011). Mentoring relationships create continuing cycles of hope and promise. Not only do mentoring programs provide positive influences for individual children, but also strengthen families and communities as a whole (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002).

According to Rhodes (2006), once a bond is formed between a mentor and youth involving trust, empathy and loyalty, the relationship has the potential to excel in the youth's socioemotional, cognitive, and identity development. As a result, there are other relational achievements such as those with parents and friends being strengthened.

According to Grossman and Rhodes (2002), in order for a mentoring relationship to have a lasting effect the relationship has to develop a minimum of six months. Within those months a proper rapport is established and significant results seem to unfold. Within this study those youth paired with a mentor over the course of twelve months had significant improvements in their life within the home, school and relationships.

According to a study by Weiler, Zimmerman, Haddock, and Krafchick (2014), mentoring provides participants with various outlets to create lasting relationships with adults who have committed their time and services to the development of youth. In order for the success of these mentor-mentee relationships to survive, a quest for structured and organized mentoring programs is essential. Findings from a study completed on Mentor Families indicated 95% of the mentoring relationships were sustained through the

program and it appears that the actual program aided in the achievement of the mentoring relationships.

Researchers tend to agree that mentoring creates positive influences on the youth overall. There are healthy developmental outcomes such as role modeling, self-esteem building, conflict resolution, and handling stress. Mentoring alters the sensitivity of relationships with others such as parents and friends. Participating youth are able to have healthy boundaries with themselves and others (Grossman, & Rhodes, 2002).

Challenges of Mentoring

Mentoring relationships are beneficial and growing significantly, unfortunately the sustainability of these relationships are terminating quickly. According to Grossman and Rhodes (2002), nearly half the relationships established through mentoring end within the first several months. There are a number of reasons for this conclusion including vulnerabilities pertaining to youth, lack of positive consistent relationships, and lack of trust between matched participants.

Best practices can serve to build the rate of achievement in formal mentoring programs and can diminish negative effects, for example, early relationship dissolution. Regardless of the termination, the youth may feel as if it is their fault and it was intentional. If this happens, the youth may feel abandoned and become critical of themselves and even blaming themselves for the situation (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Studies show many research methods are biased and lack measurable outcomes proving its effectiveness. While mentoring is implemented with high standards and excellence in delivery, after being reviewed a mixture of erratic studies exists. Reviewing

inclusive studies concurrently make significantly distinctive inferences. An example included a recent review of the same study led researchers to believe positive outcomes stem from that intervention and other researchers' inferred program actually failed participants in service delivery (Rhodes, 2008).

In spite of the long history and broad ubiquity of youth mentoring, generally little has been accessible in theory or research to guide the development of the programmatic framework. Except for a small amount of early research studies, a significant part of the established knowledge in the field was derived from experience guided by those actually working in the program and not objective observation and research. Within the past two decades, a growing number of pragmatic literature has been developed in order to increase comprehension and measurable outcomes (Matz, 2014).

Due to a developing number of scholarly articles and journals appearing, there seems to be a great deal of information provided. However, regardless of the abundance of information, the basis of empirical literature is relatively small. The impact of mentoring strikes passionate senses and feelings but there is limited proof to validate intuitive thoughts (Rhodes, & Lowe, 2008).

According to Dubois (2002), studies indicate mentoring evaluations are one sided and suggested thoughts indicate future research should include more objective information. Examples of objectifying information include tangible records such as arrest records and report or progress reports from a liable source (Converse & Lignugaris-Kraft, 2009).

Prior studies from DuBois and Neville (1997) contended that mentoring programs were limited with time, issue centered instead of solution focused, having a group model versus individual, and being implemented by trained professionals such as clinicians or educators. The authors also argued that well established mentoring programs result in less significance for the average child and not for all children. In addition, poorly designed programs that do not adequately train mentors can be harmful, especially for children who have experienced trauma or abuse.

According to DuBois and Neville (1997), studies show that neither continuous nor delayed connection with a mentor essentially enhances the chances that youth will benefit from the experience. Additionally, DuBois and Neville demonstrated a mentor having an exclusive relationship with a child is only a minute component of a helpful mediation.

Several contenders challenge these arguments by stating that it is not realistic to think that a mentoring program can support all of a child's needs, especially if the child initially comes in with programmatic issues and circumstances. Furthermore these at-risk youth need more counseling and therapeutic intervention from trained professionals opposed to a typical volunteer (Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001).

For example, a program targeting adolescent delinquents indicate mentoring alone may not combat the issue and change the behaviors. Repeated offenders were three times more likely to be arrested than those who had no chronic issues. The discoveries also suggest one-on-one mentoring does not seem to be more beneficial over group mentoring because recidivism is likely to continue to take place in juvenile offenders (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & Mckinnon, 2013).

Mentoring executed autonomously is not as effective as when compared with other treatment modalities. At the point there is joint effort and collaboration with other entities, better results are delivered and significant results introduce preventive measures for juvenile offenders. Further research entails if programs do not have collaboration with other agencies, they actually do more harm to the youth than provide support (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & Mckinnon, 2013).

Regardless of the way evaluations of formal mentoring programs have given proof of accomplishment in various components, these studies still demonstrate there are lingering issues. These studies do not determine legitimacy and effectiveness of the programs. Even if studies are well established, the information does not recommend solid impacts to argue a strong approach in further initiatives (Rhodes, 2008).

Mentoring successes have to be proven through assessments and proper measurements. Success in mentoring relationships is often measured on scales developed by mental health researchers. Generally, a researcher gathers information from a participant in several programs to look at overall improvements in their daily lives. Researchers who reviewed these studies and used this type of expansive evidence base research reasoned that mentoring programs create a scope of positive youth outcomes. However, the lack of clearly defined best practices can lead to irregularity in implementation. Therefore, more understanding is needed for mentoring programs to reach quantifiable results (Rhodes, 2008).

Practices of Mentoring

The term best practice alludes to a successful guide known to be successful in research. Best practices can be embraced to enhance interventions that recognize proven methods that work for a specific group of people with particular concerns. It is important to determine what works and what does not. Utilizing systems that actually work seem to be less expensive and able to address the needs of society (Cheon, 2008).

According to Cheon (2008), strong consideration has been placed on evaluating the effectiveness of mentoring programs by determining the participating youth results. Though this line of examination has given essential data about the capability of mentoring to affect psychosocial and scholastic results, it has failed to provide information concerning the mentoring procedure and what makes viable practice.

According to Deutsch and Spencer (2009), in addition to assessing the quality of the one-to-one relationship between mentor and youth, it is important to consider the quality of the mentoring program in which the relationship started. Unfortunately, a small amount of literature currently has isolated specific mentoring program practices and their effects on youth outcomes.

There is proven evidence suggesting the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. The major practices identified thus far are (a) selecting mentors who have some experience working with youth, (b) having expectations for frequency of contact between mentors and youth, (c) providing ongoing training for mentors, (d) support for parent involvement, (e) providing opportunities for matches to participate in structured activities, (f) using community settings rather than relying solely on in-school contact,

and (g) systematic monitoring of the implementation of program practices. These practices are general enough to be applicable to a wide array of mentoring program models and thus can be used as a standard approach (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

As DuBois and colleagues have shown through their meta-analysis of evaluations of mentoring programs, there is a wide variability in program effectiveness (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). It is critical, therefore, to further define program practices that are most likely to enhance the quality of programs and the relationships within them. This requires both continued research and self-assessment by programs of the quality of services and the influence of these on the relationships embedded within them (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Quality assessment is an important component of mentoring programs, even though it is quite challenging, especially for small programs with limited resources. The movement toward the use of evidence-based practices as a way to improve service quality is affecting how individuals view mentoring programs, particularly as funders who decide how to allocate limited resources (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

According to Deutsch and Spencer (2009), Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is beginning to tackle some of these issues by implementing a national system for tracking and assessing the quality of the relationships formed through participating programs. Developed in consultation with mentoring researchers, this system involves the use of a standard database across all programs, with standardized measures for tracking relationship quality and youth outcomes, in addition to demographics and contacts from all mentors, youth, and staff.

For example, The Young Women Leaders Program, a combined group of one-to-one mentoring programs for girls, uses mid-year focus groups with mentees and observations of mentoring groups to gather information that is delivered to mentors through their ongoing training course. Data are used to help mentors identify their achievements, recognize common failures, and develop tactics for addressing it for future use (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

According to Deutsch and Spencer (2009), small mentoring programs are without the benefit of having program evaluators and researchers present to enhance the quality of their programs. Fortunately, the number of resources to assist programs in this important endeavor is growing. National organizations dedicated to youth mentoring, such as The National Mentoring Partnership and the National Mentoring Center, offer publications and trainings on program evaluation. These resources can help programs develop strategies for assimilating quality assessments into program practices

This system is specifically designed to help mentoring programs collect, track, and analyze data on their program practices (mentor application, screening, and training), the mentoring relationships (frequency of match meetings, assessments of relationship quality), and youth outcomes (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

As indicated by Deutsch and Spencer (2009), the ideal method in establishing best practices is to formulate a written policy and procedures manual to determine the proper protocol of daily operation within a mentoring program. All components should be included regarding recruitment, retention and training so proper delivery is implemented.

In regard to hiring or recruitment, it is vital the mentoring agency promote clear desirable goals in order to function properly regardless if compensation is included. These expectations will allow the mentor to fulfill their obligation without being naive concerning the job description. National criminal background checks are mandatory ensuring safety for all. After a person is hired it is vital ongoing support and training continues to surface (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Evaluation of the mentoring program is critical on an ongoing basis. It allows the organization to identify challenges and barriers. It is also significant in tracking and examining whether the staff is up to date with trainings and developments. The dynamics of the program values and philosophy should be assessed. If administrators develop this best practice, it will allow the organization to flourish and be attentive to details (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Research studies also indicate optimistic outcomes occur when the relationship of the match exceeds one year. It is vital the mentor understands the nature of mentoring and the highly important expectations. Individuals should be aware of various trends, methods and behaviors needed in order for practices to take place. Studies recognize six best practices for individual mentors: (a) training, (b) commitment to the relationship, (c) respect for the mentee's background, (d) respect for the individual, (e) mutual activities, and (f) use of support (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

There are other components that mentoring programs should follow for best practices besides formal training. In order to have successful partnerships healthy relationships are essential. Mentors have to commit to the cause. Dedicated mentors

should have regular encounters with the youth at least once per week over a year's timeframe. This allows for a strong rapport to establish trust and confidence. Lack of commitment can lead to premature closure (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

According to Deutsch and Spencer (2009), research opportunities additionally exist to gauge change in the youth life over the duration of the relationship utilizing pre-post assessments. In the past, more attention has been focused on only desired outcomes but more emphasis should be based on the trust factor. Trust, mutuality, respect, and empathy (TMRE) is vital in the engagement process.

Practitioners and specialists agree that TMRE must be present to accomplish effective results. However, there is hope to utilize TMRE in order to determine the success of the relationship in the future. If TMRE can be established from the beginning it would allow measurable outcomes such as a longing relationship and initial respect and trust which determines the commitment of both individuals (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Deutsch and Spencer (2009) also suggest once a solid relationship is established, it is imperative the mentor becomes culturally competent. It is important to note the youth's diversity, perspectives and cultural background and respect their need for fun and interaction. Mentor respect for the mentee's perspective includes being open to building a relationship and allowing it to grow indirectly without force. This approach works according to best practices.

The ultimate goal of mentoring is achieving successful outcomes for youth. This broad concept of success can be summarized in four major goals: (a) becoming long-term contributing members of society, (b) improving self-worth, (c) increasing potential for

success, and (d) improving communication skills. The mentoring organization should strive to implement these practices in order to reach maximum success (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

According to Anastasia, Skinner, and Mundhenk, (2012), mentoring success can be challenged and debatable. There have been variations of how the relationships and behaviors are measured. An analysis is usually acquired through pre and post evaluations from mentees in various components to determine their overall functioning level. Researchers who examined these studies indicated mentoring programs deliver a productive outcome for the youth. However, the lack of distinctive best practices can prompt irregularity in execution and results.

As a result, clarification of best practices for programs and for mentors is imperative in identifying and achieving positive deliberate results if we are to reach the potential outcomes systematically. Usage of these best practices will enable program administrators to accomplish positive results all the more reliably and will permit change in a more thorough manner (Anastasia, Skinner, & Mundhenk, 2012).

Adhering to these viable best practices for mentoring programs will eventually fortify programs, arrange the foundation for more intense evidenced based curriculum and outcomes, train programs to distinguish crevices in administration, improve implementation strategies and overall provide youth with phenomenal support and resources (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Elements of Effective Practices

Due to the lack of best practices consistently implemented throughout the country, MENTOR and other professionals united and derived several editions to a publication that would guide the framework for effective strategies for mentoring programs to operate. MENTOR's cornerstone publication, the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*[™], details research-informed and practitioner-approved Standards for creating and sustaining quality youth mentoring programs and consequently, impactful mentoring relationships. The fourth edition, released in September 2015, reflects the most up-to-date research, practice, and thinking in the mentoring field (MENTOR, 2015).

The six evidence-based standards are germane within each mentoring program type. Each Standard includes benchmarks to ensure the safety and effectiveness of mentoring relationships, as well as enhancements that may be promising, innovative and useful for programs. Additionally, a Program Planning and Management section offers recommendations for designing, building, and strengthening mentoring programs and services.

The six standards of Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring Programs, as defined by MENTOR (2015), are described as follows:

1. **Recruitment:** Recruitment focuses on recruiting appropriate mentors and mentees, by realistically describing the program's objectives and expected outcomes. Recruitment strategies should build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring, and target mentors and mentees whose skills, backgrounds, and needs best match the goals and structure of the program;

2. **Screening:** Screening focuses on screening prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor; and screening prospective mentees to determine if they have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored. Screening emphasizes keeping participants, especially young people, safe in mentoring relationships;
3. **Training:** Training is essential to the success of a mentoring program. Training focuses on ensuring that prospective mentors, mentees, and their parents or guardians have the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build a safe and effective relationship. Training of mentors, particularly, has documented implications for the length of match relationship as well as both parties' perceptions of the quality of the relationship;
4. **Matching and Initiating:** Matching helps create appropriate mentoring relationships by using strategies most likely to increase the odds that the relationship will be safe and effective. Matching should consider individual characteristics about the mentor and mentee in order to foster an enduring relationship. Initiating is the step that formally establishes the mentoring relationship;
5. **Monitoring and Support:** Monitoring and support is critical to mentoring not only to create satisfying and successful relationships, but also to adjust to changing needs of the mentee and mentor, and to ensure safety. Support

ensures ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of a mentoring relationship; and

6. **Closure:** Bringing a mentoring relationship to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of both the mentor and the mentee is essential to ensuring the relationship ends with positive consequences for the mentee. Closure is a normal stage in a mentoring relationship and mentors and mentees should be able to prepare for closure and assess their experience with the relationship.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory and the Afrocentric Perspective guided the framework of this study. Mentoring programs illustrated this theory because of positive influences introduced through volunteerism. Volunteering allows and empowers students to learn by observation. Social Learning Theory examines human behavior in ongoing mutual interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1977) is one of the leading theorists of Social Learning Theory and believed one can learn by observing others. At a time when most psychologists had focused almost entirely on learning through the consequences of one's actions, Bandura showed that tedious and hazardous process of trial and error learning can be shortcut through social modeling of knowledge (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1977), Social Learning Theory emphasized the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. He argued learning would be exceptionally arduous and hazardous if people had to rely

exclusively on the effects of their own actions as a guide to which direction they should take in life.

In Social Learning Theory, there are three core components. Bandura (1977) first indicated the idea that people learn through observation. In one study, Bandura demonstrated mimic behaviors they perceive in others. Bandura identified three basic models of observational learning. These include a model involving actual demonstration of acting out behaviors among individuals, a verbal instruction model involving a description or explanation of behavior; and a symbolic model which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books or movies (Bandura, 1977).

The second concept of Social Learning Theory examines the internal mental state of an individual. Bandura indicated the external environment reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described it as intrinsic reinforcement as an internal reward or accomplishment (Bandura, 1977).

The final concept of Social Learning Theory recognized something learned does not mean it will result in changed behavior. Not all behaviors are learned effectively. Factors involving both the model and learner can play a role whether social learning is successful. These include attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. All are essential in the observational and modeling process (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1977), Social Learning Theory has assumed humans tend to emulate the behavior they see in others they care for and admire. From this perspective, formal mentoring programs establish the critical one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, which supports the healthy development of youth. It is for these

reasons that Social Learning Theory can be directly related to the effectiveness of mentoring programs among youth.

Furthermore, Social Learning Theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social environment. It considers that people learn from each other. The students within particular mentoring programs have the opportunity to observe mentors, volunteers, and other positive role models in the community, and learn from their behavior. The more positive individuals that these students observe from the community, the more likely they are to mimic their productive behavior.

Another theoretical approach discussed is the Empowerment Theory. Empowerment theory, research, and intervention connect the well-being of an individual with greater social and political environment. Theoretically, the idea forces one to think regarding well-being versus illness, ability versus deficiencies, and quality versus shortcomings. Essentially empowerment research concentrates on distinguishing capabilities opposed to inabilities (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Youth empowered through mentoring seem to have a better chance of obtaining greater resources. Mentoring provides influence over the lives of youth which depicts the framework of the Empowerment Theory—the theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decision affecting one's life (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

The Strengths Perspective was also reviewed as it outlines a person's strengths and will to recover. Jones and Zolotnik (1998) indicated the focus is based on the belief that people must be contributors toward their own success and actively involved in the

progression of their development. This approach assumes improvement will only take place if the mentees are recognized as experts in their lives.

The Strengths Perspective is essential since it is connected with the rule of positive youth advancement. Specifically, the Strengths Perspective has established a framework where adolescents are improved and rebuilt. Positive youth development also emphasizes the qualities, capabilities and strength of the individual. Another important feature of the strengths perspective is that it recognizes that all people have strengths and abilities which can address adversity give youth a feeling of hope, honor and advancement. It is important to observe the strengths of an individual opposed to the negative (Cheon, 2008).

Afrocentric Perspective

The Afrocentric Perspective, as developed at the Atlanta University School of Social Work (AUSSW), changed the perception and response of how social problems were addressed. During the civil rights era, social activists and academic leadership questioned Eurocentric thought and values used to address issues of persons and groups who were poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised. The Afrocentric Perspective developed at AUSSW posited transcending the conventional pervasive view that African Americans, underprivileged, and oppressed people experience social dysfunctioning primarily due to internal deficits and character disorders (Wright, 2013). The Afrocentric Perspective recognizes the strengths and the collective and individual uniqueness of differential groups and dictates service responses that carefully consider the cultural

integrity, ethos, talents, and creativity of these differential population groups (Yabura, 1970).

According to Yabura (1970), the Afrocentric Perspective is grounded in a Humanistic Value System also developed at AUSSW. According to Dr. Creigs Beverly (1971), the Humanistic value system is rooted in the fundamental and unqualified view that people are subjects of the world and not objects of the world. It is a view of people as subjects who act to transform their world and in doing so, move toward ever new possibilities of a fuller and richer life individually and collectively. The Humanistic Value System undergirds the Afrocentric Perspective and is articulated as follows:

1. The belief that love (agape) is essential to collective human development;
2. All people are created with equal ability and potential;
3. Satisfaction of basic human needs is the primary responsibility of society and must be the basis upon which resources are distributed;
4. Perception and life experiences of all human beings have value for them;
5. All human beings must have the inherent right to personal confidentiality;
6. All human being must have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives; and
7. Cooperation is essential to developing human communities.

Bowles (1999) indicated the Afrocentric Perspective does not exclude any one population and is not exclusive of African Americans. It is believed that individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds are valued for their differences of lifestyle in order to be the best version of themselves. The Afrocentric Perspective emphasizes the prominence

of the strengths and resilience of various populations while meeting the critical needs. It is believed this concept can be utilized by social workers with individuals from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

Schiele (1997) suggested in order to understand the Afrocentric Perspective, one must see it as a worldview. Afrocentric worldview is a set of philosophical assumptions that are believed to have originated from common cultural themes of traditional Africa and which are thought to be helpful in not only liberating people of African descent but also for facilitation of human and societal transformation for all.

The Afrocentric Perspectives' overall premise is to provide equal opportunity for all people in order to amplify their skill set and abilities so everyone has a fair chance at thriving. The fundamental principle that is vital to mentoring states that individual identity is a collective identity. Collective identity suggests that all are connected through spirituality and are a reflection of each other. Success and failure is reflective of the success and failure of one another. A society cannot consider itself as effective if the needs of others are not met since all are connected in some form (Schiele, 1997).

Within the context of mentoring, mentors are able to apply the basic tenets of the Afrocentric Perspective, thereby assisting mentees with recognizing selfworth and value, equal ability potential and participate in the decision making process as it pertains to life choices. In this regard, mentoring serves a critical role in helping to make paradigm shifts regarding society's interest and motivation to better the lives of others. The Afrocentric Perspective, grounded as it is in humanistic values, also prepares and allows mentors to

maintain their own humanity in the constant face of dehumanizing conditions and liberates them to teach and share humanism with all.

The Afrocentric Perspective reinforces the spirit of the heart shaped West African symbol called the Sankofa. Translated, Sankofa means to learn from the past and prepare one for the future. The Sankofa Bird, also a West African symbol, is representative of wisdom and says “to learn from the past, I must return and get it” (Yabura, 1970, p. 7). The Sankofa Bird reminds us that we must reflect on the past to build a successful future. The Sankofa Bird also reminds us that we must continue to move forward as we remember our past and at the same time plant a seed for future generations that come after us. The Akan of Ghana believe that the past illuminates the present and that the search for knowledge is a life-long process (Yabura, 1970).

In this writer’s opinion, this is the charge of mentoring. Mentoring perpetuates this tradition as its main objective is to guide a child in a positive direction in hopes that he or she will become productive citizens in society. For example, Greek-letter organizations such as Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. have created programs to change the lives of future generations. One of the programs derived under this organization is the Delta Academy. There was an urgency in the community for mentors to reach back to the youth due to girls experiencing confidence issues, low academic achievement, and lack of exposure. The Delta Academy provides their members an opportunity to provide guidance in order to strengthen scholastic achievement in math, science, and technology and enhance their leadership skills. The overall mission is to equip girls to become future leaders of the world (Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, 2013).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The major objectives of this chapter were to present the methods and procedures utilized to conduct the research. This study was conducted to understand the mentors' perception and level of satisfaction with elements of effective practices among girl mentoring programs. The following sections are included in this chapter: research design; description of the site; sample and population; treatment of data; and limitations of the study.

Research Design

An explanatory research design was utilized in this study. Explanatory research is defined as a method or style of research in which the principal objective is to know and understand the trait and mechanisms of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable (Key, 1997). The study collected data to explain the relationship between a mentors' perception with effective practices among girl mentoring programs and the level of satisfaction of being a mentor.

This study design conceptualizes the mentors' perception and level of satisfaction with being a mentor and understanding of elements of effective mentoring practices. The following are standards that influence best practices: Recruitment, Screening, Training, Matching, Monitoring and Support and Closure. Not being fully cognizant of these factors influences the level of satisfaction of being a mentor within the program.

Description of the Site

The research was conducted through mentoring programs in the metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area within a 50 mile radius from Clark Atlanta University. The surveys were administered through various mentoring programs for girls. Each program serves girls from 5 to 19 years of age. The mentoring programs consists of the following types of mentoring models one-to-one, group, team, peer, and e-mentoring. These programs are community-based or school-based in nature. These mentoring programs were identified through The Mentoring Connector, which is a national database of formal mentoring programs (MENTOR, 2016). These agencies were selected because of their close proximity to the university, their specific focus on girls, and being identified as utilizing best mentoring practice elements. Surveys were administered face-to-face or electronically to mentors within the agency.

Sample and Population

The initial sampling method utilized for this study was purposive sampling. This technique is often used when the researcher is seeking select attribute of the population. For this study, 50 mentoring programs were identified in the state of Georgia through MENTOR. Of those identified, 31 were found within a 50 miles radius of Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. These programs were categorized by mentor One-to-One Mentoring, Group Mentoring, E- Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, and Team Mentoring. The researcher randomly selected one mentoring program from each category type specifically serving girls, thus arriving at the total sample for the purpose of this study. Figure 1 illustrates this concept.

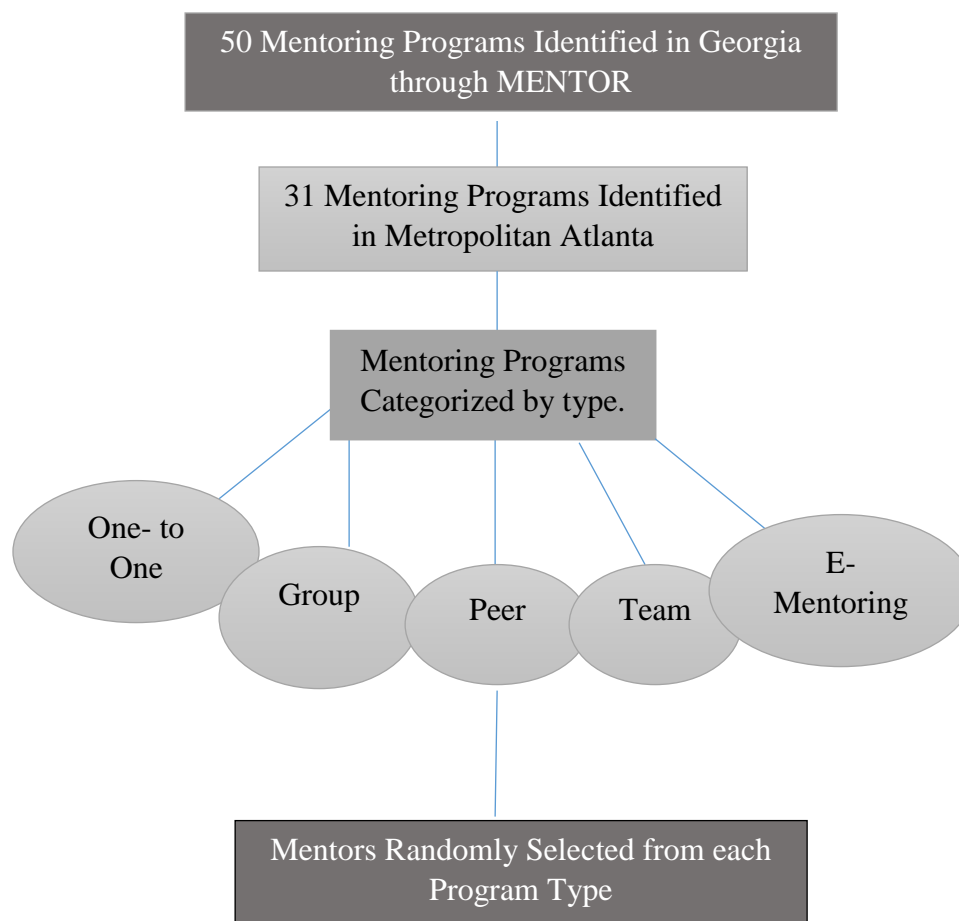


Figure 1: Purposive Sampling Model.

Due to the lack of survey responses, the researcher had to modify the sampling method to include snowball sampling. The target population for this study consisted of mentors who currently serve in programs aimed at assisting girls. The participants consisted of active mentors within the agency, all at least 18 years of age with a minimum of a high school diploma through a Doctorate degree. The population consisted of various ethnicities. Confidentiality of all participants was of high importance and was

subjected to minimum risk factors. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Clark Atlanta University granted approval of data collection.

Instrumentation

The research study employed a survey questionnaire entitled *Mentoring Experience Satisfaction Survey* which was adopted from MENTOR's national survey administered face-to-face and via email. The survey questionnaire consisted of three sections with a total of 28 questions. Section I obtained demographic information about the respondents' characteristics. Section II of the survey questionnaire is composed of five questions (5 through 9) which discussed the mentoring experience profile including questions such as length of time mentoring, mentoring setting, type of mentoring program and frequency of meeting with the mentee. These questions provided data for the presentation of the respondents' demographic profile in this study.

Section III collected data utilizing a Likert scale to measure the respondents' perception of elements of best practices within the mentoring programs. Section III of the questionnaire was composed of 18 questions (10 through 28). Section III utilized a series of questions which measured the following standards: Recruitment, Screening, Training, Matching, Monitoring & Support, and Closure. Questions included responses on a five-point continuum Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability is the accuracy or precision of a measuring instrument. Statistically, it measures the proportion of the "true" variance to the total of obtained variance of the data

either by a measuring instrument. Looking differently, reliability is the proportion of error variance to the total variance either by a measuring instrument subtracted from 1.00, the index 1.00 indicating perfect reliability. Thus, the reliability coefficient varies between 0 and 1 indicating 0 as no reliability and 1 as perfect reliability. The Chronbach's alpha provides a coefficient of internal consistency based on average inter item correlations. In this research, reliability analysis with the Chronbach's alpha model was conducted for 18 scale items—Recruitment, Screening, Training, Matching, Monitoring and Support and Closure. As Table 1 shows, the overall reliability of these items as measured by Chronbach's alpha is 0.901.

Table 1

Reliability Analysis Items

	N	Mean	Variance	SD			
Statistics for Scale	125	65.18	160.807	12.681			
				N of			
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min	Variance	Items
Item Means	3.621	2.976	4.080	1.104	1.371	.898	18
Item Variances	1.331	.880	1.813	.933	2.061	.057	18
Inter-Item Correlations							
	Scale						
	Scale Mean	Variance	Corrected	Squared	Alpha		
	If item	If item	Item Total	Multiple	If Item		
	Deleted	Deleted	Correlations	Correlations	Deleted		
Item Total Statistics							
Item 10	61.10	146.636	.488	.447	.898		
Item 11	61.15	149.646	.341	.413	.902		

Table 1 (continued)

	Scale				
	Scale Mean	Variance	Corrected	Squared	Alpha
	If item Deleted	If item Deleted	Item Total Correlations	Multiple Correlations	If Item Deleted
Item 12	61.81	147.060	.405	.482	.901
Item 13	61.30	142.581	.600	.558	.894
Item 14	61.44	139.216	.690	.560	.891
Item 15	61.42	139.842	.601	.625	.894
Item 16	61.98	138.814	.681	.595	.891
Item 17	61.43	140.876	.647	.603	.893
Item 18	61.64	140.119	.664	.657	.892
Item 19	61.64	155.200	.202	.209	.904
Item 20	61.66	145.244	.484	.479	.898
Item 21	61.25	143.349	.621	.618	.894
Item 22	61.17	146.189	.536	.492	.896
Item 23	61.39	145.998	.553	.417	.896
Item 24	61.84	139.619	.698	.628	.891
Item 25	61.67	146.851	.531	.540	.896
Item 26	62.20	145.629	.528	.441	.896
Item 27	61.92	144.010	.582	.555	.895
			Alpha	Standardized Item Alpha	
Reliability Coefficients for Item 125			.901	900	

In order to ascertain the internal consistency among these scale items, additional Chronbach's alpha "if item deleted" statistics were obtained. As shown, in the last column of Table 1, these coefficients were fairly consistent with a slight variation between .901 and .900. Therefore, it was determined that the scale items were uniformly consistent with a high level of reliability.

Treatment of Data

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a program for statistical analysis, was used to analyze the data. The treatment of data employed descriptive statistics that included measurements of frequency distribution, standard deviation, and cross tabulations to explain the distribution of data. The test statistic used for this study was Spearman Rho. The data collected through the instrument discussed above provide information on different measurements: nominal, ordinal, and interval. For example, gender and ethnicity are nominal variables. This information was treated as per the norms of statistical principals with regard to their measurement characteristics for conducting appropriate statistical techniques that would yield meaningful interpretations.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations were discovered in this study. One limitation included the population that was selected from mentoring programs only identified those listed on the national mentoring programs database. This number does not reflect programs that were not added to the list or programs unaware of the database existence. Also, it does not take into account organizations that fail to register. The data collected from the small sample limit the generalizability to the larger population. The study was exclusive of mentors serving girls and limited to the geographical state of Georgia. The participants of this study were limited to the researcher's associates, colleagues, and their referrals. The second limitation of this study is similar to that of any study based on self-reporting data. That is, the degree of validity and reliability of self-reported data depends on the accuracy of respondents' willingness and ability to provide responses.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the study in order to explain the mentors' perception and level of satisfaction with elements of effective practices among mentoring programs for girls. The data analysis was conducted at two levels; demographic data and research questions and hypotheses. The first level was the descriptive analysis, which illustrated the demographics of mentors, including, age, ethnicity, and education status and the profile of mentors. The second level of analysis was the analytical procedures, which included the Spearman Rho statistical test, in order to determine the variables that had influence on the mentors' level of satisfaction with elements of effective practices including the recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring, and closure process. The target population for the research included mentors who currently participate in mentoring programs for girls. One hundred and twenty five mentors responded utilizing purposive and snowball techniques.

Descriptive Analysis

Demographic Profile of Mentors

Table 2 illustrates the typical respondents of the study were African-American females (98%) between the ages of 31-40 years old with a master's degree (38%).

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Mentors (N = 125)

Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-20	19	15.2	15.2
21-30	28	22.4	37.6
31-40	46	36.8	74.4
41-50	22	17.6	92.0
Over 50	10	8.0	100.0
Educational Status			
High school/ GED	3	2.4	2.4
Some College	42	33.6	36.0
Bachelors	23	18.4	54.4
Masters	48	38.4	92.8
Doctorate	9	7.2	100.0
Ethnicity			
African American	123	98.4	98.4
Other	2	1.6	100.0

Given this level of education, chances are the mentors were skillful and well trained on how to handle the dynamics of youth development. On the contrary, 42% of the mentors had some level of college experience but had not obtained a degree. It could be suggested that many respondents were college-aged students participating in mentoring programs. Only a small percentage (8%) of respondents were over the age of 50, suggesting they may have been consumed with work and or family obligations and not able to commit as much time towards mentoring.

Mentoring Experience Profile

Table 3 describes the mentors experience including the type of mentoring program, setting, frequency of contact, and number of years participating within the program and being paired with a mentee. The research indicated almost half (49%) of the participating mentors participate in more than one type of mentoring program (One-to-One, Group, Peer and E- Mentoring). Approximately 34% of the respondents participated in group mentoring programs with a small percentage (6%) of mentors actually participating in only one-to-one mentoring. It is reasonable to assume that those participating in group mentoring may have had a scarcity of mentees within their participating program and an overwhelming number of mentees. In order to accommodate the program participants, group mentoring may be more effective to meet measurable outcomes. Surprisingly, only 2% of the mentors' participated in peer mentoring suggesting that their level of training was not sufficient enough to engage in peer interaction. The e-mentoring component has a 6% involvement, which may indicate many programs may not be fully aware of the benefit of this program type.

The majority (48%) of respondents were involved in community based mentoring programs with approximately 2-5 years of mentoring experience (57%). Thirty percent of the respondents had been matched with their mentees over a year with an average of contact 2-4 times per month (30%) or a minimum of one time per week (28%).

Table 3

Mentoring Experience Profile

Type of Mentoring Program	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One-to-one	8	6.4	6.4
Group	46	36.8	43.2
Peer	3	2.4	45.6
E-Mentoring	7	5.6	51.2
More than One type	61	48.8	100.0
Mentoring Setting			
Community Based	61	48.8	48.8
School Based	28	22.4	71.2
Both	36	28.8	100.0
Length of Time Mentoring			
1 year or less	26	20.8	20.8
2-5 Years	72	57.6	78.4
6-9 Years	19	15.2	93.6
10 or More years	8	6.4	100.0
Length of Time Matched			
No paired with Mentee	39	31.2	31.2
0-3 Months	20	16.0	47.2
4-7 Months	18	14.4	61.6
8-11 Months	10	8.0	69.6
12 Months or more	38	30.4	100.0
Frequency of Contact with Mentee			
2-4 Times a week	22	17.6	17.6
1 time per week	35	28.0	45.6
2-4 times a month	38	30.4	76.0
1 time per month	12	9.6	85.6
No expectation or requirement	18	14.4	100.0

Of important note, 14% of mentors did not have an expectation or requirement for meeting with mentees and 31% were not evenly matched with a mentee. This pattern may suggest the mentoring programs may not be enforcing standards or procedures which may in turn may question best practices standards.

Elements of Effective Recruitment Practices

Table 4 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the statement. Over half of the mentors (53%) strongly agreed and agreed (50%) they were presented with a realistic understanding of what the mentoring experience would entail. A low percentage of respondents (6%) felt as though they were not given a realistic perspective of the mentoring experience. Fifty-six percent of the mentors were encouraged to recruit other individuals to mentors. In certain mentoring programs, the mentors agreed (26%) that mentees are encouraged to recruit those with whom they are familiar such as teachers, coaches, and others. Approximately 25% of mentors neither agreed nor disagreed if mentees are encouraged to recruit others in the mentoring experience. Research suggested there is not a high percentage of mentors with a clear understanding of what mentoring includes and they are not given the opportunity to recruit others to participate.

Table 4

Elements of Effective Recruitment Practices

Effective Recruitment Practices (N = 125)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither		Strongly Agree
			Disagree or Agree	Agree	
10. I was presented with a realistic understanding of benefits, practices and challenges of mentoring.	6(5%)	9(7%)	7 (6%)	50(40%)	53(42%)
11. I am encouraged to recruit people I know to become mentors.	7(6%)	10(8%)	12(10%)	40(32%)	56(45%)
12. Mentee are encouraged and trained to recruit potential mentors.	10(8%)	23(18%)	31(25%)	33(6%)	28(22%)

Table 5 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the following statements. Only 36% percent of the mentors have completed a written application to begin the process of mentoring a youth. Thirty-seven percent of the mentors have completed a face to face interview, and almost half (40%) have conducted a national background check. Based on the respondents, the screening process has a low percentage of effective practices.

Table 5

Elements of Effective Screening Practices

Effective Screening Practices (N =125)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither		Strongly Agree
			Disagree or Agree	Agree	
13. I completed a written application including questions which emphasized my appropriateness within the mentoring program.	6 (5%)	15(12%)	13 (10%)	45(36%)	46(37%)
14. I conducted a face-to-face interview with mentoring personnel.	8 (5%)	18(14%)	13(10%)	46(37%)	40(32%)
15. I completed a comprehensive national background check.	11(9%)	18(14%)	11(9%)	35(28%)	50(40%)

Table 6 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the training process. Thirty-six percent agreed to participate in a 2 hour pre-match training. Approximately 42% of the mentors participated in training that included program requirements. Nearly 39% participated in training on risk management.

Table 6

Elements of Effective Training Practices

Effective Training Practices (N = 125)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither		Strongly Agree
			Disagree or Agree	Agree	
16. I participated in a minimum two hour pre-match in person mentoring Training.	13(10%)	32(26%)	16(13%)	45(36%)	19(15%)
17. I participated in mentoring training which included program requirements, expectations, roles, relationship development, effective closure, supportive resources, ethics, safety, challenges, and family involvement.	8(6%)	17(14%)	11(19%)	52(42%)	37(30%)
18. I participated in mentoring training related to risk management polices.	8(6%)	24(19%)	15(12%)	49(39%)	29(23%)

Table 7 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the Matching statements. Approximately 31% of mentors neither agreed nor disagreed that they are matched with a mentee with similar characteristics.

Table 7

Elements of Effective Matching Practices

Effective Matching Practices (N = 125)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither		Strongly Agree
			Disagree or Agree	Agree	
19. I am matched with a mentee with similar characteristics	1(1%)	14(11%)	49(39%)	39(31%)	22(18%)
20. I participated in an initial meeting including the mentee and parent	8(6%)	3(18%)	18(14%)	48(38%)	28(22%)
21. I signed a commitment with regarding rules and requirements	6(5%)	8(6%)	19(15%)	48(38%)	44(35%)

Nearly 25% of the mentors participated in a meeting which included both the parent and child. Almost 38% signed a commitment regarding the rules and regulations. It is reasonable to assume the mentors are seemingly being paired without proper consideration of similarities and minimal parental involvement.

Approximately 36% of the mentors agreed they are contacted at least once per month by the administration within the organization. Nearly 45% of the mentors agreed they have access to relevant resources. Approximately 26% agreed they document each session with their mentee. It is suggested many contacts between the mentor and mentee

could be informal and there is no accountability in regard follow up. Table 8 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the Monitoring and Support process.

Table 8

Elements of Effective Monitoring and Support Practices

	Effective Monitoring & Supporting Practices (N=125)	Neither				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree or Agree	Strongly Agree	
22. I am contacted at least one time per month by the mentoring program.		2(2%)	13(10%)	16(13%)	45(36%)	49(39%)
23. I am provided with access to relevant resources.		4(3%)	12(10)	22(18%)	56(45%)	31(25%)
24. I document and submit each mentee session.		7(6%)	28(22%)	32(26%)	32(26%)	26(21%)

Table 9 demonstrates the frequency distribution for the responses to the Closure process. Forty percent of the mentors agreed the mentoring program has a procedure to manage expected closures or those unforeseen. Yet, approximately 34% of mentors are unclear if the mentoring program conducts an exit interview. While approximately 28% of the mentors agreed or neither disagreed or agreed there are written guidelines regarding the termination process. This research assumes policy is not outlined clearly toward the termination process.

Table 9

Elements of Effective Closure Practices

Effective Closure Practices (N=125)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither		Strongly Agree
			Disagree or Agree	Agree	
25. The mentoring program has a procedure to manage anticipate and unanticipated closures.	3(2%)	19(15%)	34(27%)	50(40%)	19(39%)
26. The mentoring program conducts an exit interview.	10(8%)	34(27%)	42(34%)	27(22%)	12(10%)
27. The mentoring program has a written statement outlining closure policies.	5(4%)	31(25%)	35(28%)	35(28%)	19(15%)

Analytical Procedures

In an effort to answer the research questions, the Spearman Rho was tested statistically and following are the results. There were six research questions and null hypotheses presented and accompanied by the analytical results.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the recruitment process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho1: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the recruitment process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

As indicated in Table 10, a Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Recruitment Process. A moderately strong correlation that was not significant was found ($r(2) = .658, > .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted—that is, Satisfaction with Recruitment Process is not related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience.

Table 10

Results of Correlation between the Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Recruitment Process

Correlations			How satisfied are	
			you with your mentoring experience?	Total Recruitment Score
Spearman's Rho	How Satisfied Are	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.040
	You with Your	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.658
	Mentoring Experience?	N	125	125
Total Recruitment Score	Total Recruitment	Correlation Coefficient	.040	1.000
	Score	Sig. (2-tailed)	.658	.
		N	125	125

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the screening process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho2: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the screening process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

As indicated in Table 11, a Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Screening Process. Although statistically significant, a weak correlation was found ($r(2) = .289, p < .001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected—that is, Satisfaction with the Screening Process is related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience.

Table 11

Results of Correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Screening Process

Correlations			Overall, how satisfied are you	
			with your mentoring experience?	Total Screening Score
Spearman's Rho	Overall, how satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.289**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	125	125
	Total Screening Score	Correlation Coefficient	.289**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	125	125

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ3: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of training and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho3: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the training and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

As indicated in Table 12, a Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Training Process. A weak correlation that was not significant was found ($r(2) = .116, p > .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected—that is, Satisfaction with Training Process is not related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience.

Table 12

Results of Correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Training Process

Correlations		How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Training Score
Spearman's Rho	Overall, how satisfied	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	are you with your	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	mentoring	N	125
	experience?		
	Training Score	Correlation Coefficient	.116
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.196
		N	125

RQ4: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the matching and initiation process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho4: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the matching and initiation process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

As indicated in Table 13, a Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Matching Process. A weak correlation was found ($r(2) = .224, p < .01$) that was significant. Therefore, rejected the null. Satisfaction with the Matching Process is related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience.

Table 13

Results of Correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Matching Process

Correlations			Overall, how satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Matching Score
Spearman's Rho	How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.224*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
		N	125	125
	Matching Score	Correlation Coefficient	.224*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
		N	125	125

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

RQ5: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the monitoring and support process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho5: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the monitoring and support process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

Table 14 presents the Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Monitoring and Support Process. A weak statistically significant correlation was found ($r(2) = .175, p < .05$). Therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis. Satisfaction with the Monitoring and Support Process is related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience

Table 14

Results of Correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Monitoring and Support Process

		How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?		
		Monitoring And Support Score		
Spearman's Rho	How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.175
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.051
		N	125	125
Monitoring And Support Score	Monitoring And Support Score	Correlation Coefficient	.175*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.
		N	125	125

RQ6: Is there a relationship between the mentors' perception of the closure process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience?

Ho6: There is no relationship between the mentors' perception of the closure process and their level of satisfaction with mentoring experience.

A Spearman *rho* correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Closure Process. A weak correlation was found ($r(2) = .161, P > .05$) that is not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted—that is, Satisfaction with the Mentor/Mentee Closure Process is not related to Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience.

Table 15

Results of Correlation between Overall Satisfaction with the Mentoring Experience and Satisfaction with the Closure Process

Correlations		How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?		
		Correlation Coefficient	Closure Score	Score
Spearman's Rho	How satisfied are you with your mentoring experience?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.161
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.073
		N	125	125
Closure Score		Correlation Coefficient	.161	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	.
		N	125	125

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to examine the mentors perception and level of satisfaction with effective practices among mentoring programs for girls. An explanatory research design was conducted.

A total of 125 mentors participated in this research and were selected due to involvement in mentoring programs for girls within the metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area. The surveys were administered to various mentoring programs for girls. Each program serves girls from 5 to 19 years of age. The programs include various types of mentoring including the following: one-to-one, group, team, peer, and e-mentoring. Data analysis was conducted at two levels: descriptive, which employed frequency and percent distributions of participant responses and analytical procedures, which included the Spearman Rho statistical test.

The summary and conclusions of the research findings are presented in this chapter. Recommendations are proposed for future discussions for funders, collaborative partners, policy makers, practitioners, administrators, and social work professionals. The research study was designed to answer six questions concerning the mentors' level of satisfaction with elements of effective mentoring practices.

Some of the major findings suggest that African-American women have committed to approximately 2-5 years of service and dedication towards mentoring. The

research suggests that mentors understand the value of education since nearly 63% have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher and nearly 34% have some level of college experience. This is important as it relates to exposing youth to a different way of life which they could possibly model in the future. Studies show that at-risk youth who are mentored are 55% more likely to enroll in college (MENTOR, 2015). It is reasonable to assume these mentors have been influenced through mentorship in some regard during a time in their life.

Based on the mentoring profile experience, 50% of mentors are involved in more than one program type. Almost 60% of mentors have been involved between 2-5 years. Results suggest that mentors may be unmarried without children and may have more time to commit to enhancing the lives of youth. Contrary, mentors over the age of 40 (25%) and with more than six years' of mentoring experience (21%) may have demanding obligations which prevent them from being as active.

A substantial number of mentors are a part of community-based programs (49%) versus school-based programs (22%). The researcher could imply it may be easier to volunteer with community organizations as opposed to partnering with the school system. Perhaps school personnel may not have the time to commit to recruitment of volunteers as their focus is based on academic achievement. It would be advantageous for mentoring to take place more in the school system because there is a high volume of deviant behaviors including truancy, fighting, and substance use.

Fifty percent of mentors meet with their mentees at least four times per month. This coincides with the national standards that indicate that contact should be made at a

minimum of once per week between the mentee and mentor. Research suggests 14% of mentors have no requirement or expectation as to how often they must visit their mentee. It is reasonable to imply many informal matches may exist between mentors and mentees.

It is suggested that mentors are satisfied with the recruitment process. Over 80% of mentors agree or strongly agree they have been presented with a realistic understanding of what mentoring involves. The mentors agree (77%) they are encouraged to reach out to their network and raise awareness of mentoring and recruit others to participate. A small number (25%) of mentors are unsure if mentees are trained to recruit mentors within the program.

Findings related to the screening process and the level of satisfaction with the mentors suggest nearly 30% of mentors either did not complete an application or cannot recall if the application was completed. Approximately 29% of mentors did not complete a face-to-face interview and 32% did not remember completing a national background check. It is suggested the actual programs are not properly screened or doing a thorough assessment of who is having contact with the youth who are already in vulnerable conditions. It is imperative that the mentors are clear of any charges that would violate the safety of the participating mentee.

Findings related to the training process and the mentors' satisfaction level suggest research demonstrated over 50% of mentors agreed they participated in a minimum of a two-hour training. However, it was not noted in which training the mentors participated. The researcher failed to identify the type of training and if the mentor thought it was

effective in their mentoring practices. It can be suggested mentors may be less competent in critical areas of mentoring due to not being able to identify the training curriculum.

The matching process findings suggested 51% of mentors disagreed they were matched with a mentee of similar characteristics. This suggests there could be a shortage of mentors and even though careful attention is given towards making the proper match, there may not be enough qualified individuals to take on the task. Parental involvement may be moderate as 60% of mentors participated in an initial meeting with the parents. This is critical in the development of the mentor/mentee relationship as it sets a standard to look forward to and holds all parties accountable regarding policy and guidelines.

The monitoring and support findings infer mentors to be somewhat satisfied. Approximately 71% of mentors are contacted at least once per month by the mentoring program and provided with resources to strengthen the relationship. Nearly 41% of the mentors actually document each session. For the nearly 54% percent of mentors that do not document each contact, the expectation may not be as high from the program. It also may be difficult to measure the outcomes and if there are any changes within the relationship.

The closure process findings suggest nearly 80% of the mentors understand the procedure for anticipated and or unanticipated closures. Nearly 57% of mentors are unaware if the programs have a termination policy. Mentors may not inquire about closure unless they are looking to cease participation with the agency.

Overall, it appears that mentors are satisfied with effective mentoring practices. The overall level of satisfaction was rated as a ten by the mentor indicating they were extremely satisfied.

Recommendations

Mentoring has afforded many individuals the opportunity to advance in life and experience significant success and achievement. The researcher personally has witnessed how mentoring can impact the life of a child. The researcher was matched with a mentor at the age of 12 through Big Brothers Big Sisters and over the past 20 years was mentored and guided into a better lifestyle. Through consistency in relationship and connection, many accomplishments have been achieved in spite of facing adversity.

Pursuit and possibilities have attracted many doors to open. The researcher has engendered many successes as the Founder and Director of a mentoring organization, being a first generation college student, publishing two inspirational self-help books, and traveling the world impacting the lives of others based on the impact made.

As advocates, social workers, clinicians, educators, policy makers, funders, parents, political figures, community stakeholders, and youth, it is critical to see the need for mentoring services. If society would like to see a shift in the behaviors of the future generation, more emphasis has to be placed on this population. In dealing with people from diverse backgrounds, social workers have to implement best practices and utilize the Afrocentric Perspective in regard to seeking the good and importance of all human beings.

In regard to policy development, social workers must implement change on the macro level by lobbying, talking with legislatures, and even running for political office. At this level, the practitioner's purpose will be aimed at providing funding for direct services in order to meet the primary need of these youth. Social workers must continue to explore research and stay abreast of current trends and practices in order to serve the population.

Youth crave a sense of belonging and want to be accepted and appreciated. Having a mentor would satisfy that desire and enhance their confidence level. Mentoring would allow youth to be a part of a greater movement that not only changes their life but the lives of all they encounter now and forever.

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. A national governing board be established so all mentoring programs must submit and obtain licensure in order to practice mentoring.
2. A universal system of care concept be developed between agencies such as the school system, Department of Juvenile Justice, mentoring organizations and after-school programs, churches and faith-based communities, companies, and mental health professionals.
3. The National Mentorship Partnership should identify newly established mentoring programs and pair them up with a larger well established mentoring organization in order to obtaining coaching and support.

4. Start-up funds should be distributed from governmental agencies or the school districts to mentoring programs to assist in operation, training, and fiscal support.
5. Future research should be geared towards an evidence-based curriculum for mentoring programs to deliver quality services.
6. Future research studies should include how effective mentors perceive themselves.
7. Mentors should be properly trained on a regular basis to ensure longevity of the relationship between the youth.
8. Identify core elements from other helping professions such as psychotherapy, counseling, criminal justice, and business management.
9. School-based mentoring programs should automatically be implemented in schools that do not meet standard performance.
10. Legislature and policy makers should support the Juvenile Justice Delinquency & Prevention Act and automatically give funding to states that have high crime rates.
11. Further research should be explored on the mentees thoughts and levels of satisfaction with the mentors.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM



Mentoring Experience Satisfaction Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to study the effectiveness of girl mentoring programs in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. There are no known risks to participants who agree to take part in this research. There are no known personal benefits to participants who agree to take part in the research. However, it is hoped that those who participate in this study will help research in the field of social work education, social work curriculum development, and the professional development of social service workers in the United States.

This study is being conducted by Gabrielle Starr, Ph.D. student at Clark Atlanta University, Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work. All responses to the questionnaires will remain confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary.

If participants have questions about this study, please contact Gabrielle Starr by email at: Gabrielle.starr@students.cau.edu or the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work at Clark Atlanta University at 404-880-6600. If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of this research, the rights of research subjects, or researched related injuries (where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Paul I. Mussey at 404-880-6929 at Clark Atlanta University.

Click yes or no below to indicate your intent to participate in this research project.

Yes
 No

APPENDIX B

MENTORING EXPERIENCE SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

Mentors' Perception and Level of
Satisfaction of Mentoring Program Effectiveness
School of Social Work Ph.D. Program
Gabrielle Starr - May, 2017
Clark Atlanta University

Section I: Demographic Information

Instructions: Check the appropriate answer below. Choose only one answer for each question.

1. Gender: 1)___Male 2)___Female
2. Age Group: 1) ___ 18-20 2)___ 21-30 3)___ 31-40 4)___ 41-50
 5) ___ Over 50
3. Education Status: 1)___ Less than High School 2) ___ High School Graduate
 3)___ Bachelor's Degree 4) ___ Master's Degree
 5)___ Doctoral Degree
4. Ethnicity: 1)___ African-American 2)___ Asian 3)___ Hispanic
 4)___ White 5)___ Other

Section II: Mentoring Experience Profile

5. Type of Mentoring Program: 1) ___ One-to-One Mentoring 2) ___ Group Mentoring
 3) ___ Team Mentoring 4) ___ E- Mentoring
 5) ___ Peer Mentoring
6. Mentoring Setting: 1) ___ Community Based Mentoring
 2) ___ School Based Mentoring
7. Length of Time Mentoring within this organization:

1) ___ 1 year or less 2)___ 2-5 years 3)___ 6-9 years 4) ___ 10 years or more

8. Length of time matched with current mentee in the program:

- 1) _____ Not paired with a mentee 2) _____ 0-3 months 3) _____ 4-7 months
 4) _____ 8-11 month 5) _____ 12 month or more

Section III: How much do you agree with the following statements?

Instructions: Write the number indicating your answer (**1 thru 5**) in the blank space in front of each statement on the questionnaire. Choose only one answer for each item and respond to all statements.

**1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree 4 = Agree
 5 = Strongly Agree**

9. How frequent do you meet with your mentee in the program?

- 1) _____ 2-4 times a week 2) _____ 1 time per week 3) _____ 2-4 times a month
 4) _____ 1 time per month 5) _____ No expectation or requirement

Recruitment

- _____ 10. I was presented with a realistic understanding of the benefits, practices and challenges of mentoring.
- _____ 11. I am encouraged to recruit people I know to become mentors.
- _____ 12. Mentees are encouraged and trained to recruit potential mentors.

Screening

- _____ 13. I completed a written application including questions which emphasized my appropriateness within the mentoring program.
- _____ 14. I conducted a face to face interview with mentoring personnel.
- _____ 15. I completed a comprehensive national background check.

Training

- _____ 16. I participated in a minimum two hour pre match, in person, mentor training.
- _____ 17. I participated in mentor training which included program requirements, expectations, roles, relationship development, effective closure, supportive resources ethics, safety challenges, family involvement and challenges.

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