

Spring 4-25-2020

Academic Achievement and Development of Self-Efficacy of At-Risk girls Through Mentoring Programs

Latriace Wicks-Williams
Concordia University - Portland, lwicks@mail2.cu-portland.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cup_commons_grad_edd



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wicks-Williams, L. (2020). *Academic Achievement and Development of Self-Efficacy of At-Risk girls Through Mentoring Programs* (Thesis, Concordia University, St. Paul). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.csp.edu/cup_commons_grad_edd/423

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia University Portland Graduate Research at DigitalCommons@CSP. It has been accepted for inclusion in CUP Ed.D. Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSP. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csp.edu.

Concordia University - Portland

CU Commons

Ed.D. Dissertations

Graduate Theses & Dissertations

Spring 4-25-2020

Academic Achievement and Development of Self-Efficacy of At-Risk girls Through Mentoring Programs

Latriace Wicks-Williams
Concordia University - Portland

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

CU Commons Citation

Wicks-Williams, Latriace, "Academic Achievement and Development of Self-Efficacy of At-Risk girls Through Mentoring Programs" (2020). *Ed.D. Dissertations*. 406.
<https://commons.cu-portland.edu/edudissertations/406>

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Theses & Dissertations at CU Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ed.D. Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CU Commons. For more information, please contact libraryadmin@cu-portland.edu.

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Doctorate of Education Program

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ AND APPROVE THE DISSERTATION OF

Latriace Antrell Wicks-Williams

CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Heather Miller, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Deborah Stone, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Judy Shoemaker, Ed.D. Content Reader

Academic Achievement and Development of Self-Efficacy of At-Risk girls Through Mentoring
Programs

Latriace Wicks-Williams

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Professional Leadership, Inquiry, and Transformation

Heather Miller, Ph.D., Faculty Chair Dissertation Committee

Deborah Stone, Ph.D., Content Specialist

Judy Shoemaker, Ed.D. Content Reader

Concordia University–Portland

2019

Abstract

At-risk girls of color face a variety of challenges; even more when they are in an urban setting. Girls must gain the tools necessary to transition effectively into adulthood. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the effect participating in a mentoring program had on the academic achievement and self-efficacy of girls of color in an urban setting who have been identified as at-risk. The primary focus of the study was academic achievement and self-efficacy. These two traits have been identified as essential to the successful transition into adulthood. The population of this study is girls of color who have been identified as at risk, live in an urban setting, and graduated from The Girl mentoring program, as well as women who served as mentors in the program over a 5-year period. Purposive sampling was utilized to solicit participants for the study. Graduates and mentors participated in semi structured interviews. Additionally, the mentors participated in an anonymous survey. There were three themes that emerged from the interviews and questionnaire. The implications and recommendations for future studies on this topic included in this study.

Keywords: mentoring programs, at-risk youth, self-efficacy, academic achievement, social cognitive theory, at-risk factors, protective factors, at-risk population, and the development of self-efficacy

Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral research study to my oldest sister, Antrena Shalon “Unbreakable” Wicks. My big sister has been the S-hero of my life for as long as I can remember. She saved me from drowning when I was 8 years old. However, the real reason this is dedicated to her is because she was a girl of color, who should have been categorized as at-risk growing up in an urban setting. She faced many challenges at a very early age. She was a young teenage mother and had to figure out how to raise a child as a child with little to no support.

My sister took care of her son and her other siblings until she graduated high school. No matter what was going on in our lives, my sister and I had a bond that can only be described as unconditional love, she is the love of my life. Although she was the oldest, I always felt that I had to protect her. Even after her death, I vowed to protect her legacy and to ensure her story was told because I have always admired her strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

In September of 1999, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Ten days later, our mother was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Antrena fought cancer for 19 years. She passed away in her sleep on May 5, 2018. At the time of her death, she was living with her son, whom she had put through college and was a Band Director. This was her ultimate goal, to ensure her son was well educated and had a promising future. Hopefully, this doctoral research study will help educators to understand how to assist at-risk girls like her around the world and provide the resources and support they need to become “Unbreakable.”

This doctoral research study is also dedicated to my Godmother and Mentor, Mrs. Cathen Burnell Jones. In 1987, a 14-year-old girl who was traumatized, confused, and broken entered your English classroom. However, you saw my potential, not my scares. You became the mother I needed, when my mother could not fulfill that role. You gave me my first bible and although it was pink, I cherished it. You introduced me to Christ! Not the Christ of punishment and restriction but the Christ of love and abundance. You kept my secrets and made me a part of your family.

You taught me about self-worth. When I made mistakes, you never judge me. Instead, you talked through things with me to help me learn to make good choices. I loved it when instead of sending me to the principal when I got in trouble, they started sending me to you. I must confess, a few times I got in trouble on purpose to come be with you, especially in Calculus class. You were my inspiration and the reason I became a teacher and a counselor. In my heart, I have always felt that I must give some little girl what you gave to me, HOPE.

You were the first person to be an example of what Christ wants from us, in my life, a light to draw others to him. Every milestone, I experienced in my life, you were one of the first people I would call. Because of you, I am dedicated to ensuring that girls of color have someone to advocate for them, to teach them to value themselves, and to have hope for their futures. I loved it when I was well into my thirties and you would still answer the phone “hey little girl.” That made me feel special. I owe you the world and I just hope that you are proud of the woman that I have become.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to give thanks to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for through him, I can do all things. To my soulmate, Arthur Ray Williams Jr, who calms my spirit and supports me in every endeavor I take on. Your love and support have made me a better woman and I appreciate your silent strength and undying love for me. My mother, Mary Alice Haynes, who made me promise in her last months of life to complete my Bachelor's degree. I went a little further than you expected mommy. Thank you for encouraging me to pursue my dreams. To my grandmother, Mary Louise "Momma Mae" Hardy, I love you beyond words. I am glad that I had you as a grandmother and that I was your special baby (even though we all were). Mack Emmitt Bryant, Rotesha Denera Haynes and Robert Earl Haynes II and my wonderful nieces, Tierra Mahnique Haynes and Tielah Mari Alyce Gowans and nephews, Lakeese Calon Denard Wicks, Trenell Haynes, Robert Haynes III, thank you for holding me to high expectation of excellence. I can do it, because you believe I can. To Lashaundra Seale and LaJia DeCarroll Carter, thank you for your love and support. Our father's strong genes created four highly intelligent, strong, and driven individuals. I am proud to call you my sisters.

Thank you to Tamiko Williams, Triniti Frazier, and Adrian Barrett for being by my side for decades with love and support. You have stood by me, with me, and for me for several decades with unwavering loyalty and understanding of my weirdness. God saw fit to give me two sisters and a brother and I thank Him for you every day. To my wonderful in-laws, The Williams' Sr., Cheryl, Chris, and Chas for your support and encouragement. To Alondra, T'erin, My'Toya, Yamilet, and Shamiria for helping me to realize my purpose and the ministry God gave me. I am immensely proud of all of you. To Valerie Sanderson, six long years we have stuck it out with these young ladies, I would not have been able to do it without you. Dr. Amber

Reed and David and Meredith Downs for being great encouragers and supporters. Shaniece McGill and Gary Damon, whom I met through this program. We collaborated on several projects throughout this journey and formed a friendship, although we are on completely different sides of the country.

Dr. Kara Vander Linden, for a full year you provided guidance, support, encouragement and a great amount of patience to me. Without a person like you, I am not sure if I would have made it through this process. Dr. Shoemaker, and Dr. Stone, thank you for all you have done to help me to achieve this goal. Your support and wisdom are invaluable.

Dr. Heather Miller, you brought the absolute best out of me. It was hard at times, but I know now that you pushed me because you believed in my ability. I am so very grateful to you and I hope we get to go on a doggie play date one day! Thank you for your support and understanding through one of the toughest years of my life. This journey has been great because of you.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	v
List of Figures	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem	2
Personal Experience as a Mentor	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Expansion of the Mentoring Program	4
Social Cognitive Theory	5
Social Development Model	5
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	8
Rationale and Relevance of the Study	8
Achievement Gap in Girls of Color	8
Increasing Community Diversity	9
Changes in Family Structure	9
Benefits of the Study for Stakeholders	10
Significance of the Study	10
Definitions of Terms	11
Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitation	13
Assumptions	13

Limitations	14
Scope and Delimitations	14
Summary	14
Chapter 2: Literature Review	16
Conceptual Framework	18
Significance of the learner’s culture and background.....	19
Social constructivism	20
Learning through interaction.....	21
Context and environment.....	21
Summary.	23
Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature.....	23
At-risk and protective factors.....	24
At-risk factors.	25
Protective factors.	27
The Implications of At-Risk and Protective Factors.....	29
Self-Efficacy	30
Factors that contribute to positive self-efficacy.	31
Self-efficacy and at-risk girls.....	32
Academic Achievement	33
Factors to Increase Achievement	34
Caring adult.....	35
Mentoring programs for girls.....	37
Mentors.	37

Types of mentoring programs.	38
Mentoring relationship.	39
Mentor perspective.....	40
Review of Methodological Issues	45
Synthesis of Research Findings	47
Critique of Previous Research	48
Summary	49
Chapter 3: Methodology	52
Research Question	53
Purpose and Design of the Study	54
Research Population and Sampling Method	55
Site Description.....	55
Research Population.....	56
Sampling Method.....	56
Instrumentation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Interviews.....	57
Questionnaire	58
Data Collection	58
Identification of Attributes	60
Academic achievement.	61
At-risk factors.	62
Girls of color.	62
Mentor/additional caring adult.....	62

Protective factors.	62
Self-efficacy.	63
Urban area.	63
Data Analysis Procedures	63
Member Checking Process	64
Questionnaire Analysis	65
Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design	66
Limitations	66
Delimitations.....	66
Validation	67
Credibility.	67
Dependability.	68
Expected Outcomes	68
Ethical Issues	69
Conflict of Interest Assessment	69
Researcher’s Position.....	69
Ethical Issues in the Study	69
Summary	71
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.....	72
Description of the Sample.....	72
Description of Participants.....	73
Carla.	73
Kate.	74

Sharon.	74
Alicia.	74
Yolanda.	75
Cheryl.	75
Patrice.	75
Vera.	76
Ashley.	76
Kelly.	77
Research Methodology and Analysis.	77
Data Collection	78
Semistructured Interviews	78
Questionnaire	79
Member Checking and Follow-Up Questions	79
Data Analysis	80
Coding	80
Interviews	82
Member Checking Data	82
Summary of Findings	83
Presentation of the Results	86
Semistructured Interviews and Member Checking	86
Code 1: Support from mentors	86
Code 2: Guidance and support	87
Code 3: Sharing their struggle.	88

Code 4: Feeling important.	89
Code 5: Belief in personal achievement.	90
Code 6: Next stage in life.....	91
Code 7: Learning about themselves.....	92
Code 8: Girls’ transition to womanhood.	94
Code 9: Coming out of comfort zone.	95
Code 10: How to behave in different situations.....	96
Code 11: Rapport building.....	97
Code 12: People with the same background.	98
Code 13: Follow-up with what was learned.	99
Code 14: College and career readiness.	100
Code 15: Meeting expectations.....	102
Code 16: Academic achievement.....	103
Code 17: Positive outcomes for participants.	104
Code 18: Career readiness.	105
Code 19: Self-efficacy.....	106
Code 20: Curriculum.....	108
Summary	109
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Summary of the Results	110
Discussion of the Results	112
Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature.....	113
Limitations	119

Sample.....	119
Study Design.....	120
Research Method	120
Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory	120
Practice.....	121
Policy	122
Social Constructivist Theory.....	122
Recommendations for Further Research.....	123
Conclusion	124
References.....	126
Appendix A: Mentee Structured Interview	138
Appendix B: Mentor Semistructured Interview Questions.....	139
Appendix C: Mentor Questionnaire.....	140
Appendix D: Member Checking Interview.....	142
Appendix E: Recruitment Scripts to be used via Social Media and Email.....	143
Appendix F: Statement of Original Work.....	145

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Participant recruitment process.</i>	73
Figure 2. <i>Coding process.</i>	81
Figure 3. <i>Initial codes, collapsed codes, and emergent themes.</i>	83
Figure 4. <i>Emergent themes from coding.</i>	85

Chapter 1: Introduction

The education system faces many challenges with today's youth. Far too often youth come to the classroom with myriad issues that have little or nothing to do with education. These issues frequently impede their ability to focus fully on tasks and cause them to be unsuccessful in the educational setting. Once the issues that are hindering the youth's abilities are defined, the youth is categorized as *at-risk* (Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018).

At-risk is the term used for youth who have extenuating circumstances that predict they will not successfully transition from secondary education to postsecondary education or the workforce. At-risk factors can be physical, mental, or emotional issues that have an adverse effect on the youth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018; Wesely, Dzoba, Miller, & Rasche, 2017). These factors are magnified in urban areas with families with low socioeconomic status and among youth who are bombarded with information on social media. In an effort to address the at-risk factors in this demographic, many schools and communities have developed mentoring programs (CDC, 2017). The purpose of these mentoring programs is to provide the students in urban setting with another caring adult who can help to guide the youth, help to make good choices, manage their emotions, and prepare for the future (Lakind, Eddy, & Zell, 2014; Mann, 2013). The scale of mentoring programs ranges from small neighborhood organizations to larger national organizations, like Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America.

The mentoring program goals is normally to help the youth to develop academically and to build on their resilience and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be attained in a variety of ways and refers to a sense of accomplishment and pride through personal experiences in academics, athletics, or other activities (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Henneberger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017; Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2016). Self-efficacy can be

developed within social circles. If youth participate in events like sports, debates, or challenges in their social settings, hearing people cheer them on and demonstrating that they believe in them helps produce self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can also be developed vicariously when someone else believes in another person's ability to achieve (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017). Through encouragement from someone whose opinion is valued, youth begin to believe in their ability to achieve, which develops self-efficacy. Mentoring programs are important to this process because they provide vicarious social development of academic achievement and help to facilitate the development of self-efficacy (Silveira & Boyer, 2015)

Mentoring programs have many components to address the issues of participants. The goal is to offer motivation, goal setting, support, training, coaching, and direction (Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2016; Mann, Smith, & Kristjansson, 2015; Tolbert, 2015). Another benefit of mentoring programs is access to resources that may not otherwise be readily available to the participants of the program. Providing access to technology and professional advice is a great benefit to youth who have been identified as at-risk (Gordon, & Cui, 2014; Smith, Newman-Thomas, & Stormont, 2015; Tolbert, 2015). This access helps to close the achievement gap among youth in low socioeconomic areas and those in more affluent areas (Sullivan, & Larson, 2010). Providing these resources helps the participants set educational, career, and life goals to be able to move forward in their endeavors (Leu et al., 2015). This access helps to leverage opportunities that facilitate the development of high academic achievement and self-efficacy that will help the participants' transition to adulthood.

Background, Context, History, and Conceptual Framework for the Problem

Mentoring organizations are not a new concept. There are many nationwide mentoring programs that have been in business for years, such as Boys & Girls Clubs that was founded in

1860, the YMCA established in 1844, and Big Brothers and Sisters established in 1904. These organizations had a simple purpose, to provide youth with a safe place to go afterschool. They provided guidance and support to the members of the organization while providing programming to help the youth to develop into productive citizens.

Personal Experience as a Mentor

My experience as a teacher and a school counselor for middle school youth, age 11 to age 14, has shown me that it is necessary to provide these youths with a safe place to express themselves and acquire the tools necessary to make sound decisions, think critically, resolve conflicts, and solve problems. These youths live in a community that has a majority low socioeconomic population and, therefore, they have few resources but numerous ways to indulge in behavior that is not conducive to transitioning successfully into adulthood. Those vices include but are not limited to drugs, alcohol, gangs, and prostitution. Therefore, I created a girl's empowerment group and developed a curriculum to use with the girls who participated in the group.

The group met every two weeks with a designated topic in mind. I would have two meetings about the topic, and on the third meeting we would invite a guest speaker from the community to present on the topic. In the first few years of the group, the girls were in sixth grade to eighth grade, which is ages 11 to 14. The program continued to grow because the school I worked at was a K–12 school, and these girls continued at the school. At one point we provided mentoring to at-risk girls from Grade 6 to Grade 12.

Mentoring at-risk girls became very important to me as we continued to grow because I saw the impact it had on the graduates who participated consistently. At this juncture, the older girls served as peer mentors to the younger girls. We gave them training and met with them in

smaller groups to help them to problem solve and provide guidance on conflict resolution for the younger girls. This helped both groups of girls. The younger girls felt that they had another layer of support on campus and the older girls felt more self-assured and realized that their actions had an influence on the younger girls, which caused them to become more cognizant of the choices they were making.

Expansion of the Mentoring Program

The mentoring programs branched out and began to participate in workshops and seminars in the community as guests and as hosts. We attended a variety of symposia and seminars and presented information at similar venues in the community. This allowed the participants in the program to see women from the same community who successfully navigated the issues they faced and had success in their personal and professional lives. I began to think of what an impact we could have on the community if we were to expand out of the school and developed a community outreach program. Therefore, I began to develop a plan of action to provide our program to the community at large along with the existing mentors in the program.

We partnered with the local recreation center in the neighborhood where the school is located. We began to present seminars and symposia on common issues that the at-risk girl of color faced in the community. Parents were required to sign their child up to participate in the seminars or symposia and give approval for their youth to participate in the topic of the day. We were able to reach substantially more at-risk girls through this avenue; however, the inconsistency with which some of the at-risk girls attended the seminars and symposia hindered the type of growth and progress we desired for the at-risk girls who attended this venue. The major impact was still in the school setting; however, the partnership with the recreation center still exists and efforts are being planned to increase the attendance at this venue.

Social Cognitive Theory

This study is framed in part by social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory suggests in order for a person's self-efficacy to increase, the person must experience successful performance of any kind, witness another person's success, or be encouraged by others, and have positive physiological factors (Bandura, 1986). These can increase his or her own self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). These experiences cause the individual to have feelings of value and worthiness that motivate them to make better decisions in order to have that feeling again.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance goals (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy was a major predictor of academic, social, and emotional success in prior studies (Richardson et al., 2012; Robbins et al., 2004). The ability to demonstrate the application of self-efficacy should transfer to all areas of a person's life, both personal and professional. It is an intrinsic characteristic that determines a person's ability to self-regulate, self-motivate, and become self-sufficient in his or her day-to-day life. This study will focus on the academic achievement and development of self-efficacy in girls who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting. There is limited research on the effect of gender on the development of self-efficacy (Panadero et al., 2017); therefore, several researchers have suggested that more research in this area is necessary (Herrera, DuBois, & Grossman, 2013; King et al., 2018; Peifer, Lawrence, Williams, & Leyton-Armakan, 2016).

Social Development Model

The social development model is based on the concept that the behavior patterns of children are acquired through connections with family and community surroundings (Bandura, 1997). Both prosocial and antisocial personal development is formed through the child's development of appropriate or inappropriate bonds and attachments to the social setting when

they engage with those in their environment (Hawkins & Weis, 2017). The formation of positive bonds with those in their social setting promotes the belief that the behaviors conform to the norms, values, and beliefs recognized by the community (Hardy, Bean, & Olsen, 2014). Children learn prosocial behavior when the behaviors, norms, and values displayed by the community are prosocial. Correspondingly, children learn antisocial behavior when the behaviors, norms, and values of the socializing unit are antisocial. While youth develop bonds with their families and communities, in the early stages of life, family members are the primary community influencing youth's socialization style.

The development of antisocial behavior, as described by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), results from inadequate attachment to the primary care giver in the early stages of life (Hardy, Bean, & Olsen, 2014). Proper attachment in the early stages of life should lead to prosocial behavior that helps youth develop positive factors that enable them to have resilience and build self-efficacy. On the contrary, improper attachment in the early stages of development will lead to antisocial behavior and an increase in at-risk factors that impede the youth's ability to make good choices and, instead, develop low self-esteem and low resilience. Once youth become school-aged that influence extended to their school, peers, and communities (Gross, Stern, Brett, & Cassidy, 2017). It is important to understand that antisocial behavior is not only isolating oneself from the family or community, but also partaking in behaviors that are not acceptable in all social settings.

Healthy development of youth is key to successfully transitioning to adulthood. Being able to bounce back from a setback has become increasingly important. The current generation of youth have an overwhelming need to reduce the at-risk factors in their lives and develop protective factors to help them deal with the issues they face in contemporary society (CDC,

2017). The need to fit in and the approval of others has increased dramatically with the development of social media. It has also become increasingly difficult for parents to stay abreast of all of the different platforms youth use to communicate. Some proponents believe that social media should be added to at-risk factors for youth (Kim, Oesterle, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2015). This makes it essential for researchers to determine the relationship between at-risk factors and protective factors. The ability to identify recurring themes, issues, and ideation will be beneficial for promoting academic achievement and self-efficacy of at-risk girls of color in an urban setting.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is a lack of information regarding the development of self-efficacy and academic achievement resulting from long-term participation—six to 12 months—in mentoring programs for girls of color in urban settings. The uncertainty that comes with adolescence is difficult for most students. Adolescence is particularly difficult for young girls in urban setting with the addition of issues that are considered at-risk factors for all students (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Henneberger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017; Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018; Lakind et al., 2014; Mann, 2013). Without proper guidance and support, at-risk factors can lead to negative self-esteem, and poor academic performance and can counter the development of self-efficacy. The development of self-efficacy—beliefs about one’s capabilities to organize actions—exert control over one’s performance, and achieve one’s goals in each situation, results in positive performance outcomes (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, the development of resilience in the face of adversity in order to achieve one’s goals is paramount to the success of girls of color in urban settings. Development of resilience and self-efficacy fosters the ability to cultivate self-

control, willpower, and positive outcomes, which results in an optimistic outlook on future success (Bandura et al., 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if long-term participation in a mentoring program lasting six to 12 months fosters an environment that encourages girls of color who have been identified as at-risk to excel academically and develop the belief that they can achieve their long-term goals and acquire strategies to effectively navigate challenges they may face in the future.

Research Questions

The research question that guide this study are as follows:

RQ1: What are the experiences of mentors and the participants regarding mentoring programs and development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color in an urban setting?

Rationale and Relevance of the Study

Achievement Gap in Girls of Color

The foundation of this study is an achievement gap between girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting and their counterparts in more affluent areas. This phenomenon is attributed to a lack of social capital, such as access to another caring adult who can help youth learn to make good choices, think critically, and become resilient (Cassidy, 2015; Dray et al., 2017; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Steese, Dollette, Phillips, & Hossfeld, 2006). These qualities lead to high academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy (Mann, Smith, & Kristjansson, 2015; Neel & Fuligni, 2013; van Rooij, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2017).

Increasing Community Diversity

There is increasing diversity in communities today. Additionally, the number of youth who harm themselves because of the stimuli they are exposed to daily is increasing (CDC, 2017). The development of social media provided a platform for people around the world to be connected. Unfortunately, social media has also provided the opportunity for people all over the world to share their opinions whether they are solicited or not. These unwelcomed opinions, coupled with the at-risk factors girls of color identified as at-risk in an urban setting already face on a daily basis, can cause long-term damage to the youth's self-esteem, self-image, and self-worth, which in turn decreases the likelihood that they will transition to adulthood successfully (Oman, Vesely, Aspy, & Tolma, 2015). For this reason, researchers must find different avenues to help youth develop resilience, which helps lead to the development of high academic achievement and self-efficacy.

Changes in Family Structure

An additional motivation for this study is my experience as a classroom teacher in an urban school district in which the majority youth were identified as at-risk for a variety of reasons. Most of my students were from families of low socioeconomic status in a community that was inundated with poverty, violence, drug use, and other factors that affected their ability to excel academically and develop self-efficacy (CDC, 2018). This study is also significant to me because this is the community is similar to the one I grew up in, and it has changed significantly since my childhood, as have most urban communities in the United States.

Additionally, the typical household has transformed. Many students are either in a single parent home, living with other family members, or in government systems. This study may help

the education community to develop programs that focus on the needs of girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting

Benefits of the Study for Stakeholders

The results of this study may benefit the field of education by providing new mentoring program developers increased understanding of what attributes to include or exclude from their mentoring program frameworks for this specific population. A qualitative research approach was used to answer the research question. The researcher will collect data from various sources to illustrate the experiences of the participants regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring program, which is focused on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy.

This study may help researchers examine the effect mentoring programs have on at-risk girls of color in an urban setting regarding the academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy. Having another caring adult or mentor in the lives of youth is important to me because as a youth in an urban community, I was in need of mentors and role models who could help me understand that, although my surroundings were dire, I could still achieve academically and learn to become independent through good decision making and critical thinking (Graves, Sentner, Workman, & Mackey, 2011).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because there is insufficient literature available that on participants' and mentors' perspectives on the effectiveness of mentoring programs (Tolan, Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove, & Nichols, 2014). With the increase in the development of mentoring programs to address the many issues faced by girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting, which result in an increase in low self-esteem, low self-image, and higher risk of self-harm, it is important to find methods to help them excel academically and

improve critical thinking skills and resilience, which are important to the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2013). This study may provide important feedback from mentors on strategies that are effective and strategies that need more development to be beneficial to girls of color in an urban setting who have been identified as at risk. This insight is important because most often in mentoring programs the mentors are the ones who implement the strategies provided by the program developers.

Definitions of Terms

The definitions of critical terms used in the study are as follows:

Academic achievement: Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school and higher education (Spinath, 2012). School systems mostly define cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (Spinath, 2012). High academic achievement is an indication that the individual will successfully transition to adulthood (Bandura, 2013).

At-risk: An at-risk youth is a child who is less likely to transition successfully into adulthood (CDC, 2018). Success can include academic success and job readiness, as well as the ability to be financially independent. It also can refer to the ability to become a positive member of society by avoiding a life of crime (CDC, 2018).

At-risk factors: At-risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural levels that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes (CDC, 2018). Negative outcomes include but are not limited to not graduating from secondary education, becoming a teen parent, or low socioeconomic factors.

Girls of color: Girls of color are girls of any race except Caucasian American. For the purposes of this study, girls of color will include African American and Hispanic American girls between the ages of 18 and 22 who have been identified as at-risk in an urban setting. These girls of color are graduates of the Mentoring Program GIRL, which is a pseudonym.

Mentor/additional caring adult: A mentor/additional caring adult is an experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over a period of time (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2018). The presence of a mentor or additional caring adult cultivates a desire for academic achievement and the ability to become resilient which aids in the development of self-efficacy (Abbott, 2013; Guryan et al., 2017; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016; Spencer, & Liang, 2009).

Protective factors: Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events (CDC, 2018). Protective factors come from the home, school, and/or community. The more ties the person has to family, school, and community, the more they are exposed to more protective factors that counter the effects of at-risk factors (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Houser, 2016; Steese, Dollette, Phillips, & Hossfeld, 2006).

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is the belief people have in their own abilities, specifically their ability to meet challenges and complete a task successfully (Akhtar, 2008). When youth are taught to think critically, problem solve, and make good choices, there is a greater chance of their transitioning successfully into adulthood.

Urban setting: An urban area is the region surrounding a city. Most inhabitants of urban areas have nonagricultural jobs. Urban areas are very developed, meaning there is a density of

human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. Urban area can refer to towns, cities, and suburbs (National Geographic Society, 2018). In this study, the urban setting is in Texas.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitation

Assumptions

Assumptions are views and opinions that are important to conducting the study although they cannot be proven (Simon & Goes, 2013). One assumption of this study, which was primarily completed through a semi structured interview process, is the honesty of the participants because the participants were solicited and had the option of not participating in the study. I assume that the participants who respond to the invitation to participate will be enthusiastic about participating and providing information about the program. A stipulation is that the participants be girls of color who are high school graduates who participated in the The Girl mentoring program. I assume that the participants can recall some of the activities that they participated in during their involvement in the program well enough to give competent answers to the interview questions.

Mentors in the program also participated in this study. I assume that they will be open and honest about their opinions due to their vested interest in the program. I assume that all of the mentors who choose to participate will make themselves available to complete the questionnaire and conduct the semi structured interview in the time designated. Finally, I assume the mentors will thoughtfully reflect on the information presented in the program and offer suggestions for enhancing the program for future participants.

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study are that I had no control over which of the graduates of the program responded to the invitation to participate in the study. An additional limitation is only having been able to solicit participation from the graduates who participated in The Girl mentoring program, which is a pseudonym. The mentor perspective was limited to the mentors who participated in the program as well. An additional limitation is that I have mentoring experience, and therefore, I have some preconceived ideas about the impact the program has on the graduates. Finally, analyzing this particular program could only provide comparisons to the same population of participants in order to validate the results.

Scope and Delimitations

This study is based on the perspectives of mentors and mentees who respond to the invitation to participate in the study. Other influential adults in the graduates' lives, such as parents, teachers, or community organizations, were not considered in this study. Mentors and mentees will be asked questions about their experience and interactions with one another. What they feel was effective in the program and what they believed to be counterproductive. Finally, the mentees will be asked how participation in the program impacted their ability to achieve academically and to make good choices in their day-to-day lives. The outcomes of this study are applicable to the participants in this organization.

Summary

This study was designed to determine if long-term participation in a mentoring program for six to 12 months fosters an environment that encourages girls of color who have been identified as at risk develop the belief that they can achieve their long-term goals and acquire strategies to effectively navigate challenges they may face in the future. The data collected from

the mentors and the participants of the mentoring program may help to demonstrate the effects of the program on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy. It provided insight into what parts of the mentoring program were most beneficial to the development of these two characteristics in girls who participated in the mentoring program.

This section consisted of synopsis of the research study. I provided the statement of the problem faced by this population, the background, context, history, and conceptual framework for the problem. Additionally, I provided the purpose of the study, the basis of the study's framework, and the pertinent definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Additionally, I included the research questions and the method that will be used to collect data. Chapter 2 will provide a summary of the relevant literature that relates to this study. The literature review will concentrate on how mentoring programs affect academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting. Chapter 3 will outline the research question, the purpose and design of the study, the research population and sampling method, instrumentation, data collection, identification of attributes, data analysis procedures, limitations and delimitations, validation, expected findings, ethical issues, and finally a summary of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Youth face many obstacles in today's society that can impede academic success and the development of self-efficacy. Collectively, these obstacles are called at-risk factors. At-risk factors are things or events that interfere with a youth's smooth transition into adulthood (CDC, 2017). To address this issue, there has been an increase in school and community-based mentoring programs to provide youth with an additional caring adult who can help them use critical thinking and problem solving to make good decisions, as well as develop their self-efficacy and belief in their ability to achieve academically (Mann, Smith, & Kristjansson, 2015; Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Lakind, Eddy, & Zell, 2014).

There is a lack of information regarding the development of self-efficacy and academic achievement due to participation for six to 12 months in mentoring programs for girls of color in urban settings. The uncertainty that comes with adolescence is difficult for most students. With the addition of issues that are considered at-risk factors for all students, adolescence is particularly difficult for young girls in urban settings (Deutsch et al., 2017; Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018; Lakind et al., 2014; Mann, 2013). Without proper guidance and support, at-risk factors can lead to negative self-esteem and poor academic performance and counter the development of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is beliefs about one's capabilities to organize actions, exert control over one's performance, and achieve one's goals, and results in positive performance outcomes (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, the development of resilience in the face of adversity in order to achieve one's goals is paramount to the success of girls of color in urban settings. Development of resilience and self-efficacy fosters the ability to cultivate self-control, willpower, and positive outcomes, which results in an optimistic outlook on future success (Bandura et al., 2001).

Examining the literature about mentoring programs, academic achievement, and the development of self-efficacy involved obtaining peer-reviewed journal articles and previously submitted dissertations. The Concordia University Library provided access to several databases, such as ERIC, Education Research Complete, and Education from Sage. In addition, Google Scholar was used to retrieve journal articles. Books from a public library were used, as were course textbooks from Concordia University and previously attended schools. Key terms and phrases included *mentoring programs*, *at-risk youth*, *self-efficacy*, *academic achievement*, *social cognitive theory*, *at-risk factors*, *protective factors*, *at-risk population*, and *the development of self-efficacy*. These searches produced approximately 200 journal articles, books, dissertations, and reports; however, not all the literature attained was significant to the current study.

In this paper, *at risk* will be defined and the factors contributing to it will be listed and explained (CDC, 2017). Additionally, the chapter will include a discussion of how these at-risk factors hinder the growth and development process of students. In contrast, protective factors help students build academic achievement and self-efficacy. It will also include a discussion of how these factors can help to counteract the at-risk factors. In addition to uncovering at-risk factors that inhibit the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in girls of color and the protective factors that counteract those at-risk factors, this paper will discuss a possible solution to some of these issues (Eddy et al., 2017). The proposed solution is the involvement of a caring adult who can build a relationship with youth, teach them strategies to problem solve, and help them become socially and emotionally resilient. The caring adult in these relationships is a mentor for the students from a reputable organization with results-based curriculum and strategies that have been properly vetted to ensure the desired result of the mentorship (Eddy et al., 2017).

In this section, I will offer an analysis of the literature related to the factors that contribute to the identification of youth as at-risk and the protective factors that counteract those factors. The literature review will open with an explanation of the conceptual framework of the study, followed by a review of research literature and methodology of literature. Next will be a review of the methodological issues and a synthesis of the research findings. Finally, I will critique the previous research and summarize the literature review.

Conceptual Framework

Constructivism is a theory of how knowledge is acquired (Carpendale, 2019; Charmaz, Lewis, & Mueller, 2019; Garneau & Pepin, 2015). It originates from Piaget's system of knowledge, known as *schemata* (Carpendale, 2019; Charmaz, Lewis, & Mueller, 2019; Garneau & Pepin, 2015). Proponents of constructivism contend that people attain understanding from relationships connecting their experiences and their ideas. The cognitive structure allows learners to look further than the information provided and make sound decisions based on their mental models and schematic thinking (Grant, 2016; Krahenbuhl, 2016; Ratcliff, 2018; Rob & Rob, 2018). The learning theory originated from Piaget's belief that play was an essential part of learning for children, whereas others saw play as pointless and insignificant. Piaget believed that play was a necessary element of children's cognitive development (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Carey, Zaitchik, & Bascandzief, 2019; Dennick, 2016).

Piaget's constructivist learning theory focused on two primary processes that people use to attain knowledge: accommodation which occurs when we change our existing schema based on new information, and assimilation, which is a process in which people incorporate new information and experiences into their pre-existing ideas or world view (McKinley, 2015; Ratcliff, 2018; Weimer, Dowds, Fabricius, Schwanenflugel, & Suh, 2017). People create first-

hand knowledge through their life experiences. As learners assimilate, they combine new experiences with their background knowledge without shifting their structure. This happens when learners' experiences are associated with their core values and beliefs. It can also occur when learners experience thought process miscues that cause them to hold on to defective perceptions instead of correcting the miscues (Grant, 2016; Ratcliff, 2018; Weimer et al., 2017). If the learner experiences an event and they do not understand the significance, misunderstand the response from other people, or believe that the occurrence was an anomaly, the event may be rendered insignificant to their beliefs and values (Gautam, Williams, Terry, Robinson, & Newbill, 2018; McKinley, 2015, Schrader, 2015).

Significance of the learner's culture and background. Constructivism urges learners to draw their own conclusions regarding what is acceptable based on their background, culture, values, and belief systems. Cultural attributes accounted for in constructivism theory include linguistics, reason, and numerical classifications (Charmaz, 2017; Dennick, 2016; Krahenbuhl, 2016). These attributes are acquired by the learner as a participant in a specific culture. These attributes hold true for the duration of the learner's lifetime; however, the learner can learn attributes from other cultures if they are exposed to them in a meaningful way (Charmaz, 2017; Dennick, 2016; Krahenbuhl, 2016).

The quality of learners' interactions within their social settings is paramount to the development of sound values and belief systems to become well-informed members of their societies. Absent relations with knowledgeable members of their social settings, the acquisition of meaning of their social systems is impossible, as is the use of those systems in day-to-day life (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Schrader, 2015). The development of cognitive skills and the application of those skills through interaction of the child with other children, adults in society, and the

physical world around them is one of the main reasons that Piaget believed play is important to the growth and development of youth. They learn skills such as sharing, conflict resolution, and fairness through interaction with others in their age group (Carey, Zaitchik, & Bascandziev, 2015; Dennick, 2016; Grant, 2016). For this reason, constructivists assert that it is invaluable to consider the background and culture of the child when introducing new information throughout the course of learning development. This background aids in the formation of knowledge and truth that the child produces, learns, and retains in the learning process (Rob & Rob, 2018; Weimer et al., 2017).

Social constructivism. Social constructivists assert that individuals learn from others based on interactions among the group (Amineh & Asl, 2015; McKinley, 2015; Schrader, 2015). Cognitive meaning and learning rely on interactions with others in a community. Meaning for individuals is highly dependent on the culture of the group they interact with most. The validity of this learning also depends on how often individuals interact with those who are well-informed and well-educated in the community from which they take these learning cues (Amineh & Asl, 2015; McKinley, 2015; Schrader, 2015). Social constructivism suggests there is no new learning, all learning is related existing information and is extended into and combined with prior knowledge to form new knowledge. In order to consider the implementation of new knowledge as successful, the learner must join the old precept with the new precept to incorporate a new learning experience. Learners make meaning from their own prior knowledge in addition to the new experience, and therefore not every learner will draw the same conclusions from the same stimulus (Carey et al., 2017; Charmaz, 2017; Dennick, 2016). Constructivist learners develop a unique and individualized viewpoint of the world in conjunction with the values and beliefs of

their cultures. For this reason, it is important to understand the learner's background when following the constructivist conceptual framework.

Learning through interaction. As a learner interacts with those in his or her culture and community through shared experiences and open discussions, the learner applies the new information to his or her existing belief system to form new knowledge and develop a new approach to problem solving, critical thinking, and analytical thought processing. The primary premise is the learner is a part of a larger community that constructs meaning through interactions with the larger community; it is not an intrinsic process but a result of the large community and its belief and value systems (Krahenbuhl, 2016; Ratcliffe, 2018). Although most learning takes place in the larger community or social group, there is still a uniqueness and complexity for the individual learner.

Social constructivists believe that learners' ideas of reality are based on their own experiences with the world around them and the people in their social community (Amineh, 2015; Charmaz, 2017; Schrader, 2015). There is no pre-existing reality because until learners experience the activities, they have no frame of reference of how to make meaning of the activities. However, the people in the social community create their own principles, values, and beliefs based on their culture and community. When discussion is commingled with practical activity, this is the catalyst for intellectual growth (Amineh, 2015; Charmaz, 2017; Schrader, 2015).

Context and environment. The context and environment where intellectual constructs are developed are key to the meaning that the learner attaches to the activity. When intentionally attempting to transfer knowledge, the information presented should always be challenging to the learner (background (Gautam et al., 2018; McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018). This includes the

level of the information presented according to the learner's age, maturity level, and cultural background (Gautam et al., 2018; McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018). An additional factor in learners' abilities to construct meaning is their motivation. Is the information presented relevant to the learner? Is it information that will have a direct impact on the growth and development of the social community to whom it is presented? These questions help in understanding whether the topic will affect the learner's decision making, conflict resolution, or analytical thought processes (Gautam et al., 2018; McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018; Weimer et al., 2017).

Confidence in their ability to accomplish the goal of the learning has a direct effect on the amount of effort and the level of engagement learners have with the social community as they collaborate about the topic of discussion. This ability or inability to engage originates from the learner's personal knowledge. If the learner has had an unsuccessful experience with the topic of discussion, subconsciously he or she will be hesitant to engage for fear of failure (Dennick, 2016; Garneau, Williams, Terry, Robinson, & Newbill, 2018). This phenomenon is called the *zone of proximal development*. The principle was introduced by Vygotsky, who contended that learners participate at a level that is just above their current level of understanding. The zone of proximal development is defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Ratcliff, 2018; Schrader, 2015). Scaffolding is used to extend the learner's understanding further than the constraints of physical development to the level at which the development process has delayed the learning process. If the current experience is successful, it increases the learner's confidence and their ability to master complicated task and facilitates the learner's urge to take on more complicated challenges.

Summary. Constructivism is a conceptual framework that contends that understanding and knowledge is established by learners' experiences with the world around them. The world around them includes the people in their culture and community as well as others they interact with on a regular basis. In order to experience a shift in thinking, people must have new, meaningful experiences that can be reconciled with their previous beliefs about the event (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Dennick, 2016; Garneau & Pepin, 2015). There is also the option to disregard the new information as useless, which can cause the learner to become stunted in their growth intellectually.

Constructivist learning occurs by using new information combined with background knowledge to create a new idea or belief to be used in the future. This process is similar to a spiral (McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018; Schrader, 2015). Learners use background knowledge to understand new information and determine if it is beneficial to their growth. Once they determine if they will combine, apply, or disregard the new information, either a new idea, concept, or value is formed, or the learner retains the old precept. Perhaps the most important aspect of constructivism is that it requires learners to have authentic experiences with the world around them in order to draw their own conclusions about the value of the information experience (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Carey et al., 2017; Garneau & Pepin, 2015; Dennick, 2016).

Review of Research Literature and Methodological Literature

This literature review is a thorough examination of the literature focused on the experiences of girls of color who have been identified as at-risk in an urban setting and their participation in a mentoring program. The at-risk and protective factors that contribute to the development of resilience, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-regulation is explained through the literature. Additionally, mentoring programs' effects from the participants' perspectives and

the mentors' perspectives, in conjunction with the importance of the mentor/mentee relationship, are explored.

At-risk and protective factors. A person is considered at risk if there are aspects of their lives that predict an unsuccessful transition into adulthood (CDC, 2017). Many factors can lead to unsuccessful outcomes, so virtually every young person can be characterized as at risk. The measure of success is related to the young person's ability to achieve academically, build self-esteem, or be prepared to achieve success in postsecondary education through college or career readiness. Successful transition into adulthood is fostered by protective factors in a young person's life. These factors are the opposite of at-risk factors. They help to build self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic success. Protective factors help young people become positive and productive members of society (CDC, 2017).

Examples of some of the factors that cause an individual to be identified as at risk are outlined in this section. The protective factors that counter the at-risk factors and support the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy are also outlined. The definition and development of self-efficacy are discussed based on the literature reviewed. Academic achievement is defined and analyzed as it relates to youth defined as at risk. The section also includes discussion of environmental factors and how the presence of a caring adult affects a young person's ability to have high academic achievement and develop the resilience required to have self-efficacy and smooth transition to adulthood. Various formats for forming mentoring programs are delineated. The significance of the mentor and mentee relationship is examined and the goals and assessment of the effectiveness of the mentoring program are reviewed.

According to the CDC (2017), there are three contributors to at-risk and protective factors; at-risk factors are attributes that cause undesirable outcomes, and protective factors are

attributes that lead to desirable outcomes. These contributors are individual, family, and peer or societal factors. The individual factors are characteristics or beliefs within the individual that influence decision-making and behavior. Family factors are beliefs and behaviors that affect the individual's decision-making ability. Peer or societal factors are beliefs and perceptions from outside influences that affect the way people feel, think, and react to stimulus in their daily decision-making (CDC, 2017).

At-risk factors. Many events in a young person's life can cause trauma or faulty decision-making or thinking miscues (Wesely et al., 2017). These factors contribute to the delinquency of a young person and can cause lasting consequences. According to CDC (2017), individual at-risk factors fall into three primary categories: individual, family, and peers.

The individual at-risk factors youth may face are a history of violent victimization, attention deficits, hyperactivity or learning disorders, history of early aggressive behavior, and involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. These at-risk factors have to do with the youth's environment. Additional individual at-risk factors can affect a youth's ability to transition successfully into adulthood. These factors are associated with mental and cognitive ability. They include low IQ, poor behavioral control, and deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities. High emotional distress, history of treatment for emotional problems, antisocial beliefs and attitudes, and exposure to violence and conflict in the family are also at-risk factors.

The environment the child grows up in and family belief systems, such as religious beliefs, work ethic, discipline, and independence, can shape how a child responds to stimuli in the world. According to the CDC (2017), risk factors that are associated with the family are authoritarian childrearing attitudes; harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices; low parental

involvement; low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers; and low parental education and income. These factors are largely based on circumstances surrounding the child within the family.

Other factors have a lasting impact on a youth's ability to transition successfully into adulthood, including parental substance abuse or criminality, poor family functioning, and poor monitoring and supervision of children (CDC, 2017). These issues are impactful because they have a direct effect on a youth's attitude and beliefs regarding appropriate and inappropriate behavior. They shape the youth's worldview and, without proper guidance, are extremely difficult to reverse (CDC, 2017).

School and social settings also have a great impact on children. This is particularly true for adolescents and teenagers. For a period of time, the most influential people in a young person's life is their peer group; young people's maturity levels and social media could contribute to risk factors. According to the CDC (2017), those factors could be associated with delinquent peers, involvement in gangs, social rejection by peers, and lack of involvement in conventional activities. These factors affect school and the community at large.

Some at-risk factors that are more specific to the school environment are poor academic performance, low commitment to school and school failure, community risk factors, and diminished economic opportunities (CDC, 2017). These at-risk factors have a direct impact on the achievement gap between affluent students and their lower socioeconomic counterparts. Oftentimes, in schools in low socioeconomic areas, there are not enough resources available for each student to have an effective learning experience (CDC, 2017). Other factors that are more prevalent in the community are high concentrations of poor residents, high levels of transiency,

high levels of family disruption, low levels of community participation, and socially disorganized neighborhoods.

Researchers have shown there is an opportunity for at-risk young people to improve their projected outcomes due to the at-risk characteristics in their lives through mentoring programs (Lakind et al., 2014). Pairing young people with caring adults who can give them sound advice and coping strategies to overcome obstacles they may face, in addition to providing them with guidance a support on managing their social and emotional behaviors, has been impactful in at-risk youths' lives (Lakind et al., 2014). Mentoring programs help to alleviate the damage caused to youth due to at-risk factors. When youth experience one or more of the listed at-risk factors it can cause them to be underdeveloped academically or in social or emotional maturity (Mann, 2013). The attributes that eliminate at-risk factors are categorized as protective factors. Protective factors support the growth and development of at-risk youth.

Protective factors. Protective factors, as they relate to at-risk young people, are situations and circumstance that support or strengthen the youth's ability to achieve academically, develop emotional regulating skills, or foster social skills, as well as building self-esteem and self-efficacy (Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018). According to the CDC, protective factors include individual, family, and peer factors. Individual protective factors include but are not limited to intolerant attitudes toward deviance, high IQ, high grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement), and high educational aspirations. These protective factors are closely affiliated with a youth's sense of self as it relates to high academic performance.

Protective factors that relate to the youth's self-esteem include but are not limited to positive social orientation, popularity acknowledged by peers, highly developed social

skills/competencies, highly developed skills for realistic planning, and religiosity. Positive affiliation with organizations in the community and within the school setting help youth to develop a sense of belonging that is essential to a successful transition into adulthood. If a child lives in a positive environment, where they feel loved, valued, and supported, these factors can have a positive impact on the student's decision-making and counter any other risk factors that may exist in other areas. These positive factors help children to make good choices, use critical thinking skills, and problem solve. These protective factors are categorized as family protective factors.

According to the CDC (2017), family protective factors include connectedness to family or adults outside the family, ability to discuss problems with parents, high perceived parental expectations about school performance, and frequent shared activities with parents. These protective factors help to shape youths' values and belief systems and develop the youths' worldviews. Other family protective factors are consistent presence of parents during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime or going to bed, social activities, using constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping). These protective factors help the youth to develop resilience and the ability to rebound after a difficult situation or event has occurred.

If children have a positive self-image and resilience, peers and social factors can be positive for them and those in their peer group. Developing strong bonds within their peer and social group will help to combat other risk factors in other areas of the child's life. According to the CDC (2017), peer and social protective factors include possession of affective relationships with those at school who are strong, close, and prosocial oriented, commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school), close relationships with peers who are not

deviant, membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior, and involvement in prosocial activities. These protective factors relate closely to the school environment.

Additional peer and social protective factors are intensive supervision, clear behavior rules, consistent negative reinforcement of aggression, and engagement of parents and teachers. These protective factors relate closely to relationships with caring adults and the presence of structure and discipline in a youth's life. These factors lead to a strong worldview and understanding of appropriate behaviors that lead to successful transition into adulthood.

According to Hamby, Grych, and Banyard (2018), these protective factors in conjunction with proven models for mentoring programs yield positive results in at-risk youth for mental health well-being and coping skills for future trauma, which is the development of resilience. As defined by Hamby et al. (2018), resilience consists of three key processes. Those processes are the youth experiencing a stressful or traumatic event, the youth demonstrating healthy coping skills, and recovering from using one or more of the protective factors they have learned to demonstrate resilience. When these three processes occur, youth develop the skills and strategies required to transition normally into adulthood and function normally in society.

The Implications of At-Risk and Protective Factors

There is an inverse relationship between at-risk and protective factors. Strong protective factors minimize the effects of at-risk factors on a youth's growth and development. Conversely, if youth have low protective factors, the effects of at-risk factors on their growth and development is greater. Hamby, Grych, and Banyard (2018) suggested that future research regarding the development of resilience on at-risk youth should consider the full scope of both at-risk factors and protective factors through a preventative needs assessment. A preventative

needs assessment will help to identify on a larger community scale which risk and protective factors are prominent or moderated in a particular geographic area.

Determining the factors that contribute to the delinquency of at-risk youth is paramount to developing a plan of action for a mentoring program that will maximize the protective factors for the youth who participate in the program (Mann et al., 2015; Smith, Newman-Thomas, & Stormont, 2015). Although many other factors should be considered when planning an intervention strategy for at risk youth, determining the underlying cause of the behavior and/or decision making ability is crucial to improving the youth's ability to build resilience and self-efficacy moving forward (CDC, 2018; Eddy et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2015). Deliberate planning is central to the program's ability to teach youth how to implement the strategies they learn from their mentors independently when any of the risk factors that have previously resulted in an undesirable outcome present themselves in the future.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a person's belief regarding his or her ability to achieve goals and be resilient when encountering obstacles (Bandura, 1997). The concept of self-efficacy relates closely to self-regulation and self-understanding. Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's feelings and emotions, and self-understanding can change relative to the person's awareness of self and belief about his or her future self (Deutsch et al., 2017). The commonality with all of the beliefs is they all originate in the person; they have to manifest intrinsically from the individual and should not be impacted by outside influences.

Certain risk factors, such as poverty, living in a low socioeconomic area, or a one parent household, lead to the development of low self-esteem and lack of resilience. Thompson et al. (2013) stated youth who are in disadvantaged situations, such as having low socioeconomic

status, have fewer socioemotional and intellectual resources. Collectively, this is called social capital. Schwartz et al. (2016) discussed the inequality of natural resources regarding mentors and/or responsible adults other than their parents. Not having access to social capital can affect a young person's ability to have the same opportunities as their more privileged counterparts, but it does not necessarily mean that they will become victims of their circumstance. Mentoring programs should be used to fill in the gaps of inequity. Adults in neighborhoods, schools, after-school programs, summer camps, competitive sports teams, and online interest groups often engage youth in the sorts of informal conversations and activities that can create close bonds (Schwartz et al., 2016). It is beneficial for caring adults to be a part of the same community or share the same background as the young people they are mentoring in order to build an authentic relationship with the mentee.

Factors that contribute to positive self-efficacy. Many factors contribute to building positive self-efficacy. Panadero, Jonsson, and Botella (2017) proposed that the ability to self-regulate, self-monitor, and self-assess are characteristics that contribute to high self-efficacy. Once young people experience success in any area or see someone with whom they identify achieve success, they begin to believe they too can be successful.

Self-regulation is the ability to assess one's emotion and respond in a manner that is consistent with one's long-term welfare, beliefs, and value systems (Stosny, 2017). Stosny (2017) characterized the ability to self-regulate as the capacity to deescalate situations within oneself before they accelerate and make a good choice that will be beneficial in the long term. The inability to self-regulate causes inner conflict that leads to lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Self-monitoring is similar to self-regulation because the individual assesses him- or herself inwardly. However, the self-assessment with self-monitoring is based on the social setting one is in at the time (Pedersen, 2018). Positive self-assessment means that the person is able to adjust his or her behavior based on surroundings. The lack of these skills is demonstrated when people do not demonstrate behavior that is in keeping with the environment they are in at the time. This stems from the belief that their way of responding or behavior is appropriate regardless of the setting (Pedersen, 2018).

Holistically, the ability to self-monitor and self-regulate are driven by the ability to self-assess. Self-assessment requires one to reflect honestly on themselves. This reflection is in reference to behavior, relationships, performance, and goals. One must evaluate oneself in all these areas. Once an authentic assessment has occurred and strengths and areas of opportunity are discovered, people must develop a plan of action and strategies to attain the goals they set for themselves. Action planning and goals setting are features that enhance self-efficacy because they give people a clear direction to accomplish goals and change behaviors (Pedersen, 2018).

Self-efficacy and at-risk girls. In a mixed methods study conducted by Mann, Smith, and Kristjansson (2015), the results demonstrated that self-efficacy in at-risk girls was increased after they participated in a program with mentors. Specifically, the girls expressed that they felt more school connectedness, an increase in academic confidence, more focus on attaining their goals, and more confidence about their decision-making abilities (Mann et al., 2015). Similarly, the at-risk girls who participated in the Go Girl program experiment expressed an increase in their resilience and a sense of connectedness with their mentor as well as a connection to the other girls who participated in the program (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015). With these

results there is an increase, not only in regard to self-efficacy and resilience, but also in the feeling of belonging and community.

Providing opportunities for at-risk girls to be mentored and build relationships with caring adults other than their parents is paramount to gaining a positive outcome (Smith et al., 2015). Moreover, whether these programs are offered in the school setting or within the community, it is imperative that the program provides mentors with clear expectations for the program and supports and guides the mentors when faced with difficult situations. Overall, the mentoring relationship with at-risk girls has advantageous and lasting effects for the girls who participate in the programs. These benefits include an increase in self-efficacy, which leads to better decision making, higher academic achievement, and a sense of connectedness to the community the program serves (Mann, 2013; Mann et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2015; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012).

Academic Achievement

Some students' lives cause them to not be able to achieve academic success (Neel & Fuligni, 2013). In contemporary society, many students, specifically inner-city high school students, must work for their families to make ends meet. Therefore, academic achievement becomes secondary to the needs of everyday life. It is difficult for educators to understand this issue (Gordon & Cui, 2014; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Houser, 2016). However, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the primary necessities are breathing, food, water, and shelter; therefore, this phenomenon should not be difficult for educators to understand (Niemela & Kim, 2014).

Environmental influence plays an increasingly larger role in the academic success of students. Tolbert (2015) described environmental influencers as factors in youths' situation that

hinder their development in health, education, coping mechanisms, and employment opportunities. Youth from a low socioeconomic status with less social capital than the average student has a higher likelihood to not be able to perform well academically. Although African American students may aspire to obtain high academic achievement, the environment around them can be counterproductive to that goal. Many inner-city youths have low academic achievement due to environmental influences such the lack of examples of high achievement, lack of intrinsic desire to achieve, or lack of belief that they can achieve goals beyond what their current situation shows them (Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016; DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman, 2016; Tolbert 2015). , Inner city youth are often transient, moving from place to place frequently throughout the school year, which can cause a disruption in their learning, as well as bonding with friends, teachers, and community. All these factors affect social capital, which is essential to youths' ability to set goals and attain them (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016).

Factors to Increase Achievement

Just as environmental influencers can have a negative impact on the youth who grow up in low socioeconomic areas, there are factors that can have a positive impact on the youth. The most powerful influence on youths' ability to high attain academic achievement is intrinsic motivation. Youth can have a positive outlook on academics, set goals, develop a plan to achieve those goals, and achieve academic success (Abbott, 2013; Spencer, & Liang, 2009; Thomason, & Kuperminc, 2014). These types of youth are rare; therefore, it is necessary to become aware of the other environmental influences that can help youth accomplish their academic goals.

Additional environmental influences that help youth achieve academically are called social capital. Social capital can be generated by caring adults, mentors, or community leaders

who give hope to youth in their ability to achieve and succeed in accomplishing the goals they set out to accomplish (Abbott, 2013; Spencer, & Liang, 2009; Thomason, & Kuperminc, 2014; Tolbert, 2015). A connection with an adult who can help to guide the youth toward positive decision making helps youth to be logical and rational in their thinking when faced with a difficult situation and can demonstrate through their own experiences that it is possible to be successful no matter what the other environmental influencers are that make youth believe otherwise.

Caring adult. A caring adult is a vital part of building motivation and determination in youth from low socioeconomic areas. These caring adults can come from mentoring programs, afterschool tutoring programs, or community service organizations. It is widely believed that youth who participate in one or more of these types of programs experience greater academic achievement than those who do not participate in any programs. Mann et al. (2015) asserted that the lack of success academically and less than desirable behaviors from youth are usually a result of feeling they do not have the ability to overcome circumstances that occur in their lives outside of school. Mentoring and tutoring programs not only help youth to achieve academic success, but they help them learn coping techniques and strategies that they can use to build resilience, school connectedness, and self-efficacy (Mann, 2015). An important aspect of mentoring or tutoring programs is the cohesiveness of the curriculum (Foukal et al., 2016). Mindfulness training for the mentor yields a more satisfying experience for the youth and the mentor in the long run because it helps the mentor learn to empathize with the youth on a different level and to be more youth centered in their approach to mentoring.

Nunn (2018) suggested that the rate of academic achievement of African American girls is far lower than that of their European American counterparts. This phenomenon is related to the

lack of social capital, including positive role models and mentors, available to youth in the African American community. Additionally, the unrealistic ideals about role models and positive self-image in the African American community has an adverse effect on African American girls' self-esteem, self-image, and self-efficacy (Nunn, 2018).

Finally, mentors who identify with youths' background and demographic can help to foster the youths' personal beliefs about their ability to achieve academic success. Mentors also create a safe space for the youth to express themselves openly and develop beliefs and values as well as character with the guidance of caring adult mentors who can demonstrate strategies successfully in their own lives (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Clonan-Roy et al. further suggested that the development of these relationships provides youth with real-life examples of what a productive relationship with mutual respect, support, and trust looks like and allows them to transfer these skills to other relationship in their lives.

Researchers have shown that these relationships help tremendously in developing self-efficacy and academic achievement whether or not there is a formal or informal relationship with a caring adult from mentoring or tutoring programs (Hurd & Johnson, 2013). Hurd and Johnson (2013) discovered that youth who felt a connectedness to their mentor excelled academically, socially, and psychologically because of those relationships. The caring adult in a youth's life influences numerous aspects of the youth's life including academic achievement, extracurricular activities, drug and alcohol usage, and completion of high school and furthering their education. This is due to the program design and curriculum that is developed for the mentoring program that focuses on the development of youth as a whole and not just one aspect of their lives. Mentoring programs help to build character traits that youth will need in the future in postsecondary education or the workforce.

According to Sullivan and Larson (2010), it is very important for youth to develop a meaningful relationship with a caring adult in their community. Whether these relationships are deep and long lasting or superficial and casual, the youth in these relationships obtain beneficial information that can be transferred into adulthood and help them to excel academically and build their self-awareness and self-esteem. However, there remain areas of opportunity with some programs, specifically in the informal mentoring relationship, in order for youth to gain the full benefit of the program's goal of academic achievement and building self-esteem and resilience.

Mentoring programs for girls. Mentoring programs are becoming more popular in contemporary society. Due to an increase in mental health disorders in young people, there is an increased need for caring adults who can help youth address the nuances they face in contemporary society (Dray, Bowman, Campbell, Freund, Hodder, Wolfenden, & Oldmeadow, 2017). Some youth have been cyberbullied to the point that they have taken their own lives. Some state agencies, like the Texas Education Agency, have taken a stronger stance on bullying to try to alleviate this problem. However, bullying is not the only issue today's youth face. Programs that mentor youth have become valued organizations to help youth to become more resilient and build self-efficacy (Texas Education Agency, 2018).

Mentors. The purpose of mentoring youth is to provide them with an individual who can provide guidance and give sound advice from a caring and responsible adult. These individuals can be people from their own community, church, or school, who is unrelated to the youth they mentor (Lakind et al., 2014). The objective is to help youth develop skills and strategies that are essential to transitioning to adulthood. The mentor can provide guidance on many topics, including academic achievement, social development, and any other personal endeavors the youth wishes to pursue (Lakind et al., 2014).

The primary requirement to be a mentor is being a person of good character. In the field of education, it is widely believed that people with good character are trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, and good citizens (Counts, 1996). Those traits are expected for a mentor whether professional or personal, adults or children. In general, this is what is desired to be considered a good citizen of the world.

Other traits that make a good mentor are a willingness to share information, good communication skills, a sense of compassion, and being authentically willing to help (Lakind et al., 2014). A willingness to share information when mentoring youth is imperative to fostering a positive relationship with youth. This sharing of information refers to giving sound advice, guidance, and understanding to the mentee. Good communication is an important aspect of any relationship. When mentoring youth, one needs to be honest and open while making sure that the topics that are discussed are appropriate. Additionally, having a sense of compassion for the youth one is mentoring is important (Smith et al., 2015). Most students who participate in mentoring programs do so because they have been identified as having one or more at-risk factors that warrant mentoring from a caring adult. Finally, an authentic willingness to help at-risk youth is the most important requirement of being a mentor. A mentor must have a genuine aspiration to be a consistent person in a young person's life (Smith et al., 2015).

Types of mentoring programs. There are two main formats for mentoring programs: community programs and school-based programs. Both program formats offer one-on-one and group mentoring. These programs address a number of issues. Elite mentoring programs have designated curricula and professional training for their mentors (Tolan et al., 2014). This is not always the case with school-based mentoring programs. Oftentimes, these programs are created by teachers who see the need for them based on observations in their classrooms or communities.

Some programs not only address issues with at-risk youth, but they also include training and support for adults in the lives of at-risk youth. This is beneficial to the youth and the adults in the program because it provides them both with skills and strategies to move forward in their lives in positive ways (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). Because it is widely believed that socioeconomic status, family dynamics, and family ties are some of the primary reasons youth are at risk, whether it is academically or social/behaviorally, it is valuable to provide assistance to both populations.

In rare cases, peer mentoring can be used. Peer mentoring is when a youth who is the same age or older helps other youth, either in school or in the community, resolve issues and gain skills to be successful academically or personally (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). They are usually paired due to a common issue that the mentor will help the mentee navigate. The peer mentor also helps the mentee build confidence and social skills, as well as address the problem they initially came to the program for. It is common for there to be more trust in these types of mentoring relationships because the mentor is not seen as a person of authority but as a comrade that they can trust; however, there is limited research on this type of format.

Mentoring relationship. Many benefits come from the mentoring relationship. Some mentoring programs focus on a specific population to help youth succeed and develop new skills and strategies that they can carry onto adulthood. Although programs may focus on a particular population who is need of guidance, it is not important that the mentor be of the same gender as the mentee (Timpe & Lunkenheimer, 2015). The gender of the mentor is not as important as the length of the mentoring relationship. Dewit et al. (2016) found that mentees who participated in the program for a consecutive 12-month period showed more growth than those who exited the program and were rematched.

Some problems are unique to girls, and it is beneficial for young women to have women as mentors who can relate to their issues. It is best to pair mentees with mentors who can understand their background and have had some level of success in overcoming the mentee's specific issues (Joyner, 2013). Although it is beneficial, it is not required that youth be paired with mentors who are the same gender; however, when the focus is on gender related issues it is more impactful to have a mentor of the same gender.

In summation, mentoring programs are impactful for the youth that participate them. It is largely believed that longevity in the mentoring program yields better outcomes for self-esteem, resilience, and self-efficacy. Studies also confirm that when the mentors themselves feel a sense of responsibility to invest adequate time with the mentee the outcome of those relationships are enhanced. Overall, mentoring programs on a large or small scale, whether in a community setting or a school-based program, help at-risk youth develop skills and strategies that they are most likely not to develop without the program.

Mentor perspective. An important aspect of the mentor-mentee relationship is the perspective the mentor brings to the relationship. The mentor serves as a caring adult who is otherwise missing for girls of color in urban settings; the lack of a caring adult creates a disadvantage for girls regarding academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy (Darrow, Novak, Swedberg, Horton, & Rice, 2009; Larsson et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2015). The caring adult mentor can be a person from the school setting or the community. The mentor can be a volunteer or a paid professional. Regardless of the mentor's status as a volunteer or the setting, it is important that mentors understand the value they have in the mentor-mentee relationship and how their relationships with mentees will help to shape the mentees' belief systems, ability

to develop resilience, and academic success (Lindsay-Dennis, Cummings, & McClendon, 2011; Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2016; Tolan et al., 2014).

Mentors may want to participate in programs for a variety of reasons. Mentors may want to give back to the community where they grew up or they may be invested in a particular demographic because they share similar stories and backgrounds. Whatever the mentors' motivations are, their impact can be long-lasting, whether it is positive or negative. Smith, Newman-Thomas, and Stormont (2015) suggested that the development of strong and lasting relationships with mentees can prove difficult because the youth in these programs tend to have low social skills, issues with trust, or poor self-image. Consequently, the mentors in these programs face a unique challenge because the mentees who are usually referred to them not only have academic deficiencies but also social and emotional deficiencies (Abbott, 2013; Guryan et al., 2017; Wesely et al., 2017).

Moreover, Wesely et al. (2017) argued that more knowledge regarding the characteristics of a positive mentor–mentee relationship is necessary in order to develop a widespread program model that will have a positive effect on at-risk youth who participate in these programs. They explained that this can be achieved by inquiring with the mentor about what aspects of the mentor–mentee relationship contributed to successful outcomes and what qualities of the mentor–mentee relationship hindered the development of the relationship and self-efficacy in the mentee.

Another important aspect of the mentor–mentee relationship is the duration of the program or the length of contact. Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, and Grossman (2013) found that youth who remained in contact with the mentor for a period of just over three years had a greater successful outcome than mentees who did not remain in contact with the mentor over a long period of time. They found that youth who were in contact with their mentor for less than 21

months were less successful in attaining the desired outcomes of the mentoring program (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013). Mentor–mentee relationships that could be characterized as providing social/emotional support and guidance had a higher occurrence of occupational and educational improvement (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Reynolds, & Parrish, 2018; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013)

Lakind et al. (2014) contended that proper development and training of mentors is paramount to the success of a mentor–mentee relationship. The program under study provided mentors with training on ways to address issues with mentees and their families as well as providing guidance by way of allowing the new mentor to observe an experienced mentor as they work to demonstrate best practices with the new mentor. When mentors were interviewed after their mentor–mentee relationships came to a conclusion, the mentors expressed common traits they believed to be beneficial to the relationships. Those characteristics were remaining professional, commitment to the mentor–mentee relationship, and diligence when faced with obstacles (Foukal, Lawrence, & Jennings, 2016; Lakind et al., 2014; Tolbert, 2015).

Remaining professional with the mentee can cause some challenges for the mentor. The maturity level and background of the mentee is important to consider in all cases. When dealing with mentees who have been identified as at risk, appearing to be too formal may cause the relationship between the mentor and the mentee to develop slowly (Lester, Goodloe, Johnson, & Deutsch, 2019; Lindsay, Hartman, & Fellin, 2016; Varga & Deutsch, 2016). A common cause of this is the belief that a formal or professional approach conveys authority. This can cause the mentee to be uncomfortable initially because of a lack of trust for authority figures (Lester, Goodloe, Johnson, & Deutsch, 2019; Lindsay et al., 2016; Varga & Deutsch, 2016).

A commitment to the mentor–mentee relationship is another aspect that mentors believe is important. Many participants in mentoring programs who have been identified as at risk already have inconsistency with other adults in their lives. It is, therefore, paramount that before a mentor commits to a mentee, they fully commit to the mentoring program (Kern, Harrison, Custer, & Mehta, 2018; Smith et al., 2015; Thompson, Greeson, & Brunsink, 2016). Mentoring should not be approached lightly or as an activity to do in one’s spare time. The relationship between the mentor and the mentee can have a great impact on the mentee’s academic achievement and development of self-efficacy when both parties approach the relationship seriously and are dedicated to excellence (Kern et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2016).

When mentoring youth who have been identified as at risk, the mentor will inevitably face obstacles. Whether those obstacles originate with the child, the mentoring program, or the mentor, they have to be addressed swiftly and amicably. It is a best practice to always consider the welfare of the mentee when making decisions (Kern et al., 2018; Suffrin, Todd, & Sánchez, 2016; Thompson et al., 2016). Mentees join mentoring programs for a variety of reasons and are referred by various avenues. Because of this, it is important for the mentor to understand the mentee and his or her unique circumstance in order to develop a relationship that will foster academic achievement and self-efficacy (Kern et al., 2018; Suffrin et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2016).

The most important aspect of mentoring programs is determining if they effectively accomplish their goals. Literature reveals that there is a need for more research to determine how participating in a mentoring program affects the development of academic achievement for girls

of color in an urban setting who have been identified as at risk. One aspect that makes this difficult to ascertain is most studies regarding mentoring programs are qualitative.

Qualitative research is used to determine trends, reasons, and opinions about a specific issue (Ciocanel, Power, Eriksen, & Gillings, 2017; Lindsay et al., 2016; Wesely et al., 2017). A majority of mentoring programs are structured in two ways. One structure is mentor and mentee relationship focused. The other is activity driven, with specific curriculum to be taught during the mentoring process.

With mentor- and mentee-focused programs, the relationship between the mentor and the mentee is more important than the content. The mentor does not have a particular curriculum to explore with the mentee. The mentor and mentee relationship itself are the change agent for the mentee. The mentor is the additional caring adult who helps the mentee make good choices, develop critical thinking skills, and problem solve (Ciocanel et al., 2017; Wesely et al., 2017). The time spent with the mentee and being a good role model are the pivotal factors in this type of mentoring program.

In mentoring programs with required curricula, the information and structure of the activities are the primary change agents. Implementation of the curriculum and its outcome is measured. However, with this structure, it is difficult to determine the growth and development of the mentee resulting from the curriculum (Farrington, Gaffney, Lösel, & Ttofi, 2017; Hooley, 2016; Hossain & Bloom, 2015). When the programming is not focused primarily on the unique needs of the participants in the mentoring program or is a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring, some key markers will be overlooked.

Neither approach to mentoring programs is completely independent. The literature suggests a hybrid of these approaches, where the mentor and mentee relationship is the primary

focus with suggested activities to implement that directly address the needs of the mentee; it is further suggested that the mentors should be trained on the curriculum and needs of the proposed mentee to ensure a good fit (Kupersmidt, Stelter, Rhodes, & Stump, 2017; La Valle, 2015).

Additionally, researchers have proposed that the mentor and mentee participate in group activities and independent activities in order to allow the mentor and mentee to learn with and from others in the mentoring program (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Henneberger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017; Morgan, Sibthorp, & Browne, 2016; Morgan, Sibthorp, & Tsethlikai, 2016).

Review of Methodological Issues

An analysis of the literature reviewed for this study provided the opportunity to identify several methodologies used throughout research on the topic. The research designs used were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Although each approach contained valuable information regarding this study, the qualitative approach was most appropriate for this case study.

Quantitative research designs usually require a large sample to make generalizations about the data collected from the target population. The literature drawn for this literature review included only a few quantitative research designs. The studies that used a quantitative research design were focused on the effectiveness of programs, as opposed to how academic achievement and self-efficacy were developed through the mentoring relationship (Abbott, 2013; Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Casey, Harvey, Telford, Eime, Mooney, & Payne, 2014; Dobia et al., 2013). These studies used large sample sizes ranging from 362 to 1200. The difficulty with managing a population sample this large could be why there were far fewer quantitative studies in the literature review.

Qualitative research design is used to increase comprehension of the rationale for perceptions of the social phenomenon that is being examined. Qualitative research compiles data about the study population, the needs of the study population, and the behavior patterns of the study population (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative research is best to analyze information about human behavior and human emotions, whereas quantitative research design is a measure of concrete data (Creswell, 2014). Questionnaires, interviews, preassessments, and post assessment tools were used throughout the literature review (Cassidy, 2015; Leventhal, Gillham, DeMaria, Andrew, Peabody, & Leventhal, 2015; Salvi, 2017). Longitudinal case studies, grounded theory studies, and narratives were also used throughout the literature review (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Liang, Lund, Mousseau, & Spencer, 2016; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012). In qualitative research, personal experiences and knowledge could influence the conclusions made related to the research problem. Further, in qualitative research there is no defined method to evaluate the conclusions drawn from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Mixed methods research design was more prevalent than quantitative research design, but not as prevalent as qualitative research design. Mixed method research design is useful when the researcher seeks to quantify the data collected as well as explain the human phenomenon associated with the data. The data collection used in mixed methods studies included self-report surveys, semi structured interviews, and focus groups (Dray et al., 2017; Larsson et al., 2018; Rocchino Dever, Telesford, & Fletcher, 2017). In a mixed methods study, van Rooij, Jansen, and van de Grift (2017) set out to investigate which self-efficacy factors contributed to successful transition to postsecondary education. They surveyed 759 students in Grades 10 and 11 who completed two questionnaires that measured the variables of interest. One survey was

quantitative in nature and the second survey was aimed at feelings and opinions. This method was eliminated because the study I conducted was focused more on the relationship between mentor and mentee and its impact on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy. Other methods used in mixed methods studies were questionnaires, meta-analysis, and observations. In these studies, researchers observed the participants of the mentoring program over time, used questionnaires to gather information to analyze the opinions and feelings of the participants, and conducted a meta-analysis of 14,755 participants of a program over time (Honicke, & Broadbent, 2016; Rocchino, Dever, Telesford, & Fletcher, 2017; Tolan et al., 2014;; Tolbert, 2015).

Synthesis of Research Findings

Mentoring programs have been on the rise in the past few years as a means to alleviate many of the issues that students face that lead to them being identified as at risk. The term at-risk signifies a greater propensity for the individual not to complete secondary education in the normal 4-year span (Cassidy, 2015; CDC, 2018; Dray et al., 2017; Salvi, 2017). Much research has been done regarding at-risk populations. The basic at-risk populations have been identified according to socioeconomic status, age, gender, race, English language proficiency, and preexisting medical issues (Mann, 2013; Mann et al., 2015; Rocchino, Dever, Telesford, & Fletcher, 2017). The population identified for this study fell into four of the aforementioned categories of at-risk populations, as they were socioeconomically disadvantaged young girls of color.

Protective factors are those attributes that counter at-risk factors. These factors are the positive qualities the individual has that help build resilience (CDC, 201; Graves et al.; Henry, Schoeny, Lovegrove, & Nichols, 2014; Thompson, Corsello, McReynolds, & Conklin-Powers,

2013). Researchers have argued that if people possess protective factors, they will be able to better navigate through adversity, therefore becoming more resilient and building their self-efficacy. In an effort to provide one of the attributes on the long list of protective factors, mentorship programs have been developed to provide young people with another caring adult to help them to make good choices, provide guidance on major decisions, and deal with peer pressure.

Mentoring programs have a plethora of designs and purposes with the common goal of providing additional support to a demographic that has been identified as at-risk (Abbott, 2013; Clonan-Roy et al., 2016; Guryan et al., 2017). Mentoring programs likely use set curricula and train the mentors on how to effectively deliver the program. Additionally, the development of a mentor/mentee relationship provides the mentee with another caring adult that studies have shown to be beneficial for at-risk youth (DeWit et al., 2016; Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016). If curriculum and program management is implemented effectively, the desired outcome is attainable. The desired outcome of this study is academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy.

Critique of Previous Research

The literature reviewed for this study indicates there are benefits for at-risk girls of color in an urban setting participating in a mentorship program (DeWit et al., 2016; Foukal et al., 2016; Tolbert, 2015). The literature clarified at-risk factors and how they impede an individual's ability to develop academic achievement and self-efficacy (CDC, 2018; Larsson et al., 2018; O'Mara-Eves, Brunton, Oliver, Kavanagh, Jamal, & Thomas, 2015; Salvi, 2017). There is, however, concern in regard to the length of participation in mentoring programs and the retention

of mentor-mentee relationship after the participants leave the mentoring program (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Houser, 2016).

An important factor in building academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color is the development of social and emotional competence (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Hamed, 2012; Thompson, Corsello, McReynolds, & Conklin-Powers, 2013; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012). Emotional and social competence aids in dealing with a variety of situations, which leads to the development of resilience and good coping skills. These skills ultimately lead to high academic achievement and self-efficacy (Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016; Peifer, Lawrence, Williams, & Leyton-Armakan, 2016; Wesely et al., 2017).

Overall, the consensus is that mentoring programs can have a positive impact on many areas of participants' lives. Specifically, mentoring programs that target a specific demographic are successful when they are able to develop and implement programs properly (DeWit et al., 2016; Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Foukal et al., 2016; Lakind et al., 2014; Mann et al., 2015; Reynolds, & Parrish, 2018; Tolbert, 2015). Participants can benefit in school or in the community when mentoring programs seek to increase academic achievement and develop self-efficacy among their participants (Cassidy, 2015; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Houser, 2016; Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Rocchino, Dever, Telesford, & Fletcher, 2017; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012; van Rooij, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2017).

Summary

Building academic achievement and self-efficacy is important for all youth. Almost every youth in America can be identified as at risk based on the criteria discussed in this literature review. However, low socioeconomic status, violence in their community, lack of social capital, and disconnectedness to school and community are factors for a particular demographic and

community, making youth in these situations less likely to be intrinsically motivated to aspire to academic achievement and hindering the development of positive self-efficacy (Thompson, Corsello, McReynolds, & Conklin-Powers, 2013) .

With so many factors affecting these youth, they are not successful unless an intervention is put into place to help them believe they are capable of achieving academically, developing social and emotional intelligence, and building self-efficacy (Larson et al., 2016). In recent years a solution to these issues has been to pair these students, who lack the social capital that is available to their more fortunate counterparts, with a caring adult by way of a mentoring program. Mentoring programs can help to address the issues the students face on a daily basis and help them to understand that, despite their circumstances, they are just as capable of high achievement as other youth who do not face these obstacles (Larson et al., 2016).

It is crucial for youth to develop socially and emotionally in order to excel in all areas of their lives. A deficit in any area can cause the complete breakdown of the youth's ability to overcome obstacles. This is more prevalent in today's society due to youth being inundated constantly with conflicting messages from the home, community, and social media (Peifer, Lawrence, Williams, & Leyton-Armakan, 2016). Therefore, it is important to the growth and development of all youth that they be equipped with the tools necessary to become productive members of society and set realistic goals for themselves that will lead to a desirable future as adults.

This is especially important to populations that have been underserved and underrepresented, such as girls of color in urban settings. Each subpopulation faces its own unique characteristics and obstacles. However, girls of color in urban setting face many obstacles

that can cause them to get off course and fall victim to their environment unless a caring adult helps them to learn to fill the gap of the shortcomings they face.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The education system faces many challenges with today's population in the classroom. Far too often, students come to the classroom with myriad issues that have little or nothing to do with education. However, these issues frequently impede students' ability to focus fully on the task at hand and cause them to be unsuccessful in the educational setting. Once the issue that is hindering a student's abilities is defined, the student is categorized as at risk (Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018).

At risk is the term used for students who have extenuating circumstances that predict they will not successfully transition from secondary education to postsecondary education or the workforce. At-risk factors can be physical, mental, or emotional issues that have an adverse effect on the student (CDC, 2017; Wesely et al., 2017). These factors are magnified in urban areas with families with low socioeconomic status and youth who are bombarded with information on social media. In an effort to address the at-risk factors in this demographic, many schools and communities have developed mentoring programs.

The purpose of these mentoring programs is to provide students in urban settings with another caring adult who can help to guide the youth and help them make good choices, manage their emotions, and prepare for the future (Lakind et al., 2014; Mann, 2013). The scale of mentoring programs varies from small neighborhood organizations to larger national organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America.

There is a lack of information regarding the development of self-efficacy and academic achievement due to long term participation—six to 12 months—in mentoring programs for girls of color in urban settings. The uncertainty that comes with adolescence is difficult for most students. With the addition of issues that are considered at-risk factors for all students,

adolescence is particularly difficult for young girls in urban setting (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Henneberger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017; Lakind et al., 2014; Mann, 2013; Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018). Without proper guidance and support, at-risk factors can lead to negative self-esteem and poor academic performance and counter the development of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief about his or her capabilities to organize actions, exert control over his or her performance, and achieve goals in each situation, resulting in positive performance outcomes (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, the development of resilience in the face of adversity in order to achieve one's goals is paramount to the success of girls of color in urban settings. Development of resilience and self-efficacy fosters the ability to cultivate self-control, willpower, and positive outcomes, which results in an optimistic outlook on future success (Bandura et al., 2001).

In Chapter 3, I will outline the research question, the purpose and design of the study, the research population and sampling method, instrumentation, data collection, identification of attributes, data analysis procedures, limitations and delimitations, validation, expected findings, ethical issues, and finally a summary of the study.

Research Question

The following research question were used to guide this study:

What are the experiences of mentors and the participants regarding mentoring programs and development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color in an urban setting?

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the effect participating in a mentoring program has on academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy for girls of color who have been identified as at-risk in an urban setting. Academic achievement and self-efficacy are essential to the successful transition into adulthood. If a student is academically sound, she will have more opportunities and options in postsecondary education or the workforce. Self-efficacy helps students use critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are vital to making good choices as an adult.

The issue this study addressed was the experiences of girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting and their ability to achieve high academic achievement and develop self-efficacy. The literature review conducted in Chapter 2 supported the use of a case study. The field of education can benefit from investigating the experiences of at-risk girls of color in an urban setting and their beliefs in their ability to achieve academically and build the confidence necessary to transition successfully into adulthood. Several risk factors can contribute to a girl of color who has been identified as at risk not transitioning smoothly into adulthood. Through this study, I hoped to uncover factors that help alleviate this issue.

This qualitative case study was grounded in the social development model (SDM). “Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2013, p. 18). During qualitative research, researchers collect data in a setting that is normal to the study population and analyze those data to uncover themes in the data collection (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative researchers exhibit their own self-awareness and self-understanding as they translate the results of the study with the perspectives

of the participants in mind. Researchers provide a thorough account of the research problem and measures to be taken to address the problem.

This study used a case study design. Case study design involves a thorough examination, allowing considerable detail and analysis of the case including information related to the background of the subjects of the study. This was a bounded case study, which means that the participants came together by their own means with a purpose specific to them (Creswell, 2013). A case study uses multiple sources, including observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports. I examined a specific phenomenon that currently occurs in a real-life setting.

Other research designs were considered in developing this study. I did not select a grounded theory approach to this study because the purpose of the study was not to create a new theory. An ethnographic approach is not appropriate for this study because I did not interact with the participants in their real-life setting. Further, phenomenology was not used because the focus was not on one phenomenon, but rather was on the experiences of the participants of the study.

A case study is an appropriate approach for researchers who propose to study the environment or perspective that they consider to be significant to the phenomenon they are studying (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). The research question driving this study is suitable for the case study method as it allows a thorough consideration of how mentoring programs affect the academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy.

Research Population and Sampling Method

Site Description

The site of the program examined in this study is in an urban area in Texas classified as a low socioeconomic area. It is one of the largest divisions of Texas and used to be its own city.

When it was its own city, it was considered to be a luxury area of the city where the wealthy lived or came for vacation. Over the past several decades, that has changed dramatically.

Most of the residents of the area use some form of public assistance, whether it is Section 8 housing, food stamps, or free or reduced lunch. The demographics in this area is 6.5% African American and 69% Hispanic American (Statistical Atlas, 2018). The school where the organization was first developed has a student population of 70% Hispanic American and 28.5% African American (Charter School, 2018). One hundred percent of the student population, more than 2000 students, receive free lunch due to their low socioeconomic status

Research Population

The research population in this study consisted of 32 young women, ages 18 to 23, who participated in the community mentoring organization The Girl, which is a pseudonym, and five women who served as mentors for the program. These young women lived in the same area. The young women participated in The Girl mentoring program for between one and five years. Although the young women lived in the same community and attended the same high school, they did not all have the same experience in their home life and have been identified as at risk for various reasons. Additionally, mentors of The Girl mentoring program participated in the study. Ten women served as mentors in the program for between one and five years. These women were either educators from the school where the program was created or community leaders from the area.

Sampling Method

I used a purposive sample in this study, which is nonprobability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The objective of a purposive sample is to yield a sample that can be reasonably

expected to be characteristic of the population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). I placed an invitation on the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. The invitation clearly stated the target audience was young women between the ages of 18 and 23 who participated in the mentoring program The Girl or served as mentors for the program. Interested parties contacted me via social media messaging services. Once the timeframe to respond closed, I selected 10 young women and two mentors to participate in the study.

The program began with girls age 13 to 15, grades 6 to 8. The organization was formed due to the high incidents of conflict among the middle school girls and a lack of ability to effectively resolve conflict. I solicited the principal of the school to start a program that would give the girls an opportunity to express their frustrations, learn conflict resolution, set goals, and the make good choices. In the initial cohort, the program had 27 girls; therefore, I enlisted the assistance of two other teachers in the school to help to manage the group.

Instrumentation. Data for this study were collected through interviews in addition to an anonymous questionnaire for the mentors of the organization. Wilson (2016) stated interviews are useful when the researcher desires to explore human issues that are better answered by words rather than numbers. This study used two different forms of interviews. I used a semi structured face-to-face interview to gather data from participants who graduated from The Girl mentoring program. The mentors of the program participated in a semi structured face-to-face interview in order to gain key information and allow them to elaborate when necessary.

Interviews

Both the graduates of the program and the mentors of the program participated in a semi structured interview. The interview for the graduates consisted of 10 open-ended questions designed to elicit an in-depth response (see Appendix A). The semi structured interview for the

mentors consisted of 15 open-ended questions designed to elicit in-depth responses from the mentors of the program (see Appendix B).

Graduate and mentor interviews took between 60 and 90 minutes. They took place at a neutral location agreed upon by the participant and me. The interviews were recorded and after the interviews were transcribed, the tapes were erased. All information was stored in a locked container with no identifiable information, and no identification was included in any publication or report. The interviews did not have any identifiable information on them when they were printed for analysis. The electronic information, when loaded in to the NVivo data analysis tool, had no identifiable information from the recordings.

Questionnaire

Three mentors from the program were also asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions that have a closed response on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being no discussion/very unsatisfied and 5 being excellent discussion/very satisfied. Five open-ended questions were used to elicit in-depth responses from the mentors. The purpose of the anonymous questionnaire was to alleviate the possible conflict of interest due to my position as director of the program since its inception. Although none of the mentors or myself were compensated for participation in the program as mentors, my perceived position of authority may have caused mentors to agree or answer favorably about certain topics in the semi structured interview. Both the interview questions and questionnaire can be found in the appendices of this dissertation.

Data Collection

This study used a semi structured form of interviewing. Mentors and graduates from the program were informed of the scope of the study and ensured that all information obtained

through the interviewing process would be kept confidential, in order to help the participants feel comfortable to speak freely. The interviews took place in a neutral and comfortable setting (Creswell, 2013). The location was agreed upon between the participant and me, with the intention of providing a space where the participants could feel free to speak openly and honestly about their experiences with the program. The surroundings and privacy of the area were considered when agreeing upon a space to conduct the interviews.

I prepared two different semi structured conversations. One semi structured interview was for the mentors who worked with the young women in the group. The other semi structured interview was for the graduates of the program, over the age of 18, who participated in the group for at least nine months. The interviews were conducted individually and in a neutral setting that was agreed upon prior to conducting the interview. The interviews were designed as semi structured in order to allow flexibility to ask probing questions when there was a need to elaborate on an answer to a predetermined question.

Participants completed and informed consent form that asked for permission to be recorded to document the questions and answers during the interview. The forms were sent to the participants via email to complete prior to scheduling the interview. I also took notes of nonverbal communication during the interview. The interviews were transcribed in a reasonable amount of time after the interview took place. The structured portion of the interview was the prewritten questions regarding basic information about the mentoring program and its purpose. The follow up questions were based on the response the participant gives to the prewritten questions. The follow up questions were used to encourage the participants to clarify or elaborate on a question or idea they expressed in their answers to the prewritten questions.

Identification of Attributes

The attributes of this study were at-risk, at-risk factors, girls of color, urban setting, urban education, academic achievement, mentoring programs, mentoring/additional caring adult, protective factors, and self-efficacy. The designation of *at risk* for students in the education system signifies that there may be obstacles in place that hinder the student's ability to excel. The classification of at risk usually indicates a future with less than desirable outcomes.

An at-risk youth is a child who is less likely to transition successfully into adulthood (CDC, 2018). Success can include academic success and job readiness, as well as the ability to be financially independent. It also can refer to the ability to become a productive member of society by avoiding a life of crime (CDC, 2018). Youth are considered at risk for a number of reasons. Examples include youth who may be:

- Homeless or transient: Homeless students are those who are not listed on a lease or mortgage with a parent or guardian. Transient students are those who do not have a permanent place of residence.
- Involved in drugs or alcohol: Being involved with drugs or alcohol as a teenager is a considered to be at-risk behavior because it is illegal before the age of 18.
- Abused sexually, physically, or emotionally: Sexual, physical, or emotional abuse can cause youth to not be able to develop proper coping skills and hinder their transition into adulthood.
- Mentally ill: Mental illness, especially undiagnosed, is a predictor of unsuccessful transition into adulthood due to lack of resources for at-risk youth and stigma associated with mental illness.

- Neglected at home or live in stressful family environments: Child neglect and/or a stressful family environment impedes youth's ability to focus, causing them to be more transient, unstable, and unable to manage emotions.
- Lacking social or emotional supports: Social and/or emotional support is important to youth's development of resilience and sense of self. Without this support, youth are prone to low self-esteem and unsuccessful transition into adulthood.
- Involved with delinquent peers: Social circles and peer pressure can be beneficial or detrimental to youth. Being involved with peers who engage in risky behavior can pose a problem for youth who do not have a strong sense of self. (Farkus, 2017)

Many factors in students' lives place them in the at-risk designation. Any of those factors can impede on students' ability to attain academic achievement and self-efficacy.

- Girls of color are non-Caucasian young women age 13 to 21.
- The urban setting refers to metropolitan communities that normally are culturally diverse, categorized by large populations and complexity.
- Mentoring programs connect people with services and/or information with people who need or want the services and/or information being offered by the program that provide an opportunity to excel in school, work, or life skills. (CDC, 2017)

Academic achievement. Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university (Spinath, 2012). School systems mostly define cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (Spinath, 2012).

High academic achievement is an indication that the individual will successfully transition to adulthood (Bandura, 2013).

At-risk factors. At-risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural levels that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes (CDC, 2018). Negative outcomes include but are limited to not graduating from secondary education, becoming a teen parent, or low socioeconomic factors.

Girls of color. Girls of color are girls of any race except Caucasian. For the purposes of this study, girls of color will include African American and Hispanic American girls between the ages of 18 and 22 who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting.

Mentor/additional caring adult. A mentor/additional caring adult is an experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over a period of time (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2018). The presence of a mentor or additional caring adult cultivates a desire for academic achievement and the ability to become resilient, which aids the development of self-efficacy (Abbott, 2013; Guryan et al., 2017; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016; Spencer, & Liang, 2009).

Protective factors. Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events (CDC, 2018). Protective factors come from the home, school, and/or community. The more ties people have to family, school, and community, the more they are exposed to protective factors that counter the effects of at-risk factors (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Gordon & Cui, 2014; Houser, 2016; Steese, Dollette, Phillips, & Hossfeld, 2006).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief people have in their own abilities, specifically their ability to meet challenges ahead and complete tasks successfully (Akhtar, 2008). When youth are taught to think critically, problem solve, and make good choices, there is a greater chance of the youth transitioning successfully into adulthood.

Urban area. An urban area is the region surrounding a city. Most inhabitants of urban areas have nonagricultural jobs. Urban areas are very developed, meaning there is a density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. Urban area can refer to towns, cities, and suburbs (National Geographic Society, 2018). In this study the urban setting is in Texas.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis, as defined by Creswell (2007), is formulating and arranging the data collected, separating the data by subject matter, and decoding the results. The use of the case study method requires a comprehensive description of the case, and inductive analyses were used to analyze interview data. The purpose of transcribing the interviews as early as possible was to create a brief summary of the interview, determine connection between the research objective and the raw data obtained through the interview process, and develop a model or theory regarding the underlying structures of experiences (Thomas, 2006). In order to synthesize the information from the interviews and the notes taken by the researcher, it was paramount that the data be processed in a timely manner. The transcripts were examined to classify emergent perceptions, ideologies, and events within the interviewees' responses.

Following this process, I examined the interviews to decode the meaning of the perceptions, ideologies, and events discovered through transcribing the interviews. Subsequently, coding the information allowed categorization of the perceptions, ideologies, and events. Next,

the data were sorted into groups using a computer program. After the computer program sorted the data, I analyzed the information to look for any overarching or secondary themes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) and for evidence of discrepancies.

The information was aligned into categories based on the interview questions. Codes were assigned based on commonalities in the answers provided by participants for each data set. These data sets were organized into groups based on the labels using Microsoft Excel. The next step was an examination of the data more methodically to categorize any secondary themes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Once coded and sorted, I converted the themes to a table and examined them for commonalities, overlap, and overarching themes. This allowed for the condensation of themes into smaller groups when themes could be combined. Repeated themes found through this process became the final themes. Prior themes with no overlap were eliminated. The final themes were determined by the frequency with which they appeared in the transcription.

Member Checking Process

Member checking was the next step of the data analysis process. The data was transcribed, coded for similarities, and categorized by recurring themes. During this process, I had follow up meetings with the participants in person to discuss my findings and ensure that my interpretation of their responses was what they intended to communicate. After the follow-up interview was completed, I conducted inductive analysis due to the limited theories of this study topic. I also conducted deductive analysis as a comparative analysis of the themes and commonalities uncovered in first interview with themes and commonalities in the member checking interview.

Questionnaire Analysis

I used Qualtrics to create tags for the data analysis. The tags added to the data allowed the software to convert the comments from the open-ended questions into reportable data. I also created subtabs that allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the subtext. Once the data were compiled for the questionnaire, I used the filtering tools on the software to break the data down into more granular target set. The filter was used on all of the tags that were added to the questionnaire in order to uncover common themes in the questionnaire and the interviews. These themes were addressed in the member checking interview along with the questions from the initial interviews.

Throughout the data analysis process, I was mindful of the focus of the study, which was the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting. The analysis of the data must accurately reflect the feelings and beliefs of the participants regarding the effect participation in the mentoring program had on their development of these attributes. Therefore, as the process of analyzing the data progressed, if themes or commonalities changed, they were reported accurately and without bias.

The use of multiple forms to collect and analyze the data helped eliminate any biases or preconceived beliefs about the outcomes of the study. Creswell (2013) asserted that in order to rationalize and categorize data, the researcher should take the data apart and put them back together. The data triangulation process of first interview, peer-review, and audit inquiry outlined key concepts, themes, and commonalities to determine how participation in a mentoring program affected the academic achievement and development of self-efficacy in girls of color who had been identified as at risk in an urban setting.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research Design

Limitations

Limitations are parameters that are beyond the researcher's control. They are the inadequacies, circumstances, and/or powers that are not controlled by the researcher and boundaries on the methodology and assumptions (Pyrzack, 2016). The primary limitations of this study were that I had no control over which of the young women responded to the invitation to participate in the study. Additionally, only being able to solicit participation from young women that participated in The Girl mentoring program narrowed the population sample. The next limitation was that I was the founder and a mentor in The Girl mentoring program, and therefore, I had some preconceived ideas about the impact the program had on the young women's lives.

Another limitation of this study was that a case study alone is not enough to indicate the effectiveness of mentoring programs on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy. Therefore, it is imperative to use better program evaluations for future research on this topic. Analyzing this program, with 32 participants who have graduated, prohibited the study from drawing comparisons to a broader audience in order to validate the results. Finally, there is limited generalizability in case studies.

Delimitations

Delimitations are parameters set by the researcher. They designate the restrictions that the researcher sets for the study (Pyrzack, 2016). This study is based on the mentors' and mentees' perspectives. Other influential adults in the participants' lives, such as parents, teachers, or community organizations were not considered in this study. Mentors and mentees were asked questions about their experiences and interactions with one another, what they felt was effective in the program, and what they believed to be counterproductive. Finally, the mentees were asked

how participation in the program affected their ability to achieve academically and to make good choices in their day-to-day lives. The outcomes of this study are applicable to the participants in this organization.

Validation

The aim of research is to provide reliable information about the study. Validation is the method that establishes written evidence proving that a procedure or process passed in testing and maintains the anticipated level of compliance at all steps of the process (Creswell, 2013). Validation of a qualitative study is difficult because it is a measure of one person's understanding versus another's. Proving validity in a qualitative research study is not as specific and well-defined as those for quantitative research studies. However, there are a number of proven strategies that can be used to validate the data collected for accuracy.

Credibility. In this study, one of the techniques used to check the validity of the data collected was member checking. The use of member checking involves the researcher surveying the participants to gauge their opinion regarding the correctness of the findings. Additionally, the participants were asked to evaluate the manner in which the data were interpreted (Creswell, 2013). For the purposes of this study, I took my initial analysis to the participants to solicit their opinions of the accuracy of the outcomes of the study. This method assisted with determining if the themes and patterns that were developed were a correct interpretation of what the participants tried to convey during the data collection phase of the research.

An additional strategy that was employed to increase the credibility level of this study is peer review, or debriefing. With this method, I will gain an outside examination of the research methods used in the study (Krogh, Bearman, & Nestel, 2016). I will work with two colleagues who have already obtained their Doctor of Education yet have unbiased views regarding the

study. They will be allowed to examine the transcripts, final report, and methodology of the study (Krogh, Bearman, & Nestel, 2016).

The final strategy used to support the credibility of the study was rich, thick descriptions to document the study's results. Through this, readers will be able to draw their own conclusions with regard to the transferability of the study findings (Morse & McEvoy, 2014). This will provide the reader with the opportunity to determine if the research outcomes can be applied to other situations (Creswell, 2017). The reporting of the results of the study included quotes from the participants to allow readers to draw their own conclusions about the participants' points of view and not rely on the word of the researcher.

Dependability. Dependability of the results involves the interpretation and recommendations of the study, such that all aspects are maintained by the data received from participants. It speaks to the consistency of the results over time, it proves that the data have stability over a variety of conditions, and it helps to demonstrate that the research outcomes are reliable (Tong, & Dew, 2016). In this study, to ensure dependability, an inquiry audit was performed by the two parties who performed the peer-review of the study findings.

Expected Findings

I expected the research to show that the participation in a mentoring program for six months or more helped to build academic achievement and self-efficacy. It was my expectation that the findings would inform the literature by providing evidence that mentoring programs can be beneficial to at-risk girls in urban settings regarding academic achievement and self-efficacy. This study confirmed prior research theories about the impact of another caring adult on the development and success of girls of color in urban settings who have been identified as at risk.

Ethical Issues

Conflict of Interest Assessment

A perceived conflict of interest in this study is that I am the founder and director of the mentoring program used for this study. The curriculum and activities were created by me or one of the other mentors in the organization. To mitigate this issue, the mentors participated in an anonymous questionnaire that consists of 17 questions, 12 scaled questions, and four open-ended questions. The participants were provided with a link to the questionnaire. The questionnaire had no items that required participants to provide personally identifying information. The results of the scaled questions were automatically calculated by the Qualtrics service. I analyzed and interpreted the open-ended questions; this analysis was validated during the peer-review and audit inquiry.

Researcher's Position

I was the principal investigator for the purposes of this study. I was responsible for preparing, facilitating, and interpreting the research instrument. All processes and procedures adhered to the guidelines and regulations set forth by Concordia University–Portland. For the purposes of this study, my role as director of the organization took an auxiliary role to that of the researcher. During the data collection and analysis process, there were no meetings or events for the organization. In case of emergency, a designated mentor responded to the current participants of the program.

Ethical Issues in the Study

Creswell (2013) stated, “A qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports” (p. 37). Before collecting any data, I obtained approval from Concordia University–Portland

Institutional Review Board. In order to safeguard the ethical rights of the participants of the study, I adhered to elements introduced in Lipson's (1994) list of ethical issues:

- Pseudonyms were assigned to participants in order to keep their information confidential.
- Participants were told about the purpose and nature of the study and its possible outcomes.
- Participants were able to decline to participate in the study, decline from answering any questions they did not wish to answer, and could decide to discontinue participation without prior notice.
- I informed participants that there would be no social repercussions for declining to participate.
- I asked all participants who took part in the study to consent by replying "I consent" to the e-mail I send to them. The consent form was reviewed with them before the interview begins.
- I asked participants to avoid discussing information off the record while the study took place.
- I avoided sharing personal information with the participants during interviews in order to refrain from influencing the information shared by participants.
- I informed the participants that their information would remain anonymous and no identifiable information would be provided in the study's results.
- I informed the participants that the records would only be accessible to me, as the principal investigator and the recordings would be deleted after transcription.

Summary

This study was an attempt to provide new data showing the impact mentoring programs have on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at-risk living in an urban setting. The data collected from the mentors and the participants of the mentoring program helped to demonstrate the effects of the program on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy. It provided insight into what parts of the mentoring program were most beneficial to the development of these two characteristics in the girls who participated in the mentoring program.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the influence participating in a mentoring program had on the academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy for girls of color who have been identified as at-risk in an urban setting. A case study was chosen because it allowed me to gather opinions of the mentors and mentees of the program in a neutral setting through the use of interviews and a questionnaire. In Chapter 4, I will provide a description of the sample, the research methodology and analysis, a summary of the findings, presentation of the data and results, and the Chapter 4 summary.

Description of the Sample

I recruited 32 young adults aged 18 to 23 who participated in a girl empowerment mentoring group as mentees. The mentees live in an urban area of Texas and attended the same middle school and high school. They are African American and Hispanic. All the mentees had been identified as at-risk of not successfully transitioning into adulthood for a variety of reasons, one being that they all qualified for free or reduced lunch at their school. This is an indication of low socioeconomic status. Of the 32 solicited, I received seven responses to participate in the qualitative case study.

The second set of participants were three women aged 30 to 45 who participated in the mentoring program as mentors. I sent an invitation to participate to 10 mentors of the program, of whom three responded to participate in the qualitative case study. These women had a variety of professions that allowed them to provide a unique perspective to the mentoring program. They were either educators at the school the mentees attended or leaders in the community where the mentees lived. See Figure 1 for the recruiting process.



Figure 1. Participant recruitment process.

Description of Participants

All names are pseudonyms.

Carla. Carla is an 18-year-old African American woman who just completed her senior year in high school. She was the senior class president and captain of the school's dance team. Carla was ranked number in the top 10% in her class of students. She attended the school since pre-kindergarten. Her mother died when she was in second grade; therefore, her maternal grandmother was her legal guardian.

Carla joined The Girl mentoring program because she did not have examples of women in her family whom she looked up to. She had a strong voice on campus and was well liked by many. Carla was the type of student who could make or break a classroom, as many of the students followed her lead. She was an influencer on campus. Carla was in the mentoring program for six years.

Kate. Kate was an 18-year-old African American woman who just completed her senior year in high school. Kate was the president of the National Honors Society on campus and an officer in the dance team. Kate was ranked number in the top 10% in her class of students. She attended the school since fourth grade. Her mother struggled with drug addiction and had several trips to jail or the hospital as a result of her addiction.

Kate joined The Girl mentoring program because she felt lost and unsure of herself in middle school. She did not want to be like her mother and her surroundings, so she looked to her teachers as an example of how to be a good person and a good woman. Kate was in the mentoring program for six years.

Sharon. Sharon was an 18-year-old African American woman who just completed her senior year in high school. Sharon was a member of the dance team. Her interests were hair and make-up, so she often styled the dance team's hair and make-up for competition. Sharon was in a two-parent home with her younger sister. She was not a high achiever academically; however, she was popular among her peers.

Sharon joined the group by request from one of her teachers because she always seemed to find herself involved in girl drama. Her mother became gravely ill in her junior year of high school and the prognosis for her recovery was grim. Sharon was in the mentoring program for six years.

Alicia. Alicia was an 18-year-old Hispanic woman who just completed her senior year in high school. Alicia was a part of the theater arts club and the yearbook committee. She was the photographer for both groups. She lived in a two-parent home with her older siblings. She was an average student academically, but she struggled to find her place in the many cliques in the school.

Alicia joined the mentoring program because the founder of the program was her favorite teacher and had helped her on several occasions when she felt bad about herself. She was a cutter in sixth and seventh grade, a habit her mentor helped her to overcome. She was in the program for six years and created the logo for the mentoring group.

Yolanda. Yolanda was an 18-year-old Hispanic woman who just completed her senior year in high school. Yolanda was one of the first members of the girls' soccer team at her school. She was an average student academically. She had aspirations of going to college to become a teacher. She called herself an extroverted introvert. She was shy but once people got to know her, she was funny, charming, and smart.

Yolanda joined the mentoring program with Alicia because they were close friends. She lived in a single-parent home with her mother and siblings and in her own words, joined the program to get away from home. She was in the program for six years and became a mentor to younger girls in the program.

Cheryl. Cheryl was a 20-year-old Hispanic woman who was entering her junior year in college. Cheryl excelled academically and graduated third in her class. She received a full scholarship to her first-choice university. She is studying criminal justice and wants to be a Detective.

Cheryl lived in a single-parent home. However, her mother was a professional and she did not fall in the category of at-risk for low socioeconomic status but because she was from a single-parent home. Cheryl was in the mentoring program for four years before she graduated.

Patrice. Patrice was a 20-year-old African American woman who was entering her junior year in college. When Patrice first joined the organization, it was at the request of one of the mentors to serve as a mentor to the younger girls in the organization. Patrice was well known and

well like on campus by students and teachers. She was the captain of the dance team for three years and vice president of her junior and senior class. Academically, Patrice was ranked in the top 10 in her class and she received one of the largest scholarships the school ever gave to a student.

Patrice lived in a two-parent home with her twin brother and younger siblings. They actively participated in the community through church and charity organizations. Patrice is studying psychology and wants to be a therapist when she graduates.

Vera. Vera was a Hispanic woman who served as middle school English teacher. She had been in education for five years when she started to mentor in the program. She was working in a Title 1 school, which signifies that the district has a high poverty population. She was in her second year at the school when she became a mentor. Vera wanted to be a mentor because she was two doors down from the founder of the organization and she could hear some of the things they were doing in the academics. Additionally, she had some of the same students and would hear the girls talking about what they did in the academy or field trips they would take to seminars and symposiums.

Ashley. Ashley was an African American woman who served as the assistant principal of the school where the mentoring program was created. When she came to campus, the founder of the organization was one of the teachers the principal recommended she observe. During that first meeting they discussed the mentoring program and the vision for the organization. According to district policy, all clubs must have an administrator. Ashley gladly volunteered to be the administrator for the program.

Ashley grew up in the area that the students lived in, although it was very different when she was a young girl in the community. She had been in education for 10 years as an educator

and this was her first position as an administrator. She was 31 years old at the time that she became a mentor and had earned her Doctorate degree in Administration.

Kelly. Kelly was a Hispanic woman who was a counselor, life coach, and etiquette instructor. Kelly became a mentor in the program after she was a presenter to the group in the second year of the organization. She presented a two-part etiquette class to the participants of the mentor program. She received such heartfelt messages from the girls that she wanted to get more involved in the mentoring program.

Kelly grew up in the area that the girls in the program currently reside. She believed in the vision of the program and its purpose. She had been an educator for four years, a counselor for two years, and a life coach for one year when she became a mentor in the program.

Research Methodology and Analysis

I used a qualitative case study design to understand the influence mentoring programs have on academic achievement and development of self-efficacy. This case study was instrumental because it was designed to gain insight into a phenomenon (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, & Casey, 2015). The question that guided the research study: What influence do long term mentoring programs have on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color in an urban setting?

In this study, I used semi structured interviews with the mentees and mentors, as well as member checking to analyze the data (Glesne, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010). In addition, I used a questionnaire for the mentors to alleviate any perceived conflict of interest in the study. I conducted face-to-face interviews at a variety of public locations as agreed upon with the participants of the study. The interviews were recorded using Voice Recorder and NVivo to transcribe the recordings. Upon completion of the interviews and the transcriptions of the

recordings, I had follow-up meetings with the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy and to clarify any points the participants wished to elaborate. There were three additional questions to assist with data collection:

1. “What hurdles remain that hinder your ability to use the information you gained in the program?”
2. “Would other young ladies benefit from this program? Why or Why not?”
3. “How has the program changed the way you live?”

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected in two phases. The initial phase was the semi structured interviews with the mentees and mentor, the mentors simultaneously participated in a questionnaire. Each interview took 60 to 90 minutes depending on the length of the participant’s responses. After the data were transcribed, I had a follow up meeting with the participants for member checking and follow-up interviews.

Semi structured Interviews

The structured interviews were conducted with the seven mentees and three mentors in a span of two weeks. The meetings were scheduled for one hour, and the interviews were in a variety of settings that were neutral to the participants and me. The locations were restaurants, offices, and local libraries according to the preference of the participants. The interviews were recorded on voice recorder in conjunction with notes that I took during the interview. The notes included standout phrases as well as body language, eye contact, and other nonverbal cues.

The mentee semi structured interview was comprised of 10 prewritten open-ended questions to solicit a thorough response to the question (see Appendix A). The mentor interview was comprised of 15 prewritten open-ended questions to solicit a thorough response to the

question (see Appendix B). The mentor questionnaire was comprised of three sections with questions for that category. The first section of the questionnaire was comprised of seven questions concerning the mentor's satisfaction with aspects of the mentoring program on a scale of one to five, five being very satisfied and one being very dissatisfied. The second section of the questionnaire was comprised of five questions concerning how in-depth the mentor was able to cover program topics with the mentees. The third section was comprised of five open-ended questions soliciting the mentor's opinion on strengths, weaknesses, and modifications to the program curriculum (see Appendix C).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created in Qualtrics, as required by the university. It consisted of 16 questions. There were 12 multiple choice questions and four open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was administered to the mentors of the program. The questionnaire link was sent to the mentors through their personal email address simultaneously. Once all three of the mentors had responded to the questionnaire, I used the application tools to interpret the information provided in the questionnaire.

Member Checking and Follow-Up Questions

After the interviews were transcribed and reviewed with the recorded interview to ensure accuracy of the transcripts, I met with each participant again. I provided a copy of the transcript. I allotted time for each participant to read the transcript thoroughly to confirm that the transcript was accurate. Once this process was completed, I asked the participant additional questions. The first question I asked was "What hurdles remain that hinder your ability to use the information you gained in the program?" Next I asked, "Would other young ladies benefit from this program? Why or Why not?" My final question was "How has the program changed the way you live?"

The first question was only posed to the mentees. The second and third question was posed to both mentees and mentors. NVivo qualitative data analysis software transcribed the interviews.

Data Analysis

Hatch (2002) asserted that inductive analysis is used to identify concepts, themes, and events that emerge from the interviews as a collective. The initial interview was transcribed using NVivo Qualitative Analysis software. Once the data were transcribed, I verified the accuracy of the transcripts by listening to the recorded interviews as I read the transcripts. After this process was complete, I sent the transcripts via email to the participants to review them for validity. As the participant responded with edits, which were few and minor, I began to analyze the data from the interviews.

Coding

Saldaña and Omasta (2016) held that coding is the process by which the researcher identifies themes, concepts, and ideas from text to develop a connection between the information and linking it to research ideas and other data related to the research question. The inductive analysis model was used to examine the data that were collected from semi structured interviews and a questionnaire taken by the mentors, as well as the member checking interviews. I examined the transcripts for words, phrases, and sentences that represented common ideas, beliefs, or sentiment. The initial codes were developed from analyzing data from the first interview, questionnaire, and personal narrative. During this process I found 72 codes.

Once this process was complete, I scheduled the participant meetings for member checking and follow up questions. When the member checking meetings were completed, the recordings were transcribed using NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis software. The second interviews were transcribed, and I verified the transcripts by listening with to the recordings

while reading the transcripts. The next step in the process was to analyze the data from the member checking interviews. After the interviews were analyzed, there were three more codes add for a total of 75 initial codes. See Figure 2 for the Coding Process.

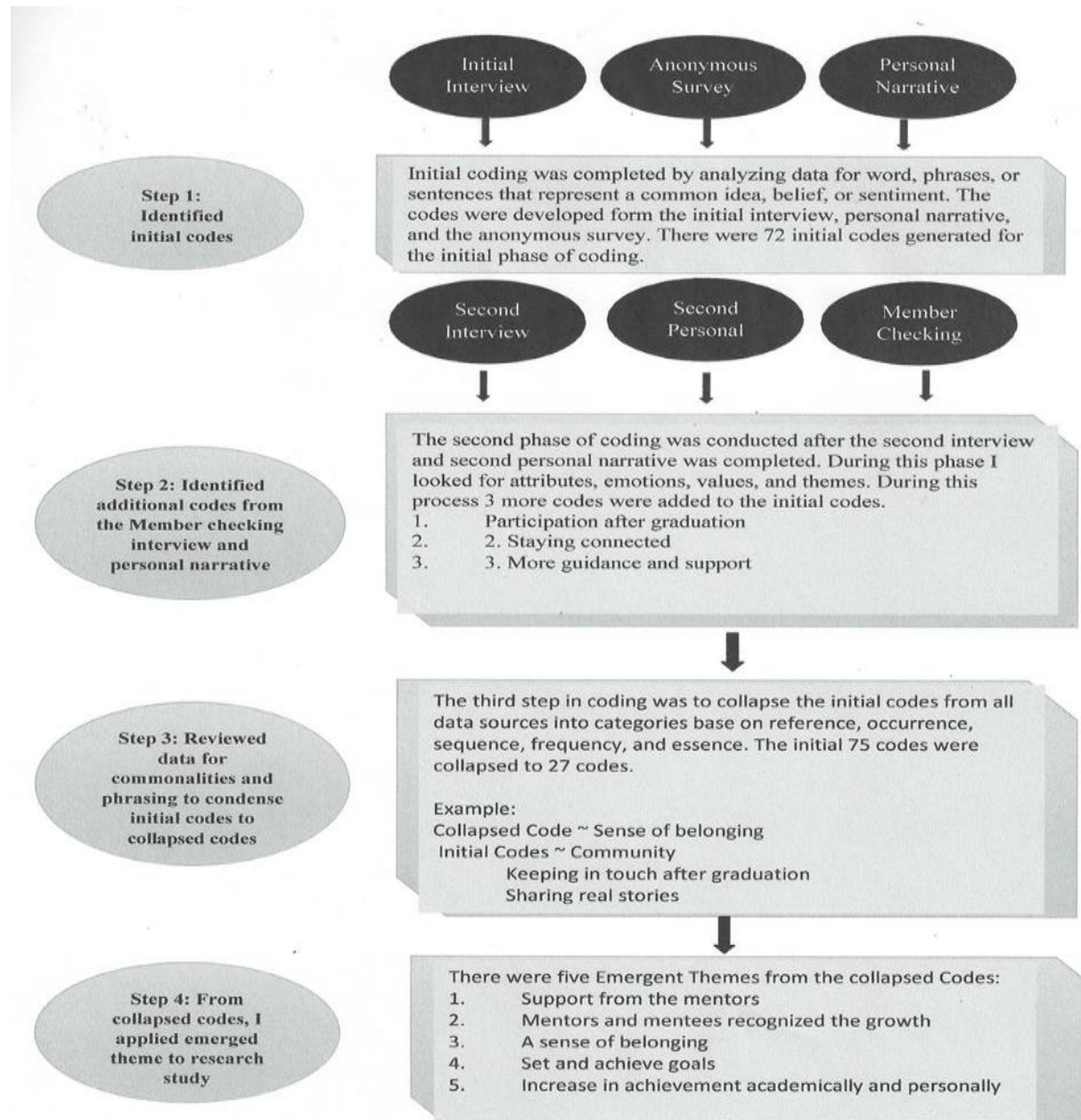


Figure 2. Coding process.

Interviews

Once the semi structured interviews, the questionnaire, and personal narrative were completed and transcribed, I examined the questions from the 10 participants of the study individually and notated in the margins information that the participant emphasized during the interview. I used the inductive analysis method to identify developing perceptions, themes, and sentiments among the interviews for coding. The resulting codes were developed based on the frequency with which they appeared across the interviews. This resulted in 72 initial codes.

Member Checking Data

Following the member checking interviews, I reviewed the transcripts and used the same method of reviewing the interviews with the recordings and writing notes in the margins. After this process, I used the existing list of codes to classify the data from the member checking interviews. This process resulted in three additional codes, bringing the total of initial codes to 75 codes (Figure 3).

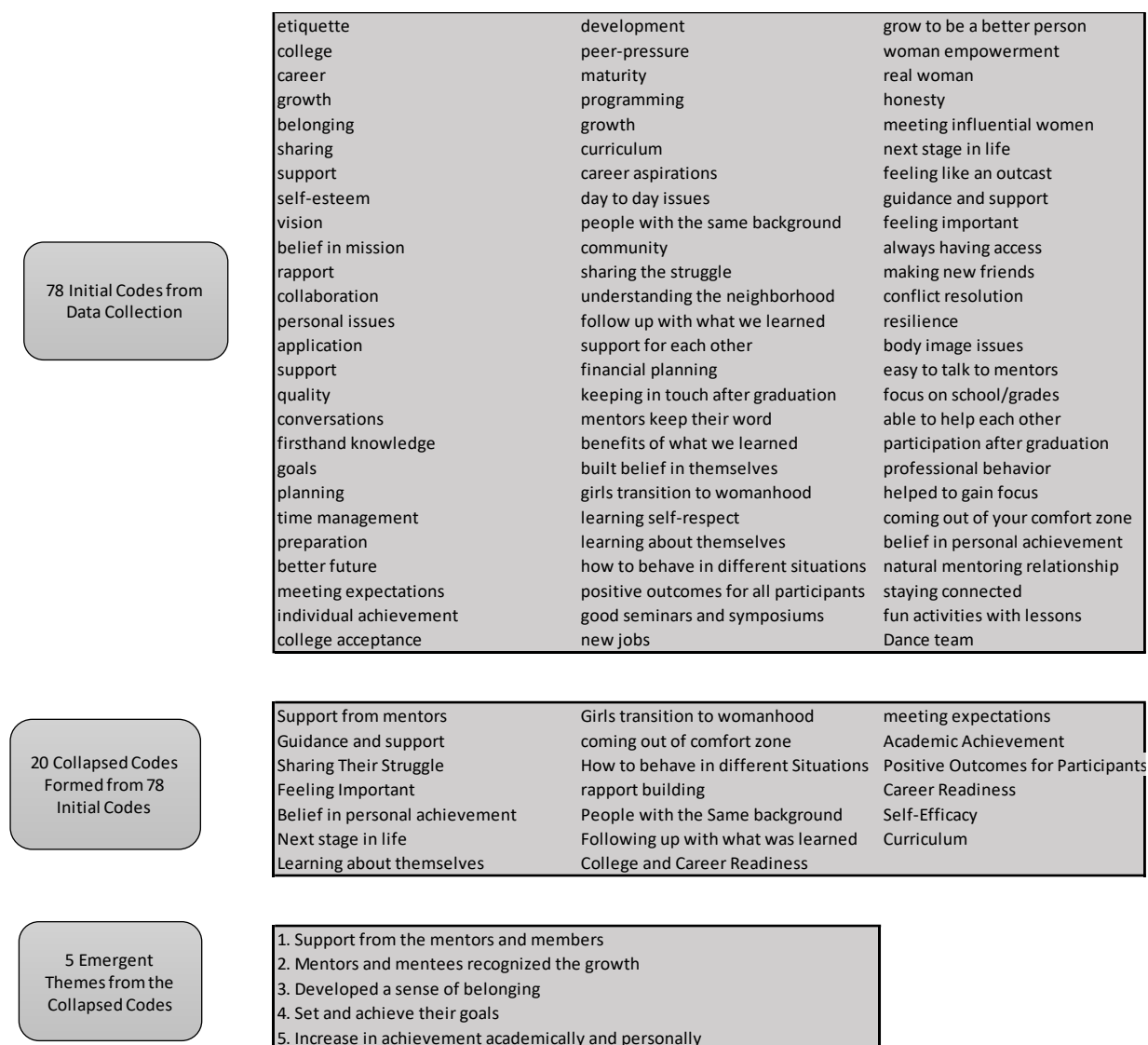


Figure 3. Initial codes, collapsed codes, and emergent themes.

Summary of Findings

This study focused on one central question: What influence do long term mentoring programs have on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color in an urban setting? The mentees were asked 15 open-ended questions in a semi structured interview about their experience in the mentor organization. The mentors were asked 10 open-ended question in a semi structured interview and 12 multiple choice questions with four open-ended questions in an interview.

The participants described a variety of ways the mentors of the program supported them throughout their time in the organization. All the participants expressed that they felt supported by the mentors. They felt that anytime they had an issue, they could approach one the mentors for guidance and they did not feel like they were a burden at any time during the program. Additionally, the mentors felt that they had enough time with the mentees to build a rapport that would foster a relationship built on trust and honesty. Although there were no assignments for mentors and mentees, they met frequently enough to feel comfortable addressing concerns they may encounter.

The mentors expressed that they could see the growth they made from the beginning of the program to when they graduated the program. Five of the mentees of the program participated in the program for five years, from the seventh grade to their senior year in high school. The other two mentees were a part of the program from their freshman year in high school until their freshman year in college. Furthermore, two of the mentors participated from the first year to the last class that we had in 2019. They also expressed that they recognized the growth in the girls from their middle school days to graduation. Experiencing this growth together helped the mentees to feel a sense of belonging in the program, the school, and the community at large. Some felt that they were struggling to fit in during middle school and joining the organization helped them feel like they found a place where they fit in. Although some of the girls joined because a friend joined; once they saw what happened in the program, they never wanted to leave. While they were all unique, during our academics and field trips they could always find something in common. They expressed that this made their bond even closer.

Both the mentors and mentees felt that goals setting was a major part of the program. One of the primary focuses in high school is college and career readiness. There were several

opportunities to explore what their goals were for post-graduation. They attended several academies and seminars about college and career readiness within the organization and the community at large. The participants expressed the need to incorporate more career readiness information to the curriculum. Activities such as resume writing and practice interviews would have been helpful for those choosing to enter the workforce instead of going to college.

All participants believed that the achievements were recognized and celebrated. Personal, group achievements, and monumental moments were acknowledged with the mentors and mentees. Participants discussed their various accomplishments and how they were recognized. Some of the ways they expressed they were recognized were award ceremonies, celebratory outings, and social media posts. Overall, five themes (Figure 4) supported the research question.

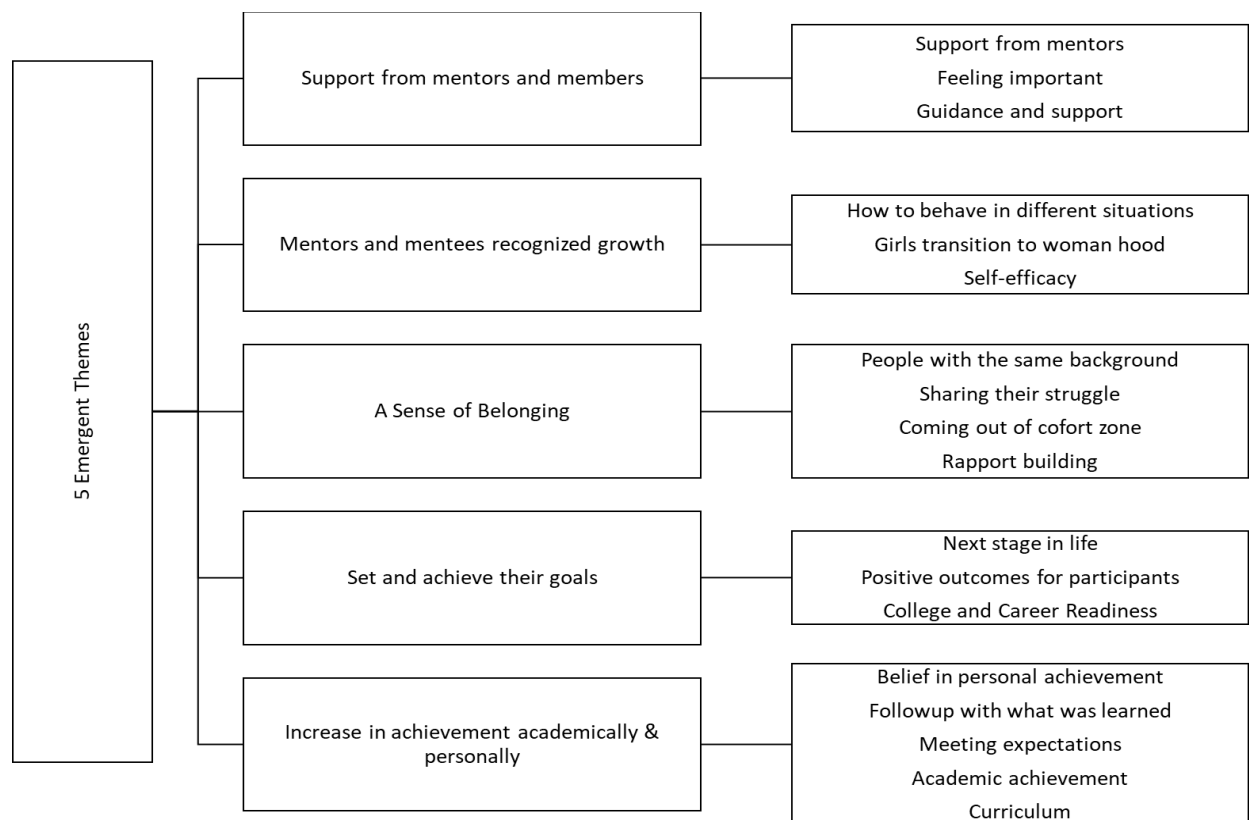


Figure 4. Emergent themes from coding.

Presentation of the Results

The data for this study were collected by semi structured interviews, member checking, and a questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the inductive analysis model as described in Hatch (2002). Coding was executed using the process as described by Saldaña and Omasta (2016) for recognizing patterns and for coding.

Semi structured Interviews, Questionnaire, and Member Checking

The process of collecting and analyzing the data lead to the development of emergent themes. There was a total of 45 codes that emerged initially. These 45 codes were condensed into 20 codes that will be reviewed.

Code 1: Support from mentors. All the participants in the program asserted that the encouragement they received from the mentors helped them to develop a higher self-esteem and a belief in themselves that they could achieve anything they set their minds to for the future. Kate referenced a situation where she was having a difficult time and the mentors helped her to navigate through the issue:

I went and actually talked to one of the mentors and just told her that I almost felt like I had like an eating disorder and you know she just encouraged me and kind of keep an eye on me and check in with me probably every two or three days really to make sure that I was OK and that I was eating, and you know everything like that. And it's just you know they're so open that it's easy to talk to them. So yeah they always help you with whatever issues you might have.

The participants talked about encouragement in a variety of ways. They felt that the mentors' encouragement helped to guide them to make good decisions and attain their goals. Sharon said, "Meetings and going to feature events in your life or goals because it helped me to maybe think

about what I want to do. It helped me because I'm one of many girls that did not have that kind of help at home." Regarding encouragement, Yolanda believed that it would be necessary to have more meetings in order to keep each other encouraged and make sure everybody did what they said they wanted.

Code 2: Guidance and support. Throughout their time in the program, many of the participants experienced events that required a little more focused attention to maneuver through. Although they were not assigned to a specific mentor, they always felt they could go to any of the mentors for emotional support. Sharon talked a lot about when she was feeling emotional and she started cutting to release the emotions. However, after speaking with one of her mentors about the issue, they came up with a unique solution to the issue. She said, "When I was cutting [my mentor] was so understanding and helped me to learn better ways to express my emotions. When we started writing poetry together that was great for me." Another mentee, Patrice, was having body image issues and she went to one of the mentors to talk to her about the issue. She said of the conversation:

But when I talked to you and Miss Amber about how I felt, you all encouraged me a lot and made me feel a lot better about myself. And yall showed me like different people who look like me that we're doing great things or whatever. I decided to go ahead and tryout for an officer on the dance team. And then I ended up making captain when I tried out so that was just huge. Huge influence in my self-esteem.

Kate said about her self-esteem and body image issues that stemmed from negative messages she would receive from her mother, "so you know, I kind of had bad body image. But being in the program and talking about the self-esteem and how we're supposed to evaluate ourselves that helped me to overcome that issue."

Code 3: Sharing their struggle. Most of the participants in the program had a less than desirable home life situations. One of the participant's mothers died when she was in the fourth grade; therefore, she and her younger brother were raised by their maternal grandmother. Expectedly, there were many challenges to relate in that dynamic strictly due to the generational gap between grandmother and granddaughter. Another participant lived with her mother and two younger siblings. Her mother was a drug addict and consequently a lot of the responsibility for her younger siblings fell to her. These family issues were ongoing and required that mentors help the young ladies cope with a variety of traumas that occurred over the six years they were in the program.

One of the most significant events to occur in a family situation was with Sharon. She explained in her interview how the mentors and other participants in the group helped her through a tough situation in her family:

The setback that I experienced during the program was when my mom got really sick and she started losing a lot of weight and I was really really really really stressed over it and I probably cried almost every day at school just not knowing what was wrong. My mom, they had her in and out of hospital she stayed, she'd be in there for weeks. She had two days and another two weeks in then out a day or so whatever and that was just really hard for me. But the way everybody just kind of rallied around me and just made me feel like this is hard but you don't have to deal with it by yourself like we're all here for you. Even some little girls that were not even in my grade they would just always encourage me, and the mentors were always like there. Well how's everything going? Do yall need anything? Like if I need a ride home if we need food, like my dad's a truck driver, my mom was sick and it's like if they needed to bring this food or whatever they were just

there for me. So, I know that I would not have made it through that without the organization that made me stronger.

The mentor Kelly spoke about the same event. This was her feeling about the situation: I didn't have individual mentees, but I do remember one of the girl's mommy got really sick and she was of course not focused when that was going on and we all just had to rally around her and keep her encouraged and to keep her mom encouraged, and just try to help them however we could. Whether it was like picking them up for school, taking them home after school, bringing food on the weekends. Whatever we had to do, we did that to make sure that family as a whole was OK because again in the organization we're very close knit and we want to help every girl that comes through our door realizing that we're not going to be able to save everyone, but those that we can help, we definitely want to be there to help them.

Code 4: Feeling important. The mentees and mentors of the program discussed how important access to the mentors was to the growth and development of the mentees. Vera who was one of the mentors from the beginning expressed that the entire premise of the program developed from the issues the mentees were having throughout the school day and how the teachers tried to help them while still presenting course information. Vera explained:

Well I wanted to be a mentor for this program like I say because we share some common kids and a lot of times the issues that happened with those students would spill over into the classroom and we'd end up trying to sort all that out during the school day and it just wasn't possible so when she created the program I thought it would be a good idea for us to partner since we knew most of the girls you know were between my class and her class.

Carla said that being able to come to the mentors at any time better prepared them than most other students in the school because they had direct access for six years and always felt they were a priority when they came to the mentors with issues. Kate said of the access to the mentors, “I think at some point throughout the program you all have been on the phone talking or texting one of us in the middle of the night as we panic about whatever.”

Code 5: Belief in personal achievement. The mentees experienced many milestones throughout their time in the organization. They spoke about how every positive event was shared among the group and celebrated. They talked about how being recognized for their various achievements motivated them to work hard to continue to have high expectations for themselves. Yolanda said about the various ways they were celebrated:

Well one thing that helped was with our report cards we’d always have to turn our report cards in to you. And you just talked to us about it like hey was this great like this or if we do well then you celebrate you make a huge deal out of everything or whatever and then our senior year when we got accepted to college or it’s the National Honor Society and all that, and you bring all those people to class and make all this noise and throw confetti like we acted like we hated it. We low-key loved it you know. So yeah that motivated me to be successful in life. I wanted you guys to be proud of me, so it made me try even harder. So that’s how it helped me. And then would my members in the group if we were in class together we would always make sure that we did well or even if I was absent and we had some word to do whatever the group member that was at school that day they would help me and explain, and we just never left each other behind. So that was that helped me to be successful.

One of the mentors, Ashley, who was an official mentor of the program for two years, who still contributed after leaving the school district, talked about the various events that were held in a fun and relaxing setting while still focusing on the growth and development of the mentees of the program. Of this she stated:

Oh yes of course. We have little assignments and we have what we call chat and chews. So, the girls will meet at a location, like for instance we went to paint with a twist, and we provided them with food, and we had music going and we were all doing our painting and while we were doing the paintings we were talking about different topics and things that are going on in our lives. I find that a lot of times if you have them doing a different activity that's focused on something else, the responses that you get are more honest because they're not really focused on trying to say what you want them to say or do what you want them to do their mind is focused on their painting. So, their answers are more authentic

Code 6: Next stage in life. Providing guidance and developing sound decision-making ability was one of the primary focuses of the program. In order to develop self-efficacy, it is paramount that the participants learn to think logically, analyze their options, and apply that to the process of making good choices, which is something that was constantly reinforced. As previously noted, Carla spoke about the guidance that she received in the program saying, "All of the guidance we received on tackling the next stage in our life, which now is college, I believe we are better prepared than most of the other kids in the school because we have had guidance and support for the past six years in the school. We could come to you guys whenever we needed to and yall always made us feel like we were the top priority for yall."

Another mentee in the program stated that the guidance she received in the program was life changing for her. Her belief regarding the guidance she received in the program was as follows:

OK. My overall view of the mentoring program is that is great. And I just I don't even know like what kind of girl I would be if I hadn't started in this program in middle school because I can't even lie like seventh grade I was way boy crazy and the way that you kind of stayed on me and steer me in the right direction. Like it just changed my whole perspective on myself and what I wanted to do with my life and what was important to me. So that was the biggest strength was the bond that we all made in the organization that made all of us all of us stronger. Like that was the most, the biggest, the best thing about the organization and I guess like, what do you say, a weakness or a bad aspect is like it hasn't actually happened. I'm hoping that now that I've graduated that it won't be like I don't interact with the group anymore or that we don't have meetings anymore or you don't tell us like what's going on in the organization because we're now adults and we're in school because you know we're still going to need guidance and counsel in college. So, I hope that you know everything's still kind of stays the same. So being away I hope that doesn't make us lose touch with each other.

Code 7: Learning about themselves. One of the objectives of the program was to build the self-esteem of the participants. By increasing the self-esteem of the participants, you help to develop a belief in the participants that they are not hopeless, and they can attain high achievement, which created self-efficacy. All of the participants of the program understood that being empowered was key to their success. Carla said of the empowerment, "The overall program helps you to become resilient. It made me realize that to be strong and to prove people

wrong, to be successful academically and how you recover from setbacks. As I said from the beginning getting through failures helps you to grow as a person.” She continued by saying the program helped her to understand how to approach different situations, how to become a better woman, understanding one’s strengths and how they help one to grow into the person she wants to become.

Sharon stated that she has been able to apply the principals she learned in the program to real life on her college campus. Her thoughts on how the program helped to empower her to believe in herself were:

They were relevance in my life because I live you know in and in the hood basically is what you would call it. I grew up in the hood and learning how to carry myself in a professional manner or in a setting or formal setting was very important because as I went to college I was able to apply this stuff and the second semester of my freshman year I was able to be an RA at my school just because I know how to present myself to people in a professional manner and I know how to behave in public.

Vera, one of the original mentors, had this to say about the woman empowerment objective:

We went to a lot of girl empowerment type of seminars that had multiple topics for the girls to listen to and you know in one location we met some very distinguished people. A Congress woman and we also met an Olympic gold medalist at one of the seminars that we went to. We also had a lot of meetings with community leaders, people you know, ladies that were from [the area] and have found success and they would you know tell their story and share with the girls and we also had etiquette classes we had sisterhood

classes to teach them how to amicably resolve conflicts and we also had courses. A lot of courses about college and career readiness and self-esteem, a lot of self-esteem.

Code 8: Girls' transition to womanhood. A majority of the participants of the program began when they were in middle school or their first year of high school. Over the course of six years the mentee matured substantially. Whether it was a change in their thinking regarding grades or not wanting to accept the responsibility that comes with being a nature leader, they all saw growth of some kind throughout the participation in the program. Ashley, one of the mentors of the program, recounts the development of maturity for a particular mentee:

I do believe that it does. Case and point there were one young lady when she first came to us in sixth grade she was a leader. She didn't know how to use her leadership, in a positive way. Over the years she matured, she stayed with the program never missed meeting, her grandmother was really involved and supportive of what we were doing in the program. By the time she got to her sophomore year, she was ranked 10 in her class and she was voted class president. She ended up being a captain on the dance team. She was in many leadership positions National Honor Society all those types of things and she ended up graduating fourth in her class. She received one of the largest scholarships that the school offered. Yes, we definitely reached our goal of improving academic achievement and fostering and self-efficacy in those girls.

The mentor, Vera, humbly bragged on the maturity she has witnessed over the years for the mentees. She has witnessed them grow and develop into leaders in the school and community. She said:

I do believe that it reaches the objective of academic achievement and fostering self-efficacy in the girls because again most of them got scholarships. A lot of them ended up

being, when they were in high school, they ended up being leaders in different organizations for instance, one of the young ladies was the Senior class president. Another young lady was the National Honor Society president. We have homecoming queens. We have captains of the dance team captains of debate clubs and things of that nature.

Code 9: Coming out of comfort zone. Confidence is undoubtedly one of the most important qualities in the development of self-efficacy. People have to believe in themselves, their ability to think critically, and their ability to achieve in order to be self-reliant and become high achievers. Alicia recalled, at the beginning of the program, how important the academics about self-esteem were instrumental in her development of confidence:

The meetings that talked about self-confidence because in middle school I felt like an outcast, I didn't really fit in any of the groups of people on the campus. So, when you asked me to come to the group meetings, I saw that I had more in common with other people than I thought.

Sharon believed that the academics on self-esteem helped her to find direction and feel better about herself. She stated:

The most useful one was the thing about self-respect. I didn't have a lot of self-esteem or self-respect. I really didn't even know what it meant to have self-respect. Its stuff like letting people take advantage of you or doing something just because everyone else is doing it. Also, meetings going to feature events in your life or goals. Yes. Because it helped me maybe think about what I want to do. It helped me because I'm one of many girls that did not have that kind of help at home.

Patrice referred to her body image issues when she first began the program. She said there was a lot of emphasis on self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image. The mentors pointed out to the mentees that all of those qualities start within one's self, that they should not base their self-esteem, self-worth, or self-image on anything outside of themselves.

Code 10: How to behave in different situations. As growing young women, it is important for students to learn the proper way to handle themselves in a variety of situations. The etiquette class that was given by Kelly was very important to the participants of the program. Almost all of them mentioned the etiquette academy; whether it was in a positive light or a negative light, they all remembered what they learned from the course. Some of the participants attributed their ability to apply the tools they learned in the etiquette class to real life successes in college and career. Yolanda stated:

I guess I would say the most important aspect of the program was just learning how to carry myself and how to be like a lady and have proper etiquette and how to talk to people in you know resolve problems without getting loud and crazy and stuff like that. And I think that was important because you know it helped when I started getting ready to apply for jobs and stuff like that. I know how to approach people and know how to introduce myself. I know how to act in a meeting or at a dinner you like not being on your phone. Stuff like that. So, I learned a lot about how to behave in in public areas.

Patrice also felt that the etiquette class was a very important course for the girls to take. She said, "We had etiquette training with Ms. Keisha which was really fun. She's so super ladylike and I really I enjoy that that with her. I didn't know how to set a table. So that was that was good information for me to learn." She further mentioned that she wished the training was more frequent so mentees would have been able to attend the second half of the etiquette course.

Alicia also spoke about the etiquette class. She was not sure how helpful it would be, but she believes it will be beneficial to her in the future. “I just hope it was most useful to me was the etiquette because that goes a long way with me being fit to be an adult. I need to know proper etiquette in the workplace in restaurants, anywhere.”

Code 11: Rapport building. All of the mentees who participated in the program talked about the bond they developed over the years they were in the organization. The mentors also expressed that they experienced a bond between themselves and the girls. They also expressed that they saw the bond between the girls over time. When asked what she would like to improve about the program, Yolanda stated the following:

I would like for meetings to be more often just so that we could go over more topics and so that we could bond more with each other because like I said some of the people that we’re in organization are girls that just normally they’re in school. I wouldn’t really see myself associated with them but then we come in the meeting. We find out like we have so much in common we’re so much alike that you know we kind of it seems like through the organization we’ve formed like a sisterhood

Vera, one of the mentors expressed the same sentiment with regard to how close everyone became throughout the program. She said:

They’ve bonded and kept in touch with each other to the point that they’re all trying to go to college together even the ones that were two years ago they still keep in touch and have that bond and also the college application process or college and career readiness, them figuring out what they actually are good at and what they actually want to do.

Furthermore, Sharon felt that the bond that she formed with the other girls in the organization changed her life. Of the bond she formed with the other girls, she said, “Like it just

changed my whole perspective on myself and what I wanted to do with my life and what was important to me. So that was the biggest strength was the bond that we all made in the organization that made all of us all of us stronger. Like that was the most the biggest the best thing about the organization.”

Code 12: People with the same background. In organizations like the mentoring program, it is important for the mentees and the mentors to have a connection with one another. The feeling of having commonality gives them the opportunity to bond over their experiences. Kate had this to say of the mentors sharing their stories:

They like you know they really don’t act like they did nothing when they were kids and it’s so sweet and innocent. But you know they will share their stories with us too. And you know so they will understand they’re like You’re not alone you’re not by yourself and you know every girl sometimes feel this way or that way or goes through these certain things and it just made them you know like a lot more relatable and it also make you feel more comfortable talking still knowing that you know they’ve had struggles too.

Sharon expressed another dynamic of the sharing of experiences. She talked about the mentees being mentors to the younger mentees and how sharing their stories with them helped the younger mentees to navigate through trials that they faced. She said of mentoring the younger girls:

But when we were all together I think that was better because we were able to share with the younger girl’s insight or information on issues that they’re facing a middle school that we faced in middle school. And it kind of seemed like it was they received it better that way because it didn’t seem like with this old grown person is telling me this is somebody

that I look up to and that I see every day and they went through the same situation. So, I think the larger group was the best.

Vera said of bonding with the mentees and them sharing their stories that it was the best because it happened naturally:

So, it wasn't really a once a one thing but of course over time certain girls were certain personalities will gravitate towards one or the other or they will form a bond with one of the mentors and you know be more comfortable with sharing with their particular mentor. So, I think the match ups were good because they just kind of happened naturally.

Kelly said of her first experience with the girls as she was presenting her academy on sisterhood:

I'm a member of a historically black sorority and of course in this sorority sisterhood is a major part of being a part of their organization. I could just see light from some of the questions the girls were asking and how they interact with each other. It's almost like forming a sisterhood through this organization that will help them to lift each other up and as mentors we will be able to guide them in the right direction as they grow as young women. I just wanted to be a part of it.

Code 13: Follow-up with what was learned. Throughout their time in the program, the mentees learned a wide variety of information. Most often, the academies would consist of three sessions. They formed a bond with each other and became friends, not just members of the same organization. Yolanda said of the mentees holding each other accountable for the information they learned:

So, I would like to meet more so that we could kind of encourage each other and make sure everybody's doing what they say they want to do and kind of hold each other accountable for the things that we've learned and the goals that we set and everything Patrice, who is a graduate of the program, had this to say about the mentees and accountability:

I guess that area of opportunity would be if us as members could keep in touch with each other better than what we do now we need to kind of like have each other's phone numbers and emails and try to do better to keep in touch with each other because that was very helpful when I was in school that us holding each other accountable for the things that we learned in and everything like that. So, I think that this you know where we could improve.

When discussing accountability, Kate talked about how they were not really close at the beginning but as they learned more, they got closer and knew what they learned in the program allowed them to help each other when they were going through something difficult. They could refer to what they learned to hold each other accountable for their actions.

Code 14: College and career readiness. One of the topics that was heavily discussed in the program was goal setting. It is very important for mentees to understand that they have to plan for their future. All of the mentors shared with the mentees how to set goals as well as follow up with the mentees to gauge their progress. Carla recalled the first time she started to plan for her goals and how the information was presented. She stated what she remembers about setting SMART goals:

Well we went through a training course SMART goals and it showed us how to like to make a goal that is specific and that we could win. We would know what we were able to

achieve it. How long it would take to achieve it and everything like that. So that process helped you to set your goals for short term and long term. I made it just really easy to you know organize your thoughts other than your short- and long-term goals.

When Kate recalled learning the importance of setting goals and understanding how she would achieve them. She said learning to set goals changed her life because she was not focused on grades. She said:

It kind of helped me to focus more on school, and then the more we did like the goal setting stuff. It just really let me know that like I really there are a lot of things that I really want to do and those things I got to have good grades to be able to you know achieve those goals or whatever. You know it was good that they started early like ninth grade what I was talking about there so that we would be you know we would understand how important it is for your grades to be good. You know everybody think they want to go to college, but you can't go to college with like a 1.0 you know. So, stuff like that was it was important."

Sharon also stated how the goal setting academy has helped her in life as a college student:

I think the goal setting was really helpful because I made my third year of college I'll be a junior in college when school starts back in August and I've used a lot of the things that they taught us in the program to help me stay on pace, to help me make sure that I meet deadlines, and everything like that so the goal setting was really important for me because a transferred it to my real life stuff and I can actually use it in my life every day.

Sharon further elaborated on learning how to set goals, she stated:

It taught me how to set goals, but it also taught me how to manage my time effectively and in setting goals making sure that you set those goals that you actually had to do it in a timely manner. Like you have time to achieve the goal that you're setting because if you set an unrealistic goal and say I want to lose 30 pounds in two weeks well that's you can't do that.

Code 15: Meeting expectations. Not only did the mentors teach the mentees the process of setting goals, but they followed up on the progress of the goals that were set. Sharon recounted how often mentees would update the mentors on the progress of the goals they set:

While I was in the mentoring program we would check in every couple of months probably like every three months and talk about our goals and how we were doing as far as achieving those goals especially the ones that were short term goals like our plans for growth after graduation. And they also taught us about setting smart goals which sets the steps in place for you to be able to know if you can actually achieve the goal and how long it takes for you to achieve the goal.

Patrice's thoughts on the planning, progress, and completion on her goals were as follows:

At the time my short-term goals were to I wanted to make the dance team and I was in middle school, so I wanted to make sure that I got to high school. And I did both of those. And then over time I ended up my junior year I ended up being the captain of the dance team. And I also was accepted to my first-choice college with a very substantial scholarship. It wasn't a full ride scholarship but there was a lot of scholarship in there and I also got one of the scholarships that the school gave so that basically paid for my whole

college. You know my all fees for it for college. So, the mentoring program helped me with introducing myself and writing essays and the S.A.T. practice and that we did and also practicing interviews and writing essays and stuff like that for job applications as well as college applications. So that's how the organization helped me.

Code 16: Academic achievement. Academic achievement was a very important part of the program's desired outcomes. A majority of the academies that were held related to academic achievement. Patrice recalled the meeting about college applications and academic achievement. She said:

I was already pretty good in class when my grades. I was in the top 10 from my freshman year all the way up to my senior year. But as I learned more the importance of that ranking and everything for college. My senior year I just like kicked it into high gear and I ended up graduating seven in my class instead of 10.

When Vera discussed the academic achievement of the mentees, she recounted the mentees being in leadership positions in school that required high academic achievement to qualify:

I do believe that it reaches the objective of academic achievement and fostering self-efficacy in the girls because again most of them got scholarships. A lot of them ended up being, when they were in high school, they ended up being leaders in different organizations for instance, one of the young ladies was the Senior class president.

Another young lady was the National Honor Society president.

Ashley discussed the academic achievements of one mentee in particular who had several achievements not just for academics. She said, "She was in many leadership positions National

Honor Society all those types of things and she ended up graduating fourth in her class. She received one of the largest scholarships that the school offered.”

Code 17: Positive outcomes for participants. One of the things the mentors and mentees of the program were extremely proud of was that all seven of the girls who participated in the study had been accepted to college. Many of the mentees were accepted to their first-choice colleges. While other mentees decided to attend college with some of the mentees who graduated before them. Yolanda recalled, when attending the academy for goal setting, she realized that she needed to become more active in her school in order to be accepted, which she did, and she was accepted to college. She said:

My long-term goal was to go to the college that I wanted to for nursing and because I want to be a nurse. And we set goals and every year, and we planned it out like that. What did you call it, SMART goals? We did the smart goals thing every year to see how close we were to achieving the goals that we made before. Also, it helped me to get into the school that I wanted to go to college because I started to participate more in other organizations in the school and I had some leadership roles and those schools and a lot of colleges when you're applying to college they want you to.

Yolanda believed that the college readiness was valuable because it prepared her for the pre-work of being accepted to college:

The topics that were most useful for me were the college readiness courses. We even had S.A.T. prep to two weekends a month for four months before we take the S.A.T. so we could practice and see what the questions were like. And get used to having to sit there for that long to take the test and everything like that. So that was very helpful because I did well on the S.A.T. the first time I took it.

Ashley was very proud of the success the program experienced with the last class of graduates. She said:

Well I can proudly say that five of the girls that were with us from sixth grade until their senior year all five of them were accepted to college. All five of them got a large amount of scholarship money and three of them were going to school together and two are going to other places but they're all going to college and then we have also have some others that you know from their earlier years that graduated before that are entering their sophomore or junior year in college and "they're successful, they're coming back to the organization to mentor the new girls or the younger girls and give them insight as to what to expect when they get to college and how to navigate on a college campus and things of that nature. So that's a very positive outcome of the program and we're very proud of that.

Vera stated about the girls and their transition from high school to college, "All of them graduated high school on time no problems. All of them received or were accepted to college or a trade school like Beauty College or something like that. All of them were sent to the college and most of them got scholarships and everything like that."

Code 18: Career readiness. While the program placed a lot of emphasis on college and career readiness, both the mentors and mentees felt that there could have been more focus on the career readiness portion of those academies. Of the career readiness academy, Ashley stated:

In hindsight being 20/20 I would think that we would need to add more information about career readiness. We focused a lot on college and career readiness but mainly on the college side and we have to understand that not everybody is going to go to college. Not everybody wants to go to college. So, we need to make sure that we also prepare them for

the workforce. We need to make sure that they know how to write resume, make sure they know the important information that needs to go on a resume. We need to make sure that they know how to fill out an application, do mock interviews, how are you supposed to dress when you go to an interview. Things of that nature so I believe that we kind of need to focus more on the Career Readiness aspects of college and career readiness.

Vera said that the career readiness helped the girls to figure out what they really wanted to do with their futures, and it helped them build their resumes. However, most of the focus was on college and not career.

Kate also believed that there could have been more focus on career readiness, stating, “I guess the biggest area of opportunity would probably be you know we got older and you know adding more stuff you know jobs and stuff like that. It was hard to kind of make it to the meetings, so it probably would’ve been good.”

Code 19: Self-efficacy. The participants of the study were asked if they believed the desired outcome of the program was met. All of the participants believed that they achieved their personal goal for joining the organization and the organization’s goals. Vera stated:

I do believe that it reaches the objective of academic achievement and fostering self-efficacy in the girls because again most of them got scholarships. A lot of them ended up being, when they were in high school, they ended up being leaders in different organizations for instance, one of the young ladies was the Senior class president. Another young lady was the National Honor Society president. We have homecoming queens. We have captains of the dance team captains of debate clubs and things of that nature. They’ve bonded and kept in touch with each other to the point that they’re all trying to go to college together even the ones that were two years ago they still keep in

touch and have that bond and also the college application process or college and career readiness, them figuring out what they actually are good at and what they actually want to do and not just like some lofty goal that you thought of when you were like 9 years old. They really put thought into it and really worked hard to write the essays and make sure the applications were correct or update resumes and things of that nature. So, I do believe that he built a sense of resilience and a desire to desire for high achievement.

Ashley's response when asked if she believed that the desired program outcomes were achieved was:

For the most part we've had probably between thirty-five and forty girls over the past six years that we're consistent in the organization. We still have some that are still in high school that graduate this year and they're doing well they're academic achievement are good they're ranking in their school is good and they're just stayed on the straight and narrow. For the most part yes, we've reached our objective needs and expectations.

However again you know there are all those handful of girls that may not follow the path that we tried to put them on overall.

Kelly also felt that the desired outcome was attained for those who participated in the program on a consistent basis. She said:

I believe the curriculum was good because of course you guys had firsthand knowledge of what was going on with the young ladies and what was going on with the neighborhood because you worked in their neighborhood and you were always with those girls, you were able to see them every day. The fact that you are developing the curriculum while developing the program, the curriculum was tailor made for that particular organization. However, it was also feasible to use that curriculum in the

neighborhood because the issues that happened in the school also happen outside of the school in that neighborhood. The curriculum was good at addressing the challenges that they had.

Code 20: Curriculum. The development of the curriculum for this particular program was unique in that it was tailored to the population that was served in the school. The mentors and mentees were in contact with each other on a daily basis; therefore, the mentors were well versed on what was happening in mentees' lives and the community. Vera's thoughts on the curriculum was as follows:

The curriculum was it well it was good with addressing the issues that the kids face and mainly because again we knew these kids on a very close basis like we dealt with them every day. So, we you know kind of had firsthand knowledge of any issues that they were facing and so we were able to cannot tailor our curriculum to fit the situations that they were in or the issues that we were experiencing around the school.

Ashley's take on the curriculum was similar to Vera's. She stated:

The curriculum was very effective because when we developed it we have firsthand knowledge of what is needed because we were working with young ladies at the school, so we knew what was going on at the school. We knew what was going on in the community. We knew what was going on in the girl's lives. We based a lot of the program curriculum on those particular situations. Although, we also made sure that it was fitting for the community at large. So, when we expanded out we could still apply whatever curriculum we had to other places. It was unique in that it was based on what we saw on a daily basis, but it was broad enough to cover a larger audience.

Kelly's point of view on the curriculum was as follows:

I believe the curriculum was good because of course you guys had firsthand knowledge of what was going on with the young ladies and what was going on with the neighborhood because you worked in their neighborhood and you were always with those girls, you were able to see them every day. The fact that you are developing the curriculum while developing the program, the curriculum was tailor made for that particular organization. However, it was also feasible to use that curriculum in the neighborhood because the issues that happened in the school also happen outside of the school in that neighborhood. The curriculum was good at addressing the challenges that they had.

Summary

The participants of this study had many commonalities that helped to make the program effective. Although each participant had their own personal goals, they all agreed that the most important attributes of the program were the support they received, the growth they experienced in the program, the sense of belonging they shared among themselves and with the mentors, and the ability to set effective goals, which all lead to the ultimate goal of high academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy. Both the mentors and mentees agreed that their participation in the program had a great influence on the directions they chose in their lives based on what was learned and shared among the participants of the program.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Girls of color face many obstacles as they navigate from adolescence to young adulthood. When these girls of color are in an urban setting and have been identified as at-risk, those obstacles increase (Deutsch, Reitz-Krueger, Henneberger, Futch Ehrlich, & Lawrence, 2017, Lakind et al., 2014, Mann, 2013, Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018). In Chapter 5, I will present an overall discussion of the study, the conclusion, and future implications. The key findings that are related to the literature review in Chapter 2 through the lens of constructivism, the conceptual framework that grounded the research study, will be presented in this chapter. Additionally, recommendations for practice, policy, and future studies are presented in this chapter.

Summary of the Results

The study was guided by one research question: What are the experiences of mentors and the participants regarding mentoring programs and development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in at-risk girls of color in an urban setting? The semi structured interviews, questionnaire, and member checking interviews provided insightful and informative information about the sample of participants.

The participants of the study were mentees and mentors who participated in a mentoring program aimed toward assisting at-risk girls of color who live in an urban area to have high academic achievement and develop self-efficacy in order to transition seamlessly to the next stage in their life. The research revealed that the mentees and mentors who participated in the study confirmed that the addition of another caring adult to provide guidance and support has a direct influence on academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy.

When the mentees of the program felt supported by the mentors and each other, it positively influenced mentees' self-esteem. The mentors and mentees saw a marked

improvement in the growth of the mentee as a result of effective delivery of program curriculum. The mentees and mentors were from the same area of the metroplex, which provided the mentees with an example of an adult from their area who transitioned successfully into adulthood as members of their community.

Through the program, the mentees were introduced to many influential women in and from their community. The mentors provided the mentees of the program with information about self-esteem, etiquette, financial literacy, conflict resolution, and goal setting through academies, seminars, and symposiums. The mentees of the program identified these events as paramount to their growth and development. Having been exposed to a variety of women who have achieved success in several different fields provided them with the hope that they could achieve on the same level.

The mentees of the program also expressed that the ability to access the mentors at any time was reassuring. They felt that their well-being was a priority to the mentors of the program. This feeling helped to build the rapport between the mentees and mentors. It also helped the mentees to feel more confident about making tough decisions due to the guidance and support they received from the mentors.

The mentors of the program conveyed that they saw growth in the mentees over time throughout the program. They saw marked improvement in self-confidence, independence, and self-esteem for the mentees. They attributed this growth to exposure to a variety of information that was presented to the mentees over the course of time they participated in the program. They also recognized the development of conflict resolution and good decision making through the mentees' ability to use logical and critical thinking to resolve issues they faced on a daily basis.

Discussion of the Results

The goal of the research question was to determine the influence an additional caring adult had on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy in girls of color who had been identified as at-risk in an urban setting. The mentees believed that having an additional caring adult who has successfully transitioned to adulthood with a similar background and upbringing and who provided guidance and support had a positive influence on their academic achievement and ability to be more resilient and self-sufficient.

The mentors of the program as a collective believed that one of the advantages the program has is that the mentors and the participants in the program were from the same community. This allows the participants of the program to see people like them who are successful and shared their journey to personal and professional growth and development. The mentors also believed an advantage the program had was that the mentors were in contact with the mentees daily, which allowed them to know what was happening in their lives at home, at school, and in the community. This helped the mentors to present tailor-made program curricula to the participants of the mentoring program.

The final attribute of the program that was advantageous to the mentees was the nature of the relationship building between the mentors and the participants of the program. The mentors and participants were not paired together in advance. They were afforded the opportunity to get to know each other in a nature setting that allowed rapport to be built based on honesty and commonality between the mentors and the mentees of the program.

The participants of the program credited having access to the mentors whenever they needed guidance or assistance as one of the primary factors to their growth both academically and personally. They contended that the ability to build rapport with the mentors over time

helped them to learn more about the mentors, and their similarities allowed them to naturally gravitate to mentors. Being assigned would not have given them that opportunity. The participants felt that the academies and the seminars they participated in over the years provided them with valuable information to help them to set goals for their future and have a realistic method to achieve those goals. They experienced a sense of belonging and formed a bond with the other mentees and the mentors based on their sharing their journey. They also deemed their long-term participation in the program as an important factor in their belief in their ability to achieve.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

Mentoring programs have increasingly become a resource for intervention for at-risk youth (Deutsch, et al 2017; Eddy, 2017; Thompson, 2013). These studies have shown that an additional caring adult leads to positive outcomes for at-risk youth who participate in mentoring programs. The demographics of mentoring programs are varied with regard to gender; however, they all focus on at-risk youth. The measure of success of the programs is a change in the participants' emotional, social, and academic improvement from the beginning of the mentoring program to the end of their participation in the program (Larsson et al., 2016; Mann et al., 2015; Schwartz & Rhodes, 2016).

In the absence of proper guidance and support, youth who are at risk are susceptible to low self-esteem and poor academic performance, and their development of self-efficacy is stunted (Bandura, 1989). However, studies have shown that when youth are provided with an additional caring adult through mentoring programs, those at-risk factors can be addressed, yielding high academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy (Lakind et al., 2014).

This study supports the belief that youth who participate in mentoring programs with caring adults who provide them with guidance on decision-making, conflict management, and coping strategies can overcome at-risk factors to develop high academic achievement and self-efficacy. The results of this study will benefit scholars, educational administrators, and community leaders to recognize the importance of providing at-risk youth with an additional caring adult to assist the youth's successful transition into adulthood. Additionally, it demonstrates that when these caring adults provide social and emotional support, the youth experience growth in the areas of resiliency and achievement (Lakind et al., 2014; Mann, 2013). The idea that having positive affiliations with organizations in the community and within the school setting builds on youth's sense of belonging and aids in the successful transition into adulthood. Providing the youth with situations and circumstances that support the ability to achieve highly, develop emotional skills, and build self-esteem increases the youth's academic achievement and emotional regulating skills (CDC, 2017; Hamby, Grych, & Banyard, 2018).

Mentees in this study expressed that the support they received from the mentors in the program was instrumental in their ability to gain positive outcomes. They stated that having immediate access to the mentors in the program provided them with the encouragement they needed to overcome obstacles they faced daily. The lasting effects at-risk girls experience from participation in mentoring programs benefit the youth's development of self-efficacy, lead to better decision making, and foster higher academic outcomes (Mann, 2013; Mann et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2015; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012). The mentees were able to identify with the mentors and bond over the commonalities of their experiences in the area where they grew up because the mentors and mentees shared similar background and grew up in the same area of time. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) asserted that when at-risk girls are paired with mentors who share

background and demographics similar to the mentees, it fosters the mentees' beliefs in their ability to achieve success. This real-life example of a productive relationship that demonstrates respect, support, and trust help the youth to transfer those skills to other relationships in their lives (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016).

The mentees and mentors of the program stated they felt a connection to one another and to the other participants in the program, which caused them to be less reluctant to share their experiences with the group. This connectedness or rapport helped to develop natural relationships among the mentees, and mentors provided the social and emotional connection necessary to build a belief in the mentees ability to form successful relationships that led to positive outcomes. Research shows that whether the relationship is formal or informal, a sense of connection with a caring adult greatly fosters youth's self-efficacy and academic achievement (Hurd & Johnson, 2013). These relationships provide social/emotional support and guidance that lead to emotional intelligence and educational improvement (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Reynolds, & Parrish, 2018; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013).

The mentees and mentors of the program described the feeling of belonging in the mentoring program. They expressed that this sense of belonging helped them to develop higher self-esteem and positive self-image through the sharing of experiences and the information they learned during the program. According to research, the sense of belonging is a protective factor for youth who have been identified as at risk. Experiencing positive relationships leads to positive social factors that support the development of positive self-esteem and self-image (CDC, 2017). Studies show that the informal conversations that take place between mentors and mentees often create close bonds between the participants (Schwartz et al., 2016). These bonds are strengthened further when the mentee and mentor are from the same background. The more

areas of the youth's life to which mentors feel connected, the greater the increase in the development of self-efficacy (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Mann et al., 2015).

Researchers believe these close bonds fill in the gaps of inequity that at-risk girls experience in an urban setting.

Mentees were aware of academic achievement and mentors strove to increase achievement through programming. The mentees who participated in the study placed a range of importance on academic achievement. For some of the mentees, the importance of academic achievement was based on the needs in their home. Some participants needed to work to help their families to provide necessities, and therefore academic achievement was not a top priority for those mentees. Others held academic achievement as a top priority because of a home environment that they were trying to escape. However, throughout the program, they all expressed that they understood the seriousness of high academic achievement that leads to a paradigm shift for the mentees. This is a common situation, specifically for at-risk youth in urban areas where life precipitates that all parties in the household who can earn do earn (Gordon & Cui, 2014; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Houser, 2016; Neel & Fuligni, 2013).

Other environmental influences affected the academic achievement of the mentees of the program. The lack of social capital can cause many at-risk youth to be poorly served and to not recover, not only academically but also in terms of health issues and an inability to cope with the stresses of life which in turn limit their earning ability (Tolbert, 2015). When youth do not have examples of high achievement in their environment, in conjunction with no intrinsic desire to achieve or low expectations for their achievement, it is likely that academic achievement will not be a top priority for the at-risk youth. This is why having an additional caring adult from the same background who has seen success in life was important to the at-risk youth participating in

the program (Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016; DeWit, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman, 2016; Tolbert, 2015). Mentors are the social capital necessary to alleviate these issues. They help youth to develop a sense of urgency regarding academic achievement and goal setting (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Larsson, Petterson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016).

Researchers have shown that academic achievement is much lower for girls of color than for their Caucasian counterparts. This is attributed to the lack of social capital and positive role models that demonstrate the importance of academic achievement. These positive role models are essential to counter the effects the unrealistic images girls of color are bombarded with in media and in their communities (Darrow et al., 2009; Nunn, 2018). Whether the mentor is from the youth's school, church, community, or other areas, they are a vital part of changing the narrative the youth sees on a regular basis. The mentor must be a person of good character whose purpose is to provide positive reinforcement and guidance to the at-risk youth that will cause the youth to adjust to more realistic expectations, develop resilience, and show growth in academic achievement (Counts, 1996; Lakind et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2015).

According to research it is also very important that the mentor be a consistent presence in the at-risk youth's life. Most at-risk youth already experience inconsistency with the adults in their life. For that reason, mentors must be committed to the mentoring program and the youth that participate in the program (Kern et al., 2018, Smith et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2016). This is consistent with the belief of the mentors of the program. They all expressed that they belief in the mission of the mentoring program is what drew them to become a mentor. The also expressed that even when their work assignments changed, they continued to mentor and support the girls that participated in the program because they understood the importance of their presence in the girl's life.

Mentors who help at-risk girls focus on academic achievement must also assist mentees with the development of social and emotional competency. The ability to build social and emotional competency will provide the at-risk girl with the tools necessary to overcome adversity, manage emotions, and use critical thinking skills (Barry, Clarke, Morreale, & Field, 2018; Hamed, 2012; Thompson, Corsello, McReynolds, & Conklin-Powers, 2013; Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012).

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to achieve goals and show resilience when faced with challenges (Bandura, 1997; Deutsch et al., 2017). By developing an understanding of the self and learning to self-regulate, self-monitor, and self-assess, the individual increases self-efficacy. Individuals develop the belief that they can excel and overcome adversity as they experience success in one area. The more people see success the more they are willing to try. This builds an intrinsic desire to achieve (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Mann et al., 2015; Pedersen, 2018). Through this process of self-regulation, at-risk youth learn to develop action plans and strategies to achieve their goals (Pedersen, 2018). All of the mentees who participated in the mentoring program affirmed that their participation and the guidance and support they received from the mentors were pivotal to the development of confidence in their ability to achieve. These achievements did not only include academics but also included overcoming obstacle of all kinds. Several of the mentees expressed that they had body image issues that they were able to overcome because of what they learned and shared in the mentoring program. This belief aligns with the results of a research study of another at-risk girl mentoring program (Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015).

Research supports the belief that once at-risk youth learn to set goals, both academically and personally, and develop a plan to achieve their goals, they experience success on many

levels. When social capital, such as caring adults, mentors, or community leaders, which were all provided in the mentoring program in this study, are available to the girls who are identified as at risk, the likelihood of them attaining high achievement and success is greatly increased (Abbott, 2013; Spencer & Liang, 2009; Thomason & Kupermine, 2014). The meaningful relationships that youth develop with the additional caring adult provides them with valuable information that if applied properly will lead to a successful transition into adulthood. Both the mentees and mentors who participated in this study believed that they saw marked improvement and growth in the mentees throughout their participation in the program. Both groups described the increase in academic achievement and the development of belief in themselves, which is the essence of self-efficacy (Abbott, 2013; Clonan-Roy, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016; DeWit et al., 2016; Dowd, Harden, & Beauchamp, 2015; Guryan et al., 2017; Larsson, Pettersson, Skoog, & Eriksson, 2016).

Limitations

Sample

The primary limitations of this study included that I had no control over which of the young ladies would respond to the invitation to participate in the study. Additionally, I was only able to solicit participation from young ladies who participated in The Girl mentoring program. The next limitation is that I am a mentor in The Girl mentoring program, and therefore, I had some preconceived ideas about the influence the program had on the young ladies' lives. Another limitation of this study was that a study of this nature is not sufficient to indicate the effectiveness of mentoring programs on the development of academic achievement and self-efficacy. Therefore, it was imperative to be able to duplicate the study to ensure the validity of

the results. Finally, analyzing this particular program could only draw comparisons to a similar population of participants in order to validate the results.

Study Design

The data collected and analyzed for this qualitative case study were restricted by the limits of the interview and anonymous survey questions. The data for this study were collected in multiple locations that were agreed upon by the interviewer and interviewees. The anonymous online survey was sent to the mentors via email with a link to the survey. I collected, transcribed, analyzed, and reported all of the data for this study. Analysis of the data was limited due to my experience as a director of a mentoring organization for at-risk girls of color. This knowledge afforded awareness and guidance during the data analysis process.

Research Method

In qualitative research, there is a supposition of a worldview, as viewed through a theoretical lens, and the study of research difficulties questioning the meaning individuals or groups assign to a societal or individual problem (Creswell, 2013). A case study was the appropriate method for this researcher study because it was intended to examine the context or setting that was considered relevant to the phenomenon that was studied (Yin, 2014). The purpose of this study was to consider the experiences of both mentors and mentees in a mentoring program. The outcomes of this study were solely grounded on the perspectives of participants in a particular mentoring program; subsequently, no generalizations about the results can be made for other programs.

Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The results of this qualitative case study are available to scholarly communities and educational communities. The results of the study cannot be applied broadly; therefore, the

findings should be examined to determine if they met the criterion of future studies. Social constructivism supports the results of this study.

Practice

The gap in practice explored in this study was the need to understand the experiences of at-risk girls of color who had been identified as at risk in an urban setting and the mentors who served in the mentoring program. The mentees in the study had similar backgrounds, lived in the same community, and attended the same school. They faced comparable obstacles in their homes and communities. Without the addition of a caring adult through the mentoring program these at-risk girls likely would have had different outcomes. The mentees voiced concerns about personal issues they faced daily, which impeded their ability to achieve academically, as well as issues that posed a threat to the development of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image. The mentees expressed that without the support and guidance of the mentors of the program, they would not have been able to learn the vital skills necessary to transition to the next phase in their lives, which for some was college and for others was the workforce.

Institutions of learning and community leaders must recognize and address the issues that at-risk youth, specifically girls of color, face in their growth and development as young people transitioning to adulthood. Institutions of learning and community leaders must work toward providing additional caring adults on a broader scale than a few mentoring organizations with limited funding and access to the youth who need these programs. They must be committed to advocating for and providing resources to the population of at-risk youth they serve on a daily basis in order to achieve the desired outcome of transitioning successfully into adulthood and becoming productive citizens of the global world.

Policy

Policies that support providing at-risk girls of color with the same resources as their Caucasian counterparts should be enacted and supported by institutions of learning and community organizations that serve these girls. Additionally, support and funding should be provided for those who serve as mentors to the at-risk girls who participate in these programs in order to provide resources and information to the youth they serve. Mentors should be properly trained and provided with resources to assist the at-risk girls they serve. They need to understand the circumstances of the communities they serve, as well as show that their strong community ties are an asset to the growth and development of high academic achievement and self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting.

Social Constructivist Theory

The findings of this study support social constructivism. Social constructivists believe that learners' ideas of reality are based on their own experiences with the world around them and the people in their social communities. Learners base their reality on their experiences and, therefore, have no pre-existing reality. Principles, values, and beliefs are formed based on the culture of the community (Amineh, 2015; Charmaz, 2017; Schrader, 2015). Learners construct meaning from the world around them. When the learner is motivated because the information is relevant or will have a direct impact on the growth and development of the social community, it has a direct impact on the learner's decision making, conflict resolution, and analytical processes (Gautam et al., 2018; McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018; Weimer et al., 2017).

Constructivists believe that learning occurs through using new information combined with background knowledge to create a new idea or belief to be used in the future. The process is similar to spiraling knowledge. Learners use background knowledge to understand new

information and determine the value of the new information to their growth and development (McKinley, 2015; Rob & Rob, 2018; Schrader, 2015). The learner evaluates whether the information should be combined, applied, or discarded. The learner has to have authentic experiences in order to draw a conclusion about the value of the information experienced (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Carey et al., 2017; Dennick, 2016; Garneau & Pepin, 2015).

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this qualitative case study indicated that the mentoring program may be effective in promoting high academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at risk in an urban setting. The struggles the at-risk girl of color faces is unique to this population. However, the addition of a caring adult, a feeling of belonging, and effective guidance and support aid in the at-risk girl's ability to develop a strong sense of self, self-esteem, self-image, and self-understanding. The literature review illustrated a variety of methods for collecting data across of a diverse population; however, studies focused on the at-risk girl of color in an urban setting should be further examined, as they are a marginalized population who face a unique set of obstacles.

Researchers should seek to create more opportunities for at-risk girls of color to increase the social capital through the addition of a caring adult mentor to provide guidance and support. Whether the mentorship is formal, such as in this qualitative case study, or informal, like a coach or classroom teacher, those who have direct contact with the population studied should be provided with resources to aid the at-risk girl of color with academic achievement and the development of self-efficacy. Finally, a study that focuses on the growth and development of at-risk girls of color on a larger scale should be conducted to examine best practices and evidence-

based programming to close the gap in achievement for at-risk girls of color and their Caucasian counterparts.

Conclusion

This dissertation was an examination of the experiences of mentees and mentors of a mentoring program and the academic achievement and development of self-efficacy of the program participants. Participants in the study believed that support from mentors, mentors' and mentees' recognition of growth, a sense of belonging within the mentor group, and learning to set and achieve goals all lead to achievement academically and personally. Each participant lived in the same area and attended the same school and therefore had several shared experiences. However, they also had unique situations and circumstances in their home lives that shaped their beliefs in their ability to achieve. Yet, they all affirmed that their participation in the mentoring program was instrumental to their academic achievement and development of self-efficacy.

The findings of this study provide understanding of the challenges at-risk girls of color in an urban setting face and how mentoring programs can help to close the gap due to the absence of social capital for this population. The experiences of the mentees and mentors in the program can assist in the improvement of existing mentoring programs or benefit developing mentoring programs by providing insight into the experiences of this population. At-risk girls of color are a growing population that needs to have parameters in place to help to combat the challenges they face in their urban communities.

The goal of educators and mentors is to provide youth with the tools necessary to become productive citizens of the global world. Unfortunately, not all citizens of the global society have the same opportunities and resources to excel. Lack of social capital combined with lack of

models of success in the at-risk youth's environment could mean failure if there are no caring adults available to provide much needed guidance and support to the at-risk girl of color.

References

- Abbott, R. (2013). Creating Effective Mentoring Relationships with Urban Youth.
- Arthur, M. W., Hawkins, J. D., Pollard, J. A., Catalano, R. F., & Baglioni Jr, A. J. (2002). Measuring risk and protective factors for use, delinquency, and other adolescent problem behaviors: The Communities That Care Youth Survey. *Evaluation review*, 26(6), 575–601.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Regulation of cognitive processes through perceived self-efficacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 25(5), 729–735.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Macmillan.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, 72(1), 187–206.
- Barry, M. M., Clarke, A. M., Morreale, S. E., & Field, C. A. (2018). A review of the evidence on the effects of community-based programs on young people's social and emotional skills development. *Adolescent Research Review*, 3(1), 13–27.
- Bayer, A., Grossman, J. B., & DuBois, D. L. (2015). Using volunteer mentors to improve the academic outcomes of underserved students: The role of relationships. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(4), 408–429.
- Beale Spencer, M., Harpalani, V., Cassidy, E., Jacobs, C. Y., Donde, S., Goss, T. N., ... & Wilson, S. (2015). Understanding vulnerability and resilience from a normative developmental perspective: Implications for racially and ethnically diverse youth. *Developmental Psychopathology: Volume One: Theory and Method*, 627–672.
- Case, A. D. (2017). A critical-positive youth development model for intervening with minority

- youth at risk for delinquency. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, 87(5), 510–519.
- Cassidy, S. (2015). Resilience building in students: the role of academic self-efficacy. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, 1781.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). The CDC guide to populations and vulnerabilities. Retrieved from <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showPcMain>
- Clonan-Roy, K., Jacobs, C. E., & Nakkula, M. J. (2016). Towards a model of positive youth development specific to girls of color: Perspectives on development, resilience, and empowerment. *Gender Issues*, 33(2), 96–121.
- Costello, C. R., & Ramo, D. E. (2017). Social media and substance use: What should we be recommending to teens and their parents? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 60(6), 629–630.
- Crenshaw, K., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2015). *Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced, and under protected*. New York, NY: Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies, Columbia University.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Darrow, A. A., Novak, J., Swedberg, O., Horton, M., & Rice, B. (2009). The effect of participation in a Music Mentorship Program on the self esteem and attitudes of at-risk students. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2, 5–16.
- Deutsch, N. L., Reitz-Krueger, C. L., Henneberger, A. K., Futch Ehrlich, V. A., & Lawrence, E. C. (2017). “It gave me ways to solve problems and ways to talk to people” Outcomes from a combined group and one-on-one mentoring program for early adolescent girls. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 32(3), 291–322.

- DeWit, D. J., DuBois, D., Erdem, G., Larose, S., & Lipman, E. L. (2016). The role of program-supported mentoring relationships in promoting youth mental health, behavioral and developmental outcomes. *Prevention Science, 17*(5), 646–657.
- DeWit, D. J., DuBois, D., Erdem, G., Larose, S., & Lipman, E. L. (2016). The role of program-supported mentoring relationships in promoting youth mental health, behavioral and developmental outcomes. *Prevention Science, 17*(5), 646–657.
- Dowd, A. J., Harden, S. M., & Beauchamp, M. R. (2015). Adolescent girls' experiences in the Go Girls! group-based lifestyle mentoring program. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 39*(2), 267–276.
- Dray, J., Bowman, J., Campbell, E., Freund, M., Hodder, R., Wolfenden, L., & Oldmeadow, C. (2017). Effectiveness of a pragmatic school-based universal intervention targeting student resilience protective factors in reducing mental health problems in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 57*, 74–89.
- DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. C. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12*(2), 57–91.
- Eddy, J. M., Martinez, C. R., Grossman, J. B., Cearley, J. J., Herrera, D., Wheeler, A. C., & Harachi, T. W. (2017). A randomized controlled trial of a long-term professional mentoring program for children at risk: Outcomes across the first 5 years. *Prevention Science, 18*(8), 899–910.
- Erdem, G., DuBois, D. L., Larose, S., De Wit, D., & Lipman, E. L. (2016). Mentoring relationships, positive development, youth emotional and behavioral problems: Investigation of a mediational model. *Journal of Community Psychology, 44*(4), 464–483.

- Foukal, M. D., Lawrence, E. C., & Jennings, P. A. (2016). Mindfulness and mentoring satisfaction of college women mentoring youth: Implications for training. *Mindfulness*, 7(6), 1327-1338.
- Gillen-O'Neel, C., & Fuligni, A. (2013). A longitudinal study of school belonging and academic motivation across high school. *Child Development*, 84(2), 678–692.
- Gordon, M., & Cui, M. (2014). School - Related Parental Involvement and Adolescent Academic Achievement: The Role of Community Poverty. *Family Relations*, 63(5), 616–626.
- Graves, K. N., Sentner, A., Workman, J., & Mackey, W. (2011). Building positive life skills, the Smart Girls Way: Evaluation of a school-based sexual responsibility program for adolescent girls. *Health Promotion Practice*, 12(3), 463–471.
- Greeson, J. K., & Thompson, A. E. (2017). Development, feasibility, and piloting of a novel natural mentoring intervention for older youth in foster care. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 43(2), 205–222.
- Guryan, J., Christenson, S., Claessens, A., Engel, M., Lai, I., Ludwig, J., & Turner, M. C. (2017). *The effect of mentoring on school attendance and academic outcomes: A randomized evaluation of the Check & Connect Program*. Institute for Policy Research Working Paper Series, WP-16-18. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University. Retrieved from <http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/docs/workingpapers/2016/WP-16-18.pdf>.
- Hamby, S., Grych, J., & Banyard, V. (2018). Resilience portfolios and poly-strengths: Identifying protective factors associated with thriving after adversity. *Psychology of Violence*, 8(2), 172–183. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.cupdx.idm.oclc.org/10.1037/vio0000135>

- Hamed, H. M. (2012). *The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and social-emotional competence in at-risk girls* (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University-Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology).
- Herrera, C., DuBois, D., & Grossman, J. (2013). *The role of risk: Mentoring experiences and outcomes for youth with varying risk profiles*. New York, NY: A Public/Private Ventures project distributed by MDRC.
- Honicke, T., & Broadbent, J. (2016). The influence of academic self-efficacy on academic performance: A systematic review. *Educational Research Review*, 17, 63–84.
- Houser, J. H. (2016). Community-and school-sponsored program participation and academic achievement in a full-service community school. *Education and Urban Society*, 48(4), 324–345.
- Hurd, N. M., & Sellers, R. M. (2013). Black adolescents' relationships with natural mentors: Associations with academic engagement via social and emotional development. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 19(1), 76–85.
- Karcher, M. J., & Hansen, K. (2014). *Mentoring Activities and Interactions*. In D. L. Dubois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd ed., pp. 45–62). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kaye, L. and Smith, C. (2014). *Understanding the role of parent engagement to enhance mentoring outcomes: Final evaluation report*. Report to the U.S. Department of Justice, Document No. 247571, Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/247571.pdf>
- Keller, T. E., & Blakeslee, J. E. (2013). Social networks and mentoring. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 129–142). Los Angeles, CA:

Sage Publications.

- Kern, L., Harrison, J. R., Custer, B. E., & Mehta, P. D. (2019). Factors that enhance the quality of relationships between mentors and mentees during Check & Connect. *Behavioral Disorders*, 44(3), 148–161.
- Kim, B. E., Oesterle, S., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (2015). Change in protective factors across adolescent development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 40, 26–37.
- King, C. A., Gipson, P. Y., Arango, A., Foster, C. E., Clark, M., Ghaziuddin, N., & Stone, D. (2018). LET's CONNECT community mentorship program for youths with peer social problems: preliminary findings from a randomized effectiveness trial. *Journal of community psychology*, 46(7), 885–902.
- Kremer, S. E., & Cooper, B. (2014). Mentor screening and youth protection. In D. L. DuBois and M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd. Ed.) (411–425). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kupersmidt, J. B., & Rhodes, J. E. (2013). Mentor training and support. In D. L. DuBois and M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 439–468). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lakind, D., Eddy, J. M., & Zell, A. (2014, December). Mentoring youth at high risk: The perspectives of professional mentors. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 43(6), 705–727.
- Larsson, M., Pettersson, C., Skoog, T. et al. Enabling relationship formation, development, and closure in a one-year female mentoring program at a non-governmental organization: a mixed-method study. *BMC Public Health* 16, 179 (2016).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2850-2>

- Leyton-Armakan, J., Lawrence, E., Deutsch, N., Lee Williams, J., & Henneberger, A. (2012). Effective youth mentors: The relationship between initial characteristics of college women mentors and mentee satisfaction and outcome. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(8), 906–920.
- Mann, M. J. (2013). Helping middle school girls at risk for school failure recover their confidence and achieve school success: An experimental study. *RMLE Online*, 36(9), 1–14.
- Mann, M. J., Smith, M. L., & Kristjansson, A. L. (2015). Improving academic self-efficacy, school connectedness, and identity in struggling middle school girls: A preliminary study of the REAL girl's program. *Health Education & Behavior*, 42(1), 117–126.
- Martin, S. M., & Sifers, S. K. (2012). An evaluation of factors leading to mentor satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(5) 940–945.
- Nasser-Abu Alhija, F., & Fresko, B. (2014). An exploration of the relationships between mentor recruitment, the implementation of mentoring, and mentors' attitudes. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 22(2), 162–180
- Niemela, P., & Kim, S. (2014). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, 3843–3846.
- Nunn, N. M. (2018). Super-Girl: strength and sadness in Black girlhood. *Gender and Education*.
- Oman, R. F., Vesely, S. K., Aspy, C. B., & Tolma, E. L. (2015). Prospective associations among assets and successful transition to early adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(1), e51–e56.
- Palmer, R., & Gasman, M. (2008). "It takes a village to raise a child": The role of social capital in promoting academic success for African American men at a Black college. *Journal of*

- College Student Development*, 49(1), 52–70.
- Panadero, E., Jonsson, A., & Botella, J. (2017). Effects of self-assessment on self-regulated learning and self-efficacy: Four meta-analyses. *Educational Research Review*, 22, 74–98.
- Schwartz, S. E., & Rhodes, J. E. (2016). From treatment to empowerment: New approaches to youth mentoring. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(1–2), 150–157.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2015). Measuring cyberbullying: Implications for research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 23, 69–74.
- Pedersen, T. (2018). Self-monitoring. *Psych Central*. Retrieved, from <https://psychcentral.com/encyclopedia/self-monitoring/>
- Peifer, J. S., Lawrence, E. C., Williams, J. L., & Leyton-Armakan, J. (2016). The culture of mentoring: Ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identity in mentoring for minority girls. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 22(3), 440–446.
- Pryce, J., Kelly, M. S., & Guidone, S. R. (2014). Mentor and youth matching. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd ed., pp. 427–438). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Reynolds, J. R., & Parrish, M. (2018). Natural mentors, Social class, and college success. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 61(1–2), 179–190.
- Rocchino, G. H., Dever, B. V., Telesford, A., & Fletcher, K. (2017). Internalizing and externalizing in adolescence: the roles of academic self-efficacy and gender. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(9), 905–917.
- Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Schwartz, S. E., Rhodes, J. E., Spencer, R., & Grossman, J. B. (2013). Youth initiated mentoring: Investigating a new approach to working with vulnerable adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 52(1–2), 155–169.
- Schwartz, S. E., & Rhodes, J. E. (2016). From Treatment to Empowerment: New Approaches to Youth Mentoring. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(1/2), 150–157.
doi:10.1002/ajcp.12070
- Silveira, F. S., & Boyer, W. (2015). Vicarious resilience in counselors of child and youth victims of interpersonal trauma. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(4), 513–526
- Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2013). Assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and scope of the study. Retrieved from dissertationrecipes.com.
- Smith, C. A., Newman-Thomas, C., & Stormont, M. (2015). Long-term mentors' perceptions of building mentoring relationships with at-risk youth. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 23(3), 248–267.
- Spencer, R., & Basualdo-Delmonico, A. (2014). Family involvement in the youth mentoring process: A focus group study with program staff. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 41, 75–82.
- Spinath, Birgit. 2012. Academic achievement. In V. S. Ramachandran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior*. (2nd ed.). (pp. 1–8). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Steese, S., Dollette, M., Phillips, W., Hossfeld, E., Matthews, G., & Taormina, G. (2006). Understanding girls' circle as an intervention on perceived social support, body image, self-efficacy, locus of control, and self-esteem. *Adolescence*, 41(161), 55–75.

- Stosny, S. (2017). Self-regulation: To feel better, focus on what is most important. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/anger-in-the-age-entitlement/201110/self-regulation>
- Suffrin, R. L. (2014). *The role of multicultural competence, privilege, attributions, and team support in predicting positive youth mentor outcomes*. College of Science and Health Theses and Dissertations. Paper 69. http://via.library.depaul.edu/csh_etd/69
- Sullivan, P. J., & Larson, R. W. (2010). Connecting youth to high-resource adults: Lessons from effective youth programs. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 25(1), 99–123.
- Taylor, A. S., & Porcellini, L. (2013). Family involvement. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 457–468). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Thomason, J. D., & Kuperminc, G. (2014). Cool girls, Inc. and self-concept: The role of social capital. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 34(6), 816–836
- Thompson, R. B., Corsello, M., McReynolds, S., & Conklin-Powers, B. (2013). A longitudinal study of family socioeconomic status (SES) variables as predictors of socio-emotional resilience among mentored youth. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 21(4), 378–391.
- Thompson, A. E., Greeson, J. K., & Brunsink, A. M. (2016). Natural mentoring among older youth in and aging out of foster care: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 61, 40–50.
- Tolan, P. H., Henry, D. B., Schoeny, M. S., Lovegrove, P., & Nichols, E. (2014). Mentoring programs to affect delinquency and associated outcomes of youth at risk: A

- comprehensive meta-analytic review. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 10(2), 179–206. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.cupdx.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s11292-013-9181-4>
- Tolbert, E. M. (2015). Next step up: A mentoring and tutoring intervention to break the cycle of disadvantage. *International Journal of Child and Adolescent Health*, 8(4), 511–517
- Tsang, Sandra & Hui, Eadaoin & Law, Bella. (2012). Self-Efficacy as a Positive Youth Development Construct: A Conceptual Review. *The Scientific World Journal*. 2012. 452327. 10.1100/2012/452327.
- Turk, F. (2018). Evaluation of the effects of conflict resolution, peace education and peer mediation: A meta-analysis study. *International Education Studies*, 11(1), 25–43.
- Van Rooij, M., Lobel, A., Harris, O., Smit, N., & Granic, I. (2016, May). DEEP: A biofeedback virtual reality game for children at-risk for anxiety. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1989–1997). ACM.
- van Rooij, E. C., Jansen, E. P., & van de Grift, W. J. (2017). Factors that contribute to secondary school students' self-efficacy in being a successful university student. *Research in Post-compulsory education*, 22(4), 535–555.
- Van Rooij, M., Lobel, A., Harris, O., Smit, N., & Granic, I. (2016, May). DEEP: A biofeedback virtual reality game for children at-risk for anxiety. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1989–1997).
- Wesely, J. K., Dzoba, N. P., Miller, H. V., & Rasche, C. E. (2017). Mentoring at-risk youth: An examination of strain and mentor response strategies. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 42(1), 198–217.

Appendix A: Mentee Structured Interview

1. At the beginning of the program you listed your short (12 months) and long term (3 to 5 years) goals. How did the mentoring program help you to achieve those goals?
2. Other than your short- and long-term goals, what other topics were covered in the mentoring programs?
3. Of the topics covered in the program, which topic was most useful to you? Why?
4. Were meeting held often enough to allow time to develop a rapport with your mentor?
5. Were the group meetings beneficial and relevant to your life or goals?
6. What challenges did you have in the mentoring program? How were these challenges addressed?
7. Which format was most beneficial to you to reach your mentorship goals (i.e., collaborate on project, in-person individual meetings, in-person group meetings, other). Which ways would be most effective, and which would be least effective for you? Why?
8. How did the overall program help you to become more successful academically?
9. How did the program help you to recover from setbacks?
10. What is your overall view on the mentoring program? What is its biggest strength? What is its biggest area of opportunity?

Appendix B: Mentor Semi structured Interview Questions

1. How did you become a mentor for the program?
2. Why did you want to be a mentor for this particular program?
3. How long were you a mentor of the Mentoring program?
4. How well would you say the mentor/mentee match was set up?
5. What types of activities did you do with your mentee?
6. How effective do you believe the program curriculum was with addressing the challenges the mentees faced?
7. Did you receive adequate training on the program curriculum?
8. What topics do you believe should be added to the program curriculum?
9. What difficulties, if any, did you have with your individual mentee?
10. How supported did you feel when presenting information to the mentee group?
11. What are the positive outcomes that you have experienced through your relationship with your mentee/program?
12. What are the negative outcomes that you experienced through your relationship with your mentee/program?
13. Do you continue your mentoring relationship with mentees after they graduate? If so, how?
14. Did the Mentoring relationship meet your objectives, needs, expectations?
15. Overall, do you believe the program meets the objective of improving academic achievement and fostering self-efficacy in girls of color who have been identified as at risk?

Appendix C: Mentor Questionnaire

How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the mentoring program?

	5 = Very satisfied	4 = Satisfied	3 = In- between	2 = Somewhat unsatisfied	1 = Very unsatisfied
01 I received enough support from the program staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
02 The mentees had quality of participation at the BEGINNING of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
03 The mentees had quality of participation in the MIDDLE of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
04 The mentees had quality of participation in the LAST FEW WEEKS of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
05 The program curriculum was easy to follow and implement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
06 How satisfied were you with the conversation the prompts provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
07 Overall - how satisfied were you with your experience in the mentoring program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the mentoring program, how much and how effectively were you able to discuss the following topics with your mentee? (Includes all forms of communication)

	5 = Excellent discussion	4 = Good discussion	3 = In- between	2 = Limited discussion	1 = No discussion on this topic
08 Career Aspirations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
09 College Goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Peer pressure/Home life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Day-to-day issues and challenges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 Other topics of interest to you and/or your mentee (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13 What modifications or enrichments would you recommend for the mentoring programs?

14 What aspect of the program did you enjoy most?

15 In what capacity would you like to participate in the mentoring program in the future?

16 Would you recommend the program to young women you believe could benefit from a mentoring program?

Appendix D: Member Checking Interview

1. What hurdles remain that hinder your ability to use the information you gained in the program?
2. Would other young ladies benefit from this program? Why or Why not?
3. How has the program changed the way you live?

Appendix E: Recruitment Scripts to be Used via Social Media and Email

Dear possible participant:

Hello, this is Latriace Wicks-Williams and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Concordia University–Portland. I am seeking participants to join in a research study I am conducting. I am asking for participants who graduated from the [redacted] mentoring program to participate in my doctoral research study. This research study will explore the experiences of girls of color who have been identified as at-risk in and urban setting and the women that mentored them. This email is an invitation to you to participate in the study.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from participating at any point, for any reason. Your name nor any personal identifying information will be associated with the research findings in any way. I am the researcher and will be the only person that will know your identity as a participant. I will keep your personal information confidential by using designated coding methods.

Your participation in this study will include a first structured interview with me that will last approximately 1 hour and a member check interviews, second interviews, as a follow-up interview, which will last approximately 1 hour. This member check interview is a way of verifying information shared in the first interview and will allow time to address any new information or follow up questions. Mentors who choose to participate in the study will also participate in a questionnaire about the program.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please respond to this email. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Latriace Wicks-Williams M.Ed.
Principal Investigator, Concordia University–Portland

Appendix F: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations:

What does “fraudulent” mean?

“Fraudulent” work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one’s own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate’s final work without full and complete documentation.

What is “unauthorized” assistance?

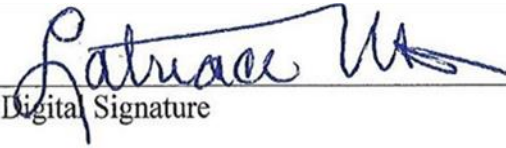
“Unauthorized assistance” refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another’s work during an online test
- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting
- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project
- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

Statement of Original Work

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University–Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.
2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association*.



Digital Signature

Latriace Wicks-Williams

Name (Typed)

December 13, 2019

Date