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THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING ON THE SELF-EFFICACY OF SCHOOL-AGE GIRLS OF COLOR: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

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THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING ON THE SELF-EFFICACY OF SCHOOL-AGE

GIRLS OF COLOR: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING ON THE SELF-EFFICACY OF SCHOOL-AGE

GIRLS OF COLOR: A MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

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This explanatory, sequential mixed-methods case study examined the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects the sense of self-efficacy of school-age girls of color. The researcher conducted this study in a Title I suburban public elementary school implementing the New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) model. The NYSMP follows a research-based mentoring model where screened and trained volunteer mentors meet with youth mentees one-to-one in a supervised environment.

Mentoring young girls of color increases opportunities for them to build their self-confidence through academic success, form relationships with positive role models, and develop their identities. This study added to the body of research by providing insight into how mentoring may have positive outcomes for girls of color.

In the study, the researcher used mixed-methods data collection techniques to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included student attendance rates, academic performance, and mentor survey data. The researcher collected qualitative data through mentor focus group interviews and artifact analysis. The findings of this study revealed that participation in this mentoring program did not influence the mentees' attendance rate or academic performance. However, mentors did perceive growth in the mentees' self-efficacy through increased effort, self-confidence,

maturity, and self-advocacy. The findings also revealed that this mentoring program

engaged in best practices of mentoring with mentors forming strong and culturally

responsive mentoring relationships with their mentees. The findings of this study

highlight the need for increased programs and resources that target social/emotional well-

being for school-age girls of color.

DEDICATION

"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments,

but what is woven into the lives of others." – Pericles

Many individuals have supported me throughout this journey, and I dedicate this dissertation to them. To the devoted teachers who were at the center of this study, and my superintendent, this would not have been possible without your commitment, encouragement, and contributions - thank you! To my mentoring comrades, Kelli and Diane, I am blessed you invited me to join your mentoring mission, which sparked my passion for this work. To my family and friends who have lifted me up on this journey and beyond - my appreciation and love for you all is endless. My parents, Billy and Carol, were the epitome of courage, hard work, sacrifice, and unconditional love; I carry them, the examples they set, and the lessons they taught me with me every day. My husband, Donald, I am forever grateful for your unwavering support, encouragement, and love. Last but certainly not least, this is dedicated to my daughter, Billie Katherine. You joined this world in the midst of my research, and you gave my work greater purpose. Your presence has brought me indescribable joy - you have made my life more fulfilling than I ever imagined.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In this explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study, the researcher examined the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects the sense of self-efficacy of school-age girls of color. The researcher conducted this study in a Title I suburban public elementary school that implements the New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) model.

Mentoring has gained popularity in education due to increasing concerns about children's well-being. Schools have worked to create and implement programs that address these concerns. Blad (2017) explained that President Obama's administration launched a mentoring initiative, My Brother's Keeper, to address chronic absenteeism. My Brother's Keeper later became an independent organization that encouraged cities to increase access to mentoring programs for African American, Latino, and Native American boys. In recent years, schools have increased interest in social-emotional learning, improving attendance, and meeting the needs of students of color; this has led to a greater interest in providing access to mentoring programs for all.

Faggella (2017) stated that mentorship has the power to impact the course of students' academic and personal life trajectories. Mentoring is important because it helps empower students to become autonomous learners and agents of their own change. Building relationships with students includes alignment with home life, achieved through regular communication and involvement of parents and guardians. Mentors can encourage students to engage in school or community-based activities that help build skills toward a known passion or to try new activities and expand a student's self-awareness and sense of self-efficacy (Fagella, 2017).

Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo's wife, Matilda Cuomo founded The New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) in 1984. It was the nation's first school-based one-to-one mentoring program that aimed to create mentor/mentee relationships for children in schools, foster care, and the court system. Today, the NYSMP continues to leverage the resources of communities, schools, and businesses to match youth with screened and trained volunteer mentors. It follows a research-based model of mentoring where mentors and mentees meet one-to-one in a supervised environment at a set time and location. The NYSMP encourages young people to stay in school and improve attendance, academic achievement, and overall academic focus. It encourages students to make sound decisions and to take on personal responsibility for their actions at home, in school, and the greater community. Mentoring helps to instill self-confidence in young people to improve their communication and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, it helps students grow, attain a greater sense of purpose, and guides them toward a brighter future.

In this Title I suburban public elementary school, the NYSMP model is implemented with fidelity. A program coordinator oversees adult mentors from the school and community. Mentors and mentees meet once weekly. They engage in one-to-one mentoring sessions and community outreach projects. All participants included in this study are school-age girls of color selected to participate in the program by recommendation of a school staff member and parent request. The total population of the elementary school is 558 students, with 78% Economically Disadvantaged and 41% being English Language Learners. The reported demographics are 83% Hispanic or

Latino, 15% Black, and 2% Other. The diverse student population in this school is a representative sample of the school district and its community.

Problem Statement

It is not yet known the extent at which mentoring has resulted in positive outcomes for school-age girls of color. For this study, girls of color refer to Black, Latina, Asian, Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander girls (Onyeka-Crawford et al.; 2017). Current research, specific to girls of color, focuses on negative stereotypes and outcomes (e.g., suspension rates, dropout rates, and teenage pregnancy). There is a lack of research on the positive educational outcomes of girls of color in regard to mentoring. There is a body of literature that discusses the importance of mentoring relationships for girls; however, more research appears to be needed on the importance of developing mentoring relationships for girls of color (Brinkman et al., 2018). Mentoring programs help provide motivation, support, training, and access to resources that help close the achievement gap among youth in low socioeconomic (SES) areas. When at-risk youth, especially girls, are provided access to positive, supportive, and caring adults, they have greater opportunities to develop self-esteem, foster positive relationships, and make positive life choices.

Prior research points to gender differences in self-efficacy. Female students report significantly higher self-efficacy in elementary school than males. By middle school, self-efficacy drops for both genders but substantially more for females from middle school onward. It is critical to better understand which female students experience these self-efficacy drops to better understand how to address low self-efficacy (Fahle et al., 2019). Furthermore, systemic failures have led to the criminalization and marginalization

of girls of color, which appears to have detrimental impacts on self-efficacy, academic achievement, identity, and relationships (Morris, 2016).

Fostering women's empowerment must begin at a young age. It appears that young girls of color need mentors that embrace them and their goals. These aspirations must not be limited to societal norms and expectations. Adults ingrain into today's girls of color that they can succeed in any role they choose. Providing mentoring for young girls of color increases opportunities for them to build their self-confidence through academic success, to form relationships with positive role models, and to develop their own identities. This study aimed to add to the body of research by providing insight into how mentoring may have positive outcomes for girls of color. Furthermore, the information gained from this research may influence school districts to adopt culturally responsive mentoring programs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to explore the extent to which participation in a mentoring program impacts school-age girls of color in terms of attendance, academics, and self-efficacy as perceived by their mentors.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) provides the theoretical framework for this study. CRF was derived from Critical Race Theory (CRT), specifically the sixth tenet of intersectionality. CRF aims to address the intersections between race and gender to provide insight into the experiences of women of marginalized groups and their adversity and perseverance. Like CRT, CRF states that (1) racism is a fundamental part of United States society, (2) women of color have their own voice to describe experiences of their

own oppression, and (3) women of color experience multiple consciousness. CRF recognizes these multiple identities of women and girls of color and acknowledges that they have experiences that are different from White girls, White boys, and even boys of color.

CRF stresses the importance of highlighting the perspectives of girls of color and their perseverance through challenges and multiple forms of oppression. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) stated that it crucial to shift traditional research concerning girls of color from damage-centered research to focus on their resiliency instead.

Bandura's social cognitive theory, more specifically the area of self-efficacy, also provides a framework for this research. Self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs about their capabilities of producing desired outcomes in different situations. This does not refer to one's actual ability to perform tasks but rather their perceptions of their capabilities to do so (Schunk, 2020). Self-efficacy is a set of beliefs that influences how one feels, thinks, motivates oneself, and behaves during different tasks or situations. According to Bandura (1978), these self-efficacy beliefs are ever-changing and informed through five primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion, physiological and affective states, and imaginal experiences. For this research, the three primary sources that guided this study are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion.

These theoretical frameworks guided this research as this study aimed to examine the effects on self-efficacy of girls of color participating in a culturally responsive mentoring program while considering the intersectionality of race and gender.

Significance and Importance of the Study

This study is significant because it adds to the existing literature on successful mentoring practices by focusing on the positive outcomes of girls of color engaged in a mentoring program. There is evidence that youth mentoring is related to more positive social relationships, higher performance and less problem behavior, positive self-image, emotional adjustment, and psychological well-being (DuBois et al., 2011). Therefore, studying the effects on self-efficacy is relevant in the field of education because it is equally important for schools to address social-emotional learning as academic learning.

This study differs from prior research as it examined the effects on self-efficacy through attendance rates, academic progress, and mentor perceptions of mentees. This study reviewed attendance records by analyzing days students were in attendance, rather than focusing on truancy. This study used a standardized, reliable academic assessment to analyze student academic growth. This study used a survey and semi-structured interviews with focus groups of mentors to examine their perceptions of the girls' self-efficacy. This research is significant as traditional educational research on girls of color often focuses on negative stereotypes; however, this study concentrated on positive educational outcomes for girls of color through mentoring.

This study is significant because there is a gap in the literature to understand how participation in a culturally responsive mentoring program may have positive effects on girls of color. The findings of this research may influence school districts to adopt culturally responsive mentoring programs. This research is critical as it analyzed existing mentoring practices in a Title I suburban elementary school and how those practices influenced student attendance, academic performance, and self-efficacy. The information

gained from this study adds to the body of research on the positive educational outcomes for girls of color.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is there a difference between attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring? H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

   H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean the attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

2. To what extent is there a difference between academic performance of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring?

   H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

   H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

3. What perceptions do mentors have about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees?

Overview of Methodology

Research designs are strategies for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in a study. A mixed methods case study design develops an enhanced description and analysis of a case using quantitative and qualitative data. This design is

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useful when there is an interest in better understanding complex systems like schools and policy decisions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Furthermore, explanatory research aims at understanding or clarifying phenomena rather than predicting them.

There are four major types of mixed methods designs: Triangulation Design, Embedded Design, Explanatory Design, and Exploratory Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Creswell (2012) stated that quantitative and qualitative data are collected sequentially in two phases during an explanatory sequential design. In the first phase, the researcher collects quantitative data. In the second phase, they collect qualitative data. This method is utilized to ensure that qualitative data can assist in elaborating on the quantitative results.

Explanatory research attempts to clarify the reasons behind the outcome. Creswell (2012) explained that the rationale for this type of research design is that quantitative data may provide an overall general picture of the research problem. Conversely, a deeper analysis through qualitative data may refine and explain that quantitative picture.

An explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study methodology was used in this study to combine both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher collected quantitative data in the form of attendance rate, academic performance on a district assessment, and mentor survey. Qualitative data was collected in the form of focus group interviews and artifacts. This case study's methodology allowed the researcher to gain various information on an understanding of the outcomes and perspectives associated with participation in a culturally responsive mentoring program.

Definition of Key Terms

Academic self-efficacy: a student's belief about their ability to learn or to perform within a school environment (Fahle et al., 2019).

At risk: Operationally defined as a student identified by a school staff member and/or parent as being in danger of failing academically and requiring social/emotional support.

Girls of color: A group that includes Black, Latina, Asian, Native American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander girls (Onyeka-Crawford et al.; 2017).

Mentoring: An individualized relationship between a trusting and supportive, non-familial adult mentor and a child or adolescent mentee (Eby et al., 2008).

School-age: Operationally defined as children ages 8-12 that attend public elementary school.

Self-efficacy: A set of beliefs that influences how one feels, thinks, motivates oneself, and behaves during different tasks or situations (Bandura, 1978).

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To provide further insight into this topic and to support the purpose of this sequential explanatory, mixed methods case study, the researcher analyzed literature from current, peer-reviewed articles about research on the topic. The study's purpose was to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color and their sense of self-efficacy. Throughout this chapter, the researcher presents information on community and family cultures, youth mentoring, culturally responsive mentoring practices, and best practices in mentoring. The information contained in this chapter connects the ideas of this study by sharing previous relevant research conducted on this topic.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Feminism

It has been over 20 years since critical race theory (CRT) was first introduced to education. CRT originated from a group of scholars: Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, Richard Delgado, Patricia Williams, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Tara Yosso. These scholars identified patterns of racially discriminatory practices from a legal standpoint. CRT has since been adapted in the field of education to examine how integrated racism exists in our organizations, schools, teaching, and even common ways of thinking about race and racism (Amiot et al., 2020). Capper (2015) detailed the six tenets of CRT:

1. *Permanence of Racism* is the concept of whether conscious or unconscious, racism is a permanent component of American life.

2. *Whiteness as Property* due to the history of racism in the United States (U.S.), the notion of Whiteness can be considered a property interest.

3. *Counterstorytelling/Counternarratives and Majoritarian Narratives* aim to question the validity of accepted premises held by the majority; the recognization of majoritarian narratives as stories and not assumed to be facts or truth. This tenet focuses on the individual voices and experiences of people of color.

4. *Interest Convergence* asserts that advancement in civil rights and progress for people of color only occurs when they converge with the interests of whites.

5. *Critique of Liberalism* critiques basic ideas accepted by liberal ideology (e.g., color blindness and neutrality of the law).

6. *Intersectionality* addresses how racism interacts or intersects with other identities and differences.

CRT focuses on the advancement of marginalized groups and has been influential in education. Each of the tenets applies to the policies and practices of schools. However, CRT scholars also noticed that women of color have multiple identities and face multiple oppressions, both as women and as people of color. However, their perceptions often went unnoticed in scholarly research.

Therefore, Richard Delgado first introduced critical race feminism (CRF) in 1995. CRT serves as the foundation for CRF. At the center of its analysis, CRF places the experiences of women of color and their adversity and perseverance (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). CRF is closely related to CRT's sixth tenant: intersectionality. CRF aims to address the intersections between race and gender and to give a voice to women of marginalized groups. Like CRT, CRF states that (1) racism is a fundamental part of U.S.

society, (2) women of color have their own voice to describe experiences of their own oppression, and (3) women of color experience multiple consciousness.

CRF highlighted issues that studies involving racism focus on the experiences and perceptions of men of color. Conversely, studies on feminism focus on the experiences and perceptions of white females. Annamma et al. (2019) stated that girls of color experience multiple marginalized identities. Viewing an issue through a single lens limits understanding of how gender interacts with race. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) further explained that the identifiers of race and gender in women of color cannot be evaluated as separate entities; being a woman of color is, in fact, its own sociocultural identity. Since women of color are indivisible, research must treat their experiences and perspectives as such. CRF recognizes these multiple identities of women/girls of color and acknowledges they have experiences that are different from White girls, White boys, and even boys of color.

CRF stresses the importance of highlighting the perspectives of girls of color and their perseverance through challenges and multiple forms of oppression. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) stated that shifting traditional research concerning girls of color from damage-centered research to focus on their resiliency instead is imperative. Educational research on girls of color focuses on negative stereotypes (e.g., teen pregnancy, school dropout, suspension rates, drug use). However, there is a need for educational research that is associated with positive outcomes for girls of color. CRF suggests an important direction for developmental and educational research for girls of color. Researchers must change the focus of studies on girls of color from their deficits or shortcomings to their strengths, resiliency, and positive contributions to society (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). CRF is an

effective framework for addressing the experiences of girls of color in educational spaces.

There is a continued need for research to understand the intersection of gender and race for girls of color. More insight into resiliency and positive outcomes for girls of color is also needed. Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) explained that the findings from research should not only be used to validate the experiences of girls of color, but to strengthen connections between schools and the community, transform practices in classrooms, and promote the social and educational policies with girls of color in mind. Furthermore, due to racism, sexism, and class oppression in the U.S., girls of color are in multiple jeopardies of exclusion, especially in educational settings. Many girls of color face adversities that challenge their coping abilities. Research has found that the most resilient students were those that received simultaneous support from their family, community, and school.

Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) stated that it is imperative that girls of color have multiple support systems to leverage the multiple challenges they face. There is a need for girls of color to receive additional support in the educational setting to be able to establish a strong sense of cultural appreciation and self-worth. Childers-McKee and Hytten (2015) asserted that using a CRF lens in schools encourages families and communities to collaborate and value diversity and heterogeneity. In mentoring, it is important to consider CRF and the program's impact on the experiences and perspectives of girls of color. This study used a CRF framework to investigate the effects that participation in a mentoring program has on school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs about their personal capabilities of producing desired outcomes in different situations. This does not refer to one's actual ability to perform tasks but rather their perceptions of their capabilities to do so (Schunk, 2020). It is a multi-faceted set of beliefs that influences how one feels, thinks, motivates oneself, and behaves during different tasks or situations. Bandura asserted that self-efficacy beliefs are constantly evolving. These beliefs are fluid and informed through at least five primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experience, social persuasion, physiological and affective states, and imaginal experiences (1978). There are three primary sources of these sources that are related to this study in mentoring. Mastery experiences refer to one's ability to persevere through arduous tasks which build self-efficacy successfully. Vicarious experience involves observing social models (e.g., between adults and peers) that complete challenging tasks successfully. This influences self-efficacy as they observe the critical thinking skills and strategies others employ. Social persuasion involves increasing self-efficacy through verbal persuasion and encouragement by others (e.g., significant adults, teachers, parents). The implementation of mentoring provides youth access to supportive adults from the community. which expands their social capital and provides an adequate source of self-efficacy (Tsang et al., 2012).

Academic self-efficacy is a student's belief about their ability to learn or to perform within a school environment. Fahle et al. (2019) explained that female students report significantly higher self-efficacy in elementary school than their male peers. In middle school, self-efficacy declines for both genders; however, the drop is considerably

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more significant for females. This decline for females remains consistent from middle school onward. What occurs within male and female students' shared academic experiences likely affects their self-efficacy differently. While female and male students are often in the same classrooms, they may be treated differently in those classrooms. Fahle et al. (2019) suggested that the messaging female students receive about their abilities, or how they interpret the messages, is critical in developing their self-beliefs. Fable et al. (2019) suggested that this significant drop in self-efficacy, and consistently lower levels of self-efficacy throughout high school, may have negative consequences in school and life outcomes for girls.

Research has also shown that there are meaningful differences in the average levels of self-efficacy between minority and White students, between students from both low and high socioeconomic statuses, and between low-achieving and high-achieving students. Groups that are more disenfranchised within the learning environment appear to be more susceptible to self-doubt and lack of confidence (Fahle et al., 2019). Since evidence suggests that academic self-beliefs predict academic achievement outcomes, disparities among groups in academic self-efficacy, may affect achievement gaps. Merolla (2017) stated that self-efficacy is a critical precursor for academic achievement. Higher levels of self-efficacy might lead to higher levels of educational success. Students who have higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviors that are conducive to high achievement. Conversely, students with low levels of self-efficacy are less likely to perform well in school or engage in achievement-enhancing behaviors.

Furthermore, Merolla (2017) explained that there is a link between neighborhood disadvantage and lower self-efficacy at the individual level. Individuals in impoverished

neighborhoods tend to lack stable employment and wages. This affects their belief that their actions can positively influence their situation. However, in these same neighborhoods, there is also the belief that hard work leads to individual success. Exposure to these conflicting ideas leads individuals to develop more heterogeneity about their ability to affect their lives. Research shows that students in these environments have difficulty transforming positive self-efficacy into better academic achievement. The social context of impoverished neighborhoods has negative consequences on student outcomes. Interventions, such as mentoring, that focus on reducing opportunity gaps could effectively reduce disparities in self-efficacy among these subgroups (Fahle et al., 2019).

Many students experience a decline in self-esteem and school engagement as they transition from elementary to middle school. There is a need for focused interventions that support students through this transition (West et al., 2018). Fahle et al. (2019) found that average self-efficacy is higher in schools with more supportive academic climates, where students report a higher sense of belonging, and where students perceive discipline is fair. Therefore, research on self-efficacy should be used to inform intervention efforts to boost self-efficacy, and to guide school accountability measures. There is evidence that mentoring and self-efficacy are related. Maldonado et al. (2008) explained that self-efficacy is both a social and personal construct and that relationships impact perceptions of self-efficacy. Mentoring relationships influence dominant components in mentees' lives, and it fosters the development of positive conceptions of self. This study aimed to identify the effects that participation in a mentoring program has on school-age girls of color sense of self-efficacy.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
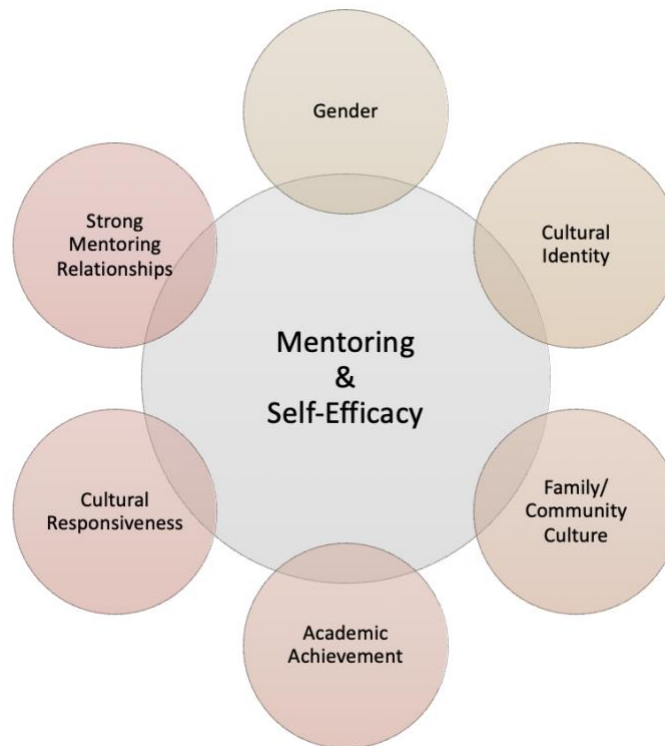
This conceptual framework illustrates that mentoring and self-efficacy are affected by many variables. Prior research has shown that many factors influence effectiveness of mentoring programs, including but not limited to, gender, cultural identity, family and community culture, academic achievement, cultural responsiveness, and strong mentoring relationships. The scope of this study explored how these variables influence the self-efficacy of school age girls of color that participate in a mentoring program. The extent to which these variables effect the self-efficacy of the girls included in this study was determined by gathering and analyzing data from a variety of sources.

Review of Related Literature

Family and Community Cultures

There are many barriers to success in school for girls of color that extend beyond the biases associated with race and sex. Girls of color are more likely to live in low-socioeconomic neighborhoods with fewer public resources and under-resourced schools that are not culturally competent. There is evidence that neighborhood and family cultural context shapes academic achievement and social/emotional well-being of youth.

Onyeka-Crawford et al. (2017) elucidated that living in economically distressed neighborhoods can create mental and physical stressors. Girls of color are less likely to have access to school counselors and resources. Disproportionate rates of exclusionary discipline that begin as early as preschool, which results in lost class time and increased school pushout compound these stressors.

This study, in conjunction with the National Women's Law Center, aimed to better understand what healthy and safe schools look like for all girls. A nationwide online survey of 1,003 girls of color, ages 14-18, inquired about their school experiences. There were also six focus groups on barriers facing girls who were sexual assault survivors and girls who were currently pregnant or parenting children.

The results revealed that girls of color need access to culturally responsive learning environments. Culturally responsive practices can benefit girls of color by encouraging students for their future economic stability. Evidence suggests that obtaining a high school diploma significantly reduces the likelihood of living in poverty for women of color.

Thompson et al. (2013) confirmed that low SES is associated with fewer socio-emotional and intellectual resources which may be a result of a lack of parental involvement and availability. There are connections between challenging parent-child relationships among low SES youth and parent stress, distress, depression, and parents' perceived isolation and lack of support. Low self-esteem and academic readiness are primary outcomes associated with poverty. Families in poverty experience environmental stressors that overwhelm intrinsic beliefs and resiliencies. Thompson et al. (2013) state that mentoring programs that target at-risk assume that being mentored can leverage the adverse effects associated with living in poverty. Therefore, they aimed to explore how facets of poverty may predict levels of need for at-risk youth.

The participants in the study included 24 youths that participated in mentoring programs in school and afterschool clubs. A school professional or parent referred each participant to the mentoring program if they exhibited academic difficulty, problem behaviors, or socio-relational difficulties. The results revealed that mentored youths from very low SES backgrounds benefited the most from mentoring program participation. The data revealed a link between low-status jobs and unemployment and elevated parenting stress and difficulties within the parent-child relationship. Youth from lower SES families and neighborhoods experienced greater environmental risk than their more affluent counterparts. These findings suggest that community climate and structure may impact the efficacy of mentoring programs.

Case (2017) also explored key intervention features for minority youths that help them better navigate adverse social-structural conditions, decrease problem behaviors, and increase prosocial behaviors. Historically, minority youths that live in low SES

communities face exposure to social and structural factors that increase their risk of delinquent behaviors. This population often lack access to community facilitators of healthy development (e.g., employment opportunities, home-school connections, access to youth programs). Case (2017) asserted that it is essential to empower youths to recognize social structure inequalities and to engage in social action to increase their access to opportunities, and foster critical consciousness, self-efficacy, and community engagement.

This ethnographic study included nine youths and two staff members involved in The Peer Ambassadors (PA) Program. The PA program was a leadership development program that targeted African American youths with prior involvement with the juvenile justice system or identified as at-risk for involvement. Youths were referred to the program by a peer, family member, school personnel, or mental health provider. This intervention program aimed to improve opportunities for youths in their communities.

The findings derived from observations and semi-structured interviews led to the development of the critical-positive youth development model of intervention. Three contextual intervention features that foster youth leadership are (1) empowering roles; (2) counterspaces and counternarratives; (3) supportive relationships. These contextual assets engage youth in the community in positive ways and support the development of key individual assets: competence, confidence, connections, and contributions. It appears that the development of these individual assets, encourages community engagement and favorable behavior outcomes.

Youth Mentoring

Youth mentoring is an individualized relationship between a trusting and

supportive, non-familial adult mentor and a child or adolescent mentee. Eby et al. (2008) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis to determine the effect size associated with mentoring outcomes for mentees and to explore whether the relationship between mentoring and the mentee outcomes varied by the type of mentoring program (youth, academic, or workplace). The sample contained 116 independent reports that were eligible to be included. This study found that mentoring was significantly related to favorable behavioral, attitudinal, health-related, interpersonal, motivational, and career outcomes. The greatest effect sizes were between mentoring and helping others and school and career attitudes. There is a favorable correlation between mentoring with a wide range of mentee outcomes. There appears to be a strong association between mentoring between some outcomes (e.g., school attitudes) over other outcomes (e.g., psychological stress). Youth mentoring aims to reduce at-risk behaviors, improve academic performance, and develop interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

There is evidence that youth mentoring is related to more positive social relationships, higher performance, less problem behavior, positive self-image, emotional adjustment, and psychological well-being. DuBois et al. (2011) also conducted a meta-analysis using 73 independent evaluations of mentoring programs directed toward children and adolescents from 1999-2010. They aimed to determine whether program effectiveness would vary depending on program practices and the characteristics of participating mentors and mentees. The analysis revealed evidence for the effectiveness of mentoring in improving outcomes across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of young people's development.

While mentoring has the capacity for fostering healthy development among

youth, it is equally important for the mentor to feel satisfaction in the mentoring relationship. Suffrin et al. (2016) examined 247 mentors in the context of their relationships with their mentees, mentees' family, and mentoring organization where they volunteer, to better understand how various relationships promote mentor satisfaction. Mentor satisfaction is imperative as greater satisfaction means mentors are more likely to sustain their relationship with mentees. More substantial relationship duration ultimately has a positive effect on youth outcomes as well.

The results of this study indicated that higher perceived cultural competence, stronger relationships with mentees' families, and greater mentor satisfaction with the mentoring organization predicted greater mentoring satisfaction overall (Suffrin et al., 2016). Mentor satisfaction is essential as it predicts mentor retention and therefore, positive outcomes for the mentee.

For the purposes of developing these supportive and nurturing mentoring relationships, school-based mentoring is common among youth mentoring. Frels et al. (2013) examined the purposes and approaches of adult mentors in the school setting. This study aimed to provide mentors with an opportunity to impact future directions of school-based mentoring programs to increase a sense of connectedness for at-risk students. This collective case study included 11 mentor participants. Frels et al (2013) conducted interviews and observations. They used Match Characteristics Questionnaire (Program Support subscale and Mentor Satisfaction subscale) as well. Findings suggested three themes that adults associated with the purpose of mentoring: beliefs (the idea that working with children makes a personal difference), spirituality (the idea that working with children is unique and inner strength-based), and motivation (the idea that working

with children has self-sustaining rewards). Although the mentors did not consider their contributions to their mentees to be life-changing, mentoring did account for positive change amongst the mentors/mentees.

Culturally Responsive Mentoring Practices

The research about mentoring girls of color appears to overlap with research on culturally responsive mentoring practices. The literature on these topics is closely related and should be considered indivisible.

The adultification of Black girls suggests that they need less nurturing, protection, support and are more independent than their White peers. These ideas may be a barrier to leadership and mentorship opportunities in schools for girls of color. Epstein et al. (2017) suggested that the perception of Black girls as less innocent may contribute to harsher punishment by school personnel.

This study included 325 adults from across the United States of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and different educational levels, surveyed about their beliefs surrounding children's development in the 21st century. The participants were randomly assigned to complete a questionnaire about their perception of either Black girls or White girls. The results showed, across all age ranges, participants viewed Black girls as more adult-like than White girls. Results also revealed that participants feel Black girls require less protection and nurturing than their White peers.

These results suggest that at almost all stages of childhood, from age 5 to 19, Black girls are viewed as more adult than their White peers. Adults perceive Black girls as developmentally older than their White peers during critical periods of healthy identity development. This adultification of Black girls may contribute to the disproportionality in

school discipline. Furthermore, the belief that they require less nurturing and support may inhibit access to school leadership and mentoring opportunities (Epstein et al., 2017). All girls of color deserve equal treatment, opportunities, and access to protections that are deemed necessary and appropriate for all children.

Alvarez et al. (2009) asserted that mentoring students of color warrants additional expertise in negotiating professional roles, managing discrimination and racial intolerance, assessing one's own racial and ethnic identity, and recognizing one's personal life in the mentoring process. This study explored how students of color negotiate the intersections of their personal, cultural, and professional identities through mentoring.

This case study's findings revealed issues critical to successful mentoring for students of color. Mentors need to support mentees of color by fostering relationships, engaging in respectful discourse, being respectful of cultural behaviors, teaching mentees to navigate relationships with others, engaging in discussions of personal and professional identity, teaching effective management experiences with discrimination, and recognizing the role of racial identity (Alvarez et al., 2009). These findings suggest that the needs of students of color related to professional education, socialization, and development, are unique and should have more direct guidance.

Kayser et al. (2018) examined mentoring programs in a community with many programs for adolescent Black girls to determine what Black girls need to succeed. The researchers sought to identify ways agency, autonomy, family involvement, cultural responsiveness, and youth voice occurred in their afterschool mentoring programs.

The researchers used a convenience sample of 26 individuals involved with community or school-based mentoring or afterschool programs. Data were collected during the 2016-2017 school year using semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. These findings, based on the interview and focus group data, suggest that Black girls have three primary needs: (1) programs that develop partnerships with parents and families; (2) adults who will both advocate for them and teach them how to advocate for themselves; (3) mentors who share their racial identity.

While this study did not find evidence of parental involvement in the mentoring and afterschool programs, the program leaders and staff did acknowledge that more parental participation is needed, and family involvement may be an effective way to promote cultural responsiveness within the mentoring and afterschool programs. The findings suggested, from both adult and adolescent interviewees, that Black girls need to learn to use their voices to be able to advocate for themselves. This study found that Black girls need to work with mentors who share their racial and ethnic backgrounds. The Black girls expressed that they preferred mentors who shared similar life experiences. The adult mentors also supported this sentiment as they cannot share the same perspectives as different race and ethnicities (Kayser et al., 2018).

It is important also to explore mentoring relationships between adult staff and girls of color in a gender-responsive program. Brinkman et al. (2018) aimed to gain an understanding of how the girls perceived the benefits and challenges of establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships. Likewise, they wanted to better understand how the mentors perceived the factors involved with establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships.

The study participants were in two groups: 10 adolescent girls, ages 13-18, who attended a gender-responsive program, and 10 adult staff members, ages 24-59. Brinkman et al. (2018) used semi-structured interviews to collect data from all participants. The study focused on the participants' perspectives. After transcribing and coding data from all the interviews, two domains emerged from the data: positive mentoring relationships and challenges and barriers.

The findings, derived from the staff and girls' interviews, described four categories as factors that contribute to the formation of positive mentoring relationships: (1) the development of positive relationships; (2) integrity and trustworthiness; (3) perceived support; and (4) role-modeling. The girls expressed that their relationships with staff were generally positive and that engaging in conversations about personal topics was very important to them. The staff expressed that their interactions with the girls were one of the positive aspects about working at the program, and felt that engaging in conversations about sensitive topics, listening to the girls, getting to know each other, and using self-disclosure were most important in promoting these positive relationships. Overall, the findings indicate that relationships depend on trust to be meaningful (Brinkman et al., 2018).

A second domain considered the possible challenges girls and mentors experienced that create barriers to forming these positive mentoring relationships. Two categories were determined by staff members: challenges to trust and perceived judgment. Two other categories identified by both staff and the girls: (1) advice giving; (2) confidentiality. The staff reported girls' challenging behaviors, negative attitudes and moods, and past trauma were troubling factors in forming positive mentoring

relationships. The girls felt it was important for staff to maintain confidentiality which may pose difficulty as staff members are mandated reporters. These challenges may interfere with building trust between the girls and their mentors. The findings suggest that both the girls and staff members perceive that forming a relationship and having meaningful conversations is crucial for building a positive mentoring relationship (Brinkman et al., 2018).

The negative biases adults have about girls of color may influence the girls' perceptions of their mentoring relationships. Therefore, it is important that girls of color have culturally responsive mentoring programs. Peifer et al. (2016) asserted that a mentor's cultural sensitivity enables their mentee's exploration of and commitment to their cultural identities. The researchers examined 95 mentoring pairs of middle school girls of color and female college students both from majority and minority cultural groups. The study aimed to explore mentors of color and White mentors' ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identities in association with their minority group mentees' ethnic identities.

Peifer et al. (2016) assessed mentors' and mentees' ethnic identities using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). They used the Commitment subscale to determine a person's affirmation, belonging, and commitment to their ethnic group. They also used Exploration subscale; this assessed mental processes related to understanding the meaning of group membership. Peifer et al. (2016) used the Empathetic Feeling and Expression subscale of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy to assess ethnocultural empathy. This assessed internal feelings about cultural issues and expressions of cultural empathy.

Results revealed that mentors' ethnic identity exploration and commitment predicted higher levels of minority mentees' ethnic identity exploration. Mentors willing to engage in their ethnic identity help mentees feel safe to explore their cultural identity. Ethnocultural empathy contributes to effective cross-cultural counseling and youth mentoring.

Developing a positive ethnic identity is crucial for youth of color. It is equally critical for mentoring programs to understand how their interventions influence mentees' ethnic identity development. Sanchez et al. (2019) conducted a repeated measures study to examine the roles of cultural mistrust and perceived mentor support for ethnic identity. The participants were 40 adolescent girls of color matched with racially diverse female mentors in a community-based mentoring program.

The participants completed various surveys at the start of the mentoring program intervention, three months later, and at the end of the year-long program. To assess mentor support for ethnic identity, mentees completed a survey developed by the researchers to assess their perceptions of mentor support for their ethnic background, culture, and identity. Results of this study revealed the girls' perceptions of their mentors' support for ethnic identity were related to the quality of the mentoring relationship. Mentees that perceived more mentor support for ethnic identity predicted increased mentor satisfaction regarding relational satisfaction. Mentees that reported more mentor support on ethnic identity exhibited increased ethnic identity exploration.

Findings also suggested that cultural mistrust may hinder mentor relationships between mentees of color and White mentors. Therefore, the conclusions suggest that it is imperative that mentoring programs include training to help mentors support girls of

color in their ethnic identity development, as positive ethnic identity is fundamental to healthy development (Sanchez et al., 2019).

CRF emphasizes the importance of counter storytelling for girls of color to highlight their experiences and perspectives. Gibbs Grey & Harrison (2020) conducted a year-long ethnographic case study with Black girls who attend a weekly school-based mentorship program. The study aimed to examine the school and home experiences of Black girls who experienced multiple school disciplinary actions. The researchers wanted to gain insight into the students' perspectives on their school, community, and home environments while providing support and advocacy through mentoring.

Through school-based observations and interviews with the subjects, their parents, teachers, and administrators, three themes emerged: (1) incongruence of school narratives vs. the narratives of the girls; (2) misalignment of enforced disciplinary actions with girls' actions; (3) existence of multiple pathways that Black girls interact with school disciplinary systems. These findings revealed that there appears to be a contrast between best practices in schools versus the realities that Black girls experience in schools.

Furthermore, many girls in this study lacked extracurricular opportunities due to a deficit of school and family resources. Therefore, research suggest schools create safe spaces for Black girls to grow. Black girls should have a support system that will listen to their stories and advocate for immediate and long-term changes in their lives and schools (Gibbs Grey & Harrison, 2020).

Carter Andrews et al. (2019) also contended that there is a need for formal school spaces where Black girls can critically reflect on their school experiences in ways that are

affirming, healing, and conducive to positive school reform. The researchers also postulated that characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors such as nonconformity are perceived as self-advocacy and independence when exhibited by White girls but seen as disruptive and aggressive when exhibited by Black girls. Therefore, this study aimed to better understand Black girls' schooling experiences by talking with students.

Seventy Black girls participated in this phenomenological, qualitative study. All participants attended Critical Conversation Spaces (CCSs) based on teacher recommendations. CCSs are semi-structured groups where participants engage amongst themselves and with facilitators- the expectation is that there is no fear or judgment within these spaces. CCSs are supportive spaces for healing and developing a sense of community. These groups aim to empower Black girls to use their voices to examine the facets of their gendered and racialized experiences. Carter Andrews et al. (2019) conducted semi-structured focus group interviews using CCSs (Carter Andrews et al., 2019).

Findings from this study suggest five themes that are related to CRF and highlight students' attitudes and treatment towards Black girls, as well as adults' perceptions and expectations of them: (1) notions of femininity and the policing and surveillance of Black girl bodies; (2) Black girls and (anti)intellectualism; (3) marginalization of Black female athletes; (4) Black girls in relational contexts; (5) necessary support structures for Black girls. Many of the experiences Black girls shared in CCSs were evidence of the double standards about appropriate behaviors and White-normed femininity. Findings also revealed that Black girls experienced lower academic expectations, but unreasonably high behavioral expectations by school professionals. Findings from this research provide

insight into how to meet the academic, social, and identity needs of Black girls in schools and to develop and implement educational policies that are equitable and affirming to Black girls (Carter Andrews et al., 2019).

Carter Andrews et al. (2019) contended that Black girls need educational spaces that cultivate community with same-race, same-gender peers to share their unique and collective racialized and gendered experiences. Furthermore, these spaces should be an integral part of the explicit school curriculum and school day.

Muno (2014) also emphasized the importance of providing a safe environment where girls can develop healthy identities and relationships. She stressed that healthy adolescent female development requires supportive relationships. Girls must be encouraged to explore their experiences and to see their life experiences reflected in adults that lead such programs.

In this qualitative study, more than 100 girls participated in 10 focus groups over three years. Group facilitators guided discussions to capture how girl-specific practices ensuring safety, developing leadership skills, and promoting social change effected participants. The results revealed that experiencing a positive girl culture increased girls' sense of worthiness and belonging. Girls developed higher expectations for themselves and others. They also developed attitudes and skills that addressed the underlying reasons they struggled academically. These girl-specific practices empowered girls at school and elsewhere, leading to improved academic behaviors, social skills, and interpersonal behavior (Muno, 2014).

It appears that youth development programs are essential for promoting positive developmental goals. The development of a positive identity, a capacity for building and

maintaining relationships with peers and adults, and social competence, all increase the likelihood of developing healthy behaviors and attitudes over time. Kuperminc et al. (2011) aimed to determine the short-term effects of participation in a youth development program, Cool Girls, Inc. The researchers expected program participants to show improvements in positive behaviors and attitudes, especially in self-concept, academic orientation, future orientation, and healthy behavior. The study also explored the additional effects of participating in Cool Sisters, a one-on-one mentoring program.

This quasi-experimental study sample included 86 Cool Girls participants and 89 comparison participants. The sample consisted mostly of Black girls ages 9 to 15. Cool Girls and comparison participants completed questionnaires that assessed multiple measures within each domain of youth development.

The findings suggested Cool Girls participants demonstrated improvements in positive behaviors and attitudes, especially in the areas of self-concept, future orientation, and healthy behavior; however, there was no statistical significance in academic orientation. According to the study, Cool Girls experienced gains in academic competence relative to comparison participants. Participation in Cool Sisters was associated with gains in perceptions of social acceptance and body image. In relation to the comparison group, Cool Girls, showed gains in hope for the future. Cool Sisters participants were associated with increased expectations of avoiding future drug use. Cool Girls experienced gains in physical activity as well, in relation to their comparisons (Kuperminc et al., 2011). Overall, the results suggested that a comprehensive community-based program has the potential to promote positive and healthy development in young girls.

Best Practices in Mentoring

There have been many mentoring program models discussed thus far. Whether the mentoring program occurs in a community-based or school-based setting, there appears to be several best practices for improving program effectiveness.

Bayer et al. (2015) aimed to determine the effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs on the academic outcomes of mentored students and the mechanisms behind these effects. This randomized, control trial study included 1,139 students from 71 schools participating in Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's (BBBSA) school-based mentoring program. Mentors and mentees met during school, after school, or both during and after school. Mentoring pairs engaged in a variety of activities (e.g., talking, playing games, playing sports, doing homework). The pairs met for 45-60 minutes, three to four times a month. BBBSA provided training to mentors prior to the start of the program and throughout the program via meetings and teleconferences.

Results revealed that mentors who received training before and during their assignments were more likely to have close relationships with their mentees. Furthermore, the data indicated that these mentoring relationships accounted for positive impacts on academic outcomes. The researchers suggest several practices for fostering close mentoring relationships: not having all mentoring pairs meet in the same location, having the mentoring pairs meet at least three times per month, and providing ongoing support to mentors (Bayer et al., 2015).

Smith et al. (2015) also explored critical factors of successful mentoring relationships. This qualitative study included 12 participants with extensive experience in mentoring at-risk youth. Smith et al. (2015) collected data through focus group

interviews. The data revealed four themes: supportive acceptance, consistency, social literacy, and future visioning.

The findings suggested that supportive acceptance focuses on the need to build a supportive, accepting relationship with the mentee. Consistency highlights the importance of the mentor as a long-term, consistent presence in their lives. The other themes of social literacy (skills for interacting with those around us) and future visioning (helping mentees make decisions about their future) were related to the mentees' needs for support (Smith et al., 2015).

Smith et al. (2015) found that through developing a supportive trusting relationship, youth can be taught social skills and develop appropriate visions for their futures. This research identifies that a critical factor of effective mentoring relationships is the consistent presence of a supportive, caring adult; this relationship will increase children's academic, social, and life success.

McDaniel and Besnoy (2019) conducted a year-long case study to evaluate the effectiveness of a cross-age peer mentoring program for both mentees and mentors. The mentee group had 11 elementary participants selected by school staff for needing social and academic support. The mentor group consisted of six 11th grade students nominated by their school counselor for being responsible students with leadership skills.

The facilitators promoted relationships between the mentor/mentee pairs using three strategies: (1) providing consistent procedures; (2) offering informal time for activities of choice; (3) remaining flexible and responsive to pairings and activities. As the program progressed, mentors showed evidence of effectiveness in providing individualized support for mentee deficits and in providing activity choices that were

responsive to mentee preferences (McDaniel & Besnoy, 2019). Over the course of the year-long program, mentees showed positive academic outcomes, increased self-efficacy, improved attendance, and improved classwork and homework ratings.

The results of this study indicated that mentoring programs should include (1) a component where the fidelity of program implementation is monitored; (2) ongoing training for mentors; (3) parental/family involvement; (4) structured, appropriate activities for mentors and mentees; (5) clearly stated high expectations for attendance for mentors. McDaniel and Besnoy (2019) found that when each of these five best practices for mentoring programs are implemented, program effectiveness increases. Providing a foundational structure and ongoing support to mentors and mentees, builds meaningful relationships. The mentees improved academically, behaviorally, and socially, while mentors developed leadership skills.

Summary

The study's purpose was to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy. The researcher investigated current, peer-reviewed research on best practices of culturally responsive youth mentoring programs. The research suggests family/community involvement, a strong mentoring relationship, and cultural responsiveness are factors in effective mentoring programs. Furthermore, the research suggests that mentoring positively impacts girls of color. These topics connect to critical race feminism and Bandura's social cognitive theory, specifically self-efficacy. To support the purpose of this sequential explanatory, mixed methods case study and to provide further information

and clarification, the researcher analyzed relevant research conducted on the topic of this study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study was to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy. In this study, the researcher examined attendance rates and academic growth of mentee participants, as well as mentor perspectives on the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees. This chapter outlines the research methods, setting, participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

Rationale for Research Approach

The researcher conducted an explanatory, sequential, mixed methods case study and analyzed the collected quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell (2012) stated that quantitative and qualitative data are collected sequentially in two phases during an explanatory sequential study. In the first phase, the researcher collects quantitative data. In the second phase, the researcher collects qualitative data. The researcher utilized this method to use qualitative data to assist in analyzing the quantitative results.

Explanatory research clarifies how the data analysis provides explanations for the outcome. Creswell (2012) explained that the rationale for this type of research design is that quantitative data may provide an overall general picture of the research problem. Conversely, a deeper analysis through qualitative data may refine and explain that quantitative picture.

An explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study methodology was used in this study to combine both quantitative and qualitative data. The collected quantitative data came from data associated with the attendance rate, academic performance on a

district assessment, and mentor survey. The researcher collected qualitative data from focus group interviews and artifacts. This case study's methodology allowed the researcher to gain a variety of information on an understanding of the outcomes and perspectives associated with participation in a culturally responsive mentoring program.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is there a difference between the attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring?

   H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

   H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

2. To what extent is there a difference between academic performance of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring?

   H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

   H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

3. What perceptions do mentors have about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees?

Setting

The setting of this explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study was a Title I suburban elementary school in a central Suffolk County school district. The school serves approximately 558 students in Kindergarten through Grade 6. This is a Targeted Support & Improvement school (TSI). Schools are identified as TSI if one or more student subgroups perform at a level "1" (on a scale of 1 to 4) on a combination of indicators. The indicators to measure school performance are student academic achievement, student growth, academic progress, English language proficiency, chronic absenteeism, graduation rates, and college, career, and civic readiness. TSI schools must develop a school improvement plan, including at least one schoolwide improvement strategy, which the School Improvement Team, in conjunction with New York State Education Department representatives, reviews annually. The goal of this system is to achieve equity for all students. Table 1 outlines the school's student data to provide more detailed information about the setting of this study.

After IRB approval, the researcher gained access to the research setting with written permission from the Superintendent of Schools. The researcher requested, in writing, permission to conduct this study at one of her elementary schools. All district, school, program, and student data were kept confidential. The researcher did not use any names or identifying information to maintain confidentiality throughout the study. The researcher replaced student names with assigned identification (ID) numbers. Additionally, the researcher kept all research information on a password-protected laptop, iPad, and iPhone.

Table 1

School Profile

Information:	Percentage
Demographics:	
American Indian/ Alaska Native	>1%
Black or African American	15%
Hispanic or Latino	83%
Asian or Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	1%
White	1%
Multiracial	1%
Gender:	
Male	50%
Female	50%
Other Groups:	
English Language Learners	41%
Students with Disabilities	15%
Economically Disadvantaged	78%
Homeless	2%

Note. This data is from the school district's 2020-2021 data from the State Education Department's Student Information Repository System.

Participants

This study had two groups of participants: students (mentees and non-mentees) and mentors. The sampling method was judgment, or purposive, a non-random sampling

technique. One advantage of this sampling method is that it targeted the specific subgroups that the researcher wished to study. Using purposive sampling made it easier for the researcher to make generalizations about the selected sample.

The students were not active participants; rather their attendance records and academic scores were utilized. Students that participate in the school's mentoring program have been identified as at-risk by school staff and their parents. School staff and parents referred these students to participate in the school's mentoring program. The student data used in this study was the attendance rates and academic scores of selected mentees and comparable peers that did not participate in the mentoring program.

The mentor participants included school staff members that serve as mentors in the school's mentoring program. These mentors were voluntary participants in this study. The researcher asked them to complete a survey via Google Forms. Their identities and responses were kept anonymous. Additionally, a group of mentors participated in focus group interviews. Their participation in the interview process was voluntary as well. The researcher requested these mentors participate in the study through the survey.

Data Collection Procedures

Archival data includes student participants' attendance records from PowerSchool SIS and Star360 Reading assessment data. The researcher also collected artifacts, conducted a survey, and conducted focus group interviews with mentor participants. The tools that the researcher used to collect the data included a password-protected laptop, iPad, and iPhone.

After receiving IRB approval and permission from the Superintendent of Schools, the researcher emailed potential adult/mentor research participants. The researcher

conducted a virtual mentoring program meeting via Webex to clarify any concerns and address further questions. After the meeting, the researcher obtained informed consent from all adult/mentor research participants via email.

The researcher first assigned each student participant with a student ID number. The researcher used this number for all student data to maintain confidentiality throughout this study. The researcher followed this sequence for conducting her research:

1. Gained access to the research site.

2. Obtained IRB approval.

3. Selected research participants and obtained informed consent.

4. Collected quantitative student data through PowerSchool SIS and Star360.

5. Collected quantitative mentor data by conducting the survey.

6. Analyzed survey data to develop semi-structured focus group interview questions.

7. Collected qualitative data through focus group interviews with mentor participants.

8. Analyzed qualitative data to identify themes, patterns, and discrepancies.

9. Developed Chapter 4 (Results) and Chapter 5 (Discussion); sent to mentor.

Data Sources

Student Data

The researcher used PowerSchool SIS for attendance data. PowerSchool SIS is a comprehensive, cloud-based student information software program. PowerSchool SIS functions include the ability to view, record, and update student attendance data. Teachers enter student attendance daily. PowerSchool SIS allows viewers to generate

attendance verification records for individual students and groups. The researcher used these records to obtain and verify student attendance in this study.

The researcher accessed PowerSchool SIS database to obtain student attendance records for the selected student participants for the 2021-2022 school year. The researcher used this data to analyze the number of days each student attended school. The researcher entered this data into an Excel spreadsheet, replaced student names with assigned ID numbers, and conducted a means analysis using SPSS. An independent samples t-test analysis determined if there was a difference between the mean attendance rates of girls that participated in mentoring and those that did not participate in mentoring.

For the academic data, the researcher used Renaissance's Star360 Reading assessments data. These assessments serve as tools for screening, progress monitoring, instructional planning, and measuring growth. Educators use the scaled scores of these assessments to predict performance and proficiency on state assessments. The scaled score is used to compare student performance across grade levels. Any increase in scaled score indicates student growth. The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) calculation uses an individual's growth between a current test score and previous test scores, which is then compared to the growth of their academic peers. Each of these computer-adaptive tests take 20-30 minutes to administer and makes automatic adjustments. If a student answers a question correctly, the next question will be more difficult, whereas if they answer a question incorrectly, the next question will be less difficult. The Star360 Reading assessment consists of 34 multiple-choice items in reading: literature and reading: information and language. Star360 assessments have high reliability. Whereas a score of

1.00 indicates perfect reliability, Star360 Reading has a test reliability coefficient of .95 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of .91. Star360 assessments also have high validity as well due to decades of extensive research, study, and effective use of the Star360 assessments.

The researcher accessed the Star360 assessment program to obtain Star360 Reading data from September 2021 to June 2022 for selected student participants. Using the Student Growth Percentile, the researcher used the academic data to analyze student growth and progress. Due to Covid-19, the researcher did not use academic data from the 2020-2021 school year, as schools operated on hybrid and virtual models. Student data from the 2020-2021 school year would not be representative of student progress during a typical, five-day, in-person instructional model. The researcher exported the 2021-2022 data to an Excel spreadsheet and replaced student names with ID numbers. The researcher conducted a means analysis using SPSS. The researcher also used an independent samples t-test analysis to determine if there was a difference between the mean academic scores of girls that participated in mentoring and those that did not participate in mentoring.

Survey

The researcher disseminated a survey to mentor participants from the school's mentoring program. A survey is used in research to describe the population's attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the survey assessed such topics as the mentors' perceptions of NYSMP effectiveness and mentors' perceptions of their mentees' self-efficacy. The survey was developed by the researcher and administered using Google Forms. It is a 16-item survey with a 5-point Likert scale

(1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree). The researcher-created survey was proposed and validated by face content validity with St. John's University doctoral students. After administering the survey, the researcher further analyzed the data in SPSS for validity and reliability.

The researcher sent an email to the mentor participants that included a link to the Google Forms survey. There was a description of the survey, the purpose of the survey, and directions for taking the survey included. There was also a statement of informed consent, whereby completing the survey means that the mentor is giving consent to participate in the study. All survey responses were anonymous to maintain confidentiality. Google Forms collected the results. The researcher exported the results to an Excel spreadsheet. The researcher analyzed the data in SPSS to identify trends in mentor responses. The researcher drew tentative conclusions from the data. The results this data suggests were used to develop the semi-structured interview questions for the mentor focus group participants.

Focus Groups

The researcher conducted focus group interviews with mentor participants. Creswell (2012) explained that the researcher could use focus groups to collect shared understanding from several individuals and gather views from specific people. Focus groups typically involve four to six participants. They are advantageous when interviewees likely yield the best information and when participants are alike and are cooperative with each other. This is likely for the mentors in this study as they were voluntary participants, and they worked together through the mentoring program.

The semi-structured interview questions were developed from the research questions and based on conclusions drawn from the quantitative data (e.g., attendance records, academic growth, mentor survey results). The researcher offered to interview at a convenient time for mentor participants. The interviews were conducted virtually via Webex, audio and video-recorded, and lasted approximately 60 minutes. The researcher transcribed recordings for data analysis purposes. Transcription is the process of converting audio recordings and field notes into textual data. The researcher coded the data and looked for themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the data.

Artifacts

The researcher collected and analyzed various artifacts in the form of memorandums, agendas, professional development and training materials, photographs, and any pertinent materials distributed from the school's mentoring program. The researcher conducted a content analysis of the study's artifacts. The artifacts were organized and coded into categories that matched the themes that emerged from analyzing the data.

Table 2

Research Question Matrix

Research Question	Type of Research	Research Method	Type of Analysis
1	Quantitative	Descriptive Statistics	Means Analysis: Independent Samples *t*-test

2	Quantitative	Descriptive Statistics	Means Analysis: Independent Samples t-test
3	Quantitative and Qualitative	Survey and Focus Group Interviews	Face Content Analysis, Means Analysis, and Analysis of Themes

Trustworthiness of the Design

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) stated, "Validity differs in quantitative and qualitative research, but in both approaches, it serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data, the results, and the author's interpretation of the data results" (p. 216). Mixed methods studies use both approaches. For quantitative data, the researcher uses quality instruments, analyzes data, and employs procedures that reduce threats to internal and external validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For qualitative data, it is critical to establish validity to ensure that the data collection is accurate and that the information is credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Credibility is the certainty in the truth of the study and its findings (Connelly, 2016). Credibility occurs through the use of observations, journaling, audio recording, and transcriptions. Transferability is the extent to which the study's findings are useful to persons in other settings (Connelly, 2016). Transferability develops through rich, detailed descriptions of the context, location, and people studied. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and the conditions of the study (Connelly, 2016). The use of

process logs, researcher's notes of activities during the study, and triangulation of data establish dependability. Confirmability is the neutrality that findings are consistent and able to be repeated (Connelly, 2016). Confirmability can be established through the researcher keeping detailed notes of their decisions and analysis throughout the study and triangulation of data.

In this study, the researcher-created survey was proposed and validated by face content validity with St. John's University doctoral students. This is a strategy to examine validity to determine how the survey is appropriate for measuring the purpose of this study. Following the administration of the survey, the researcher utilized SPSS to analyze the survey for validity and reliability.

Creswell (2012) defined triangulation as:

…the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. The inquirer examines each information source and finds evidence to support a theme. This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes" (p. 259).

The researcher triangulated data collected through the survey, interviews, and artifacts to obtain the most trustworthy findings and improve the generalization of the outcomes. This increases the likelihood that other schools and districts will be able to use the results of this study to apply these effective practices to their mentoring programs.

Research Ethics

The researcher used ethical practices, including data collection procedures that were respectful to participants and researchers, and adhered to the university's IRB

process to ensure and maintain ethics throughout the study. The researcher provided all respondents with informed consent to participate in this study. Additionally, the invitation to participate included a statement explaining that all collected data would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. The invitation stated that participation is voluntary and that the participants' names and participation information would be kept confidential.

Data Analysis Approach

The researcher used methods and tools to analyze the following quantitative and qualitative data: student attendance rates, student Star360 Reading scores, mentor survey data, digitally transcribed mentor interviews, and artifacts.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) stated:

The procedure for conducting integrative data analysis in the explanatory sequential design occurs in three phases: the analysis of the initial quantitative data, an analysis of the follow-up qualitative data, and an analysis of how the qualitative data helps to explain the quantitative data to answer the mixed methods question (p. 234-235).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) outlined the procedure of integrative data analysis and recommended the following steps:

- Analyzing quantitative databases and noting statistical results that need further explanation.
- Determining the purposeful sample that can best provide explanations.

- Designing qualitative data collection procedures that identify the types of questions that need to be answered by the purposeful sample.

- Collecting and analyzing the qualitative data.

- Developing a table/graph that illustrates how the qualitative results enhance the quantitative results.

- Interpreting the value added by the qualitative explanations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

First, the researcher analyzed quantitative data by conducting a means and independent samples t-test using SPSS. The researcher reviewed the results to determine if participation in a mentoring program influenced mentee attendance rates and academic scores. The researcher used the results of these analyses to develop semi-structured interview questions.

Next, the researcher administered the mentor survey. Mentor participants received the Google Forms survey via email. All responses were kept anonymous. The researcher conducted a means analysis in SPSS. The researcher used the results of these analyses to develop semi-structured interview questions. In addition, the researcher conducted a factor analysis.

The researcher used analysis of themes to analyze interview data from mentor focus group interviews. Analysis of themes occurs when the researcher analyzes data for specific themes, forming information into clusters of ideas to provide details that support the themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative data was transcribed and coded in preparation for analysis.

To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher used Dedoose, which is a cloud-

based software program. Dedoose is a comprehensive program for data management, excerpting, coding, and analyzing text, audio, and video files. Creswell (2012) stated that "transcription is the process of converting audiotape recordings into text data" (p. 239). Dedoose was used to transcribe the focus group interview data.

The researcher then coded the data to form descriptions and identify themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the data. The researcher followed an inductive process of narrowing the data into a few prevalent themes using Creswell's model for qualitative research (Figure 2).

Figure 2

A Visual Model of the Coding Process in Qualitative Research
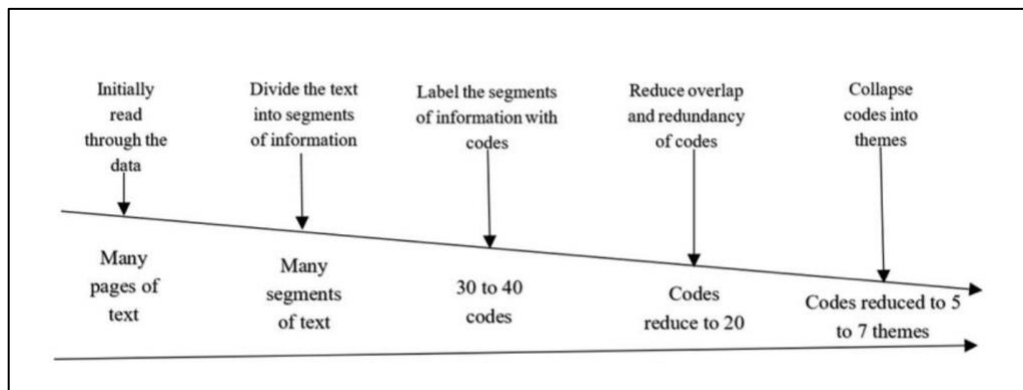
Note. From Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

Researcher Role

The researcher is a middle-class, White, non-Hispanic, female. She is an Assistant Principal in this Title I, suburban, central Suffolk County school district. The researcher's familiarity with the district may impact data collection as participants may feel obligated to participate. The researcher addressed this misconception by initially soliciting mentor

participation via email and using an email address that is not identifiable (e.g., does not include researcher's name or school district's name). At the follow-up mentoring meeting, the researcher disclosed that this research has no affiliation with the school district and participation in the study, or non-participation, is voluntary and will not have any influence on participants' status within the district. To ensure there is no bias in the interpretation of the study, the researcher had her study peer-reviewed to ensure objectivity in data analysis and interpretation.

Conclusion

In this case study, the researcher used an explanatory sequential, mixed methods research approach to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy. The researcher utilized these data collection and analysis procedures to ensure the validity and the trustworthiness of the study's design.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Introduction

This explanatory sequential, mixed methods case study aimed to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy. In this study, the researcher examined attendance rates and academic growth of mentee participants, as well as mentor perspectives on the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees.

Explanatory research clarifies the reasons behind the outcome. Creswell (2012) explained that the rationale for this type of research design is that quantitative data may provide an overall general picture of the research problem. Conversely, a deeper analysis through qualitative data may refine and explain that quantitative picture. The quantitative results show general trends and relationships, while qualitative results show in-depth personal perspectives. With this integrative data analysis, the researcher interprets to what extent and in what ways the qualitative results explain and add insight into the quantitative results.

In this study, the researcher collected quantitative data in the form of student attendance rates, academic performance on a district assessment, and a mentor survey. Qualitative data were collected in the form of focus group interviews and artifact analysis to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is there a difference between the attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring?

H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

2. To what extent is there a difference between academic performance of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring?

H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean academic performance of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

3. What perceptions do mentors have about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees?

With the results of this study, the researcher will explore the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy. The results of this study will add to the existing literature on successful mentoring practices by focusing on positive outcomes of girls of color that engage in a mentoring program.

The researcher collected attendance and academic data on mentee participants and comparable peers that did not participate in the mentoring program (non-mentees) (Table 3). Data were analyzed to determine if there was a difference between mentees and non-mentees in terms of attendance rate and academic growth.

Mentors completed a Google Forms survey to gather information regarding the mentoring program's effectiveness and mentor perceptions of the development of self-efficacy of mentees. The researcher performed a factor analysis on the mentor survey and analyzed survey data. After the quantitative data (student attendance, academic data, and mentor survey data) were collected, the results guided the researcher in developing interview questions for mentor participants.

The researcher conducted focus group interviews with eight mentor participants to expand on the quantitative data and as a qualitative data collection method. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes. The interviews took place virtually to gather data about the mentors' perceptions of program effectiveness and their mentee's self-efficacy growth. The researcher recorded the interviews and transcribed the recordings into textual data for analysis. The researcher analyzed data for specific themes, forming information into clusters of ideas to provide details that support the themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher used analysis of themes to analyze interview data which assisted in answering the research questions.

Table 3

Description of Mentee and Non-Mentee Participants

	Mentees	Non-Mentees
Hispanic/Latina	12	13
Black	4	3
IEP	7	6
504	1	0
Bilingual/ENL	4	8

4th Grade	2	6
5th Grade	5	6
6th Grade	9	4

Note. There were 32 students in the sample.

Research Question 1

The first research question explored to what extent there was a difference between the attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and those who did not. The researcher conducted an independent samples *t*-test to compare the mean attendance rate for the 2021-2022 school year of school-age girls of color that participated in a mentoring program (mentees) and school-age girls of color that did not participate in a mentoring program (non-mentees). The hypotheses for this statistical test are:

H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean attendance rate of mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

The level of significance for this test is $\propto = .05$. The sample contained 16 mentees and 16 non-mentees (Table 4). The researcher calculated the attendance rates for the percentage of days in attendance. The attendance rates for mentees, shown in Table 5, ranged from 87.00- 99.00 ($M = 93.56$, $SD = 3.90$). The attendance rates for non-mentees, shown in Table 5, ranged from 86.00-100.00 ($M = 93.63$, $SD = 3.91$).

Table 4

Breakdown of Mentees and Non-Mentees in the Sample of Students

	Frequency	Percent
Mentees	16	50.00
Non-Mentees	16	50.00

Note. There were 32 students in the sample, and no observations had missing or miscoded data.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Attendance Rates by Student Group

	Mentees	Non-Mentees
N	16.00	16.00
Mean	93.56	93.63
Median	93.00	93.00
Mode	93.00	91.00
Std. Deviation	3.90	3.91
Minimum	87.00	86.00
Maximum	99.00	100.00

Prior to running the independent samples *t*-test, the researcher reviewed the four assumptions of the *t*-test. The sample consisted of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and their peers that did not. The researcher will use the analyses from this student sample to generalize to future students. However, this was not a random sample due to the small sample size and the fact of the usage of purposive sampling

technique, resulting in an unmet assumption. Moreover, with a smaller sample size, it may be difficult to determine normality; therefore, the researcher checked normality assumption through the inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots, and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The distribution of scores for the mentee and non-mentee groups met the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality (p>.05 for both). The visual evidence showed that histograms with normal curves demonstrated normal distributions of attendance rates for mentees and non-mentees. The Q-Q Plots demonstrated normality as they appeared linear for both mentees and non-mentees. Finally, the data met Levene's test of homogeneity of variances $F(1,30)$ = .03, p =.87. Therefore, the attendance rate data met all the assumption tests to conduct the independent samples t-test.

The independent samples t-test results showed no statistically significant difference between the mean attendance rates for mentees and non-mentees, MD= .06, t(30) = .05, p=.96 (Table 6). Therefore, we retain the null hypothesis as there is no significant difference in the attendance rates between mentee and non-mentee groups; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$.

Table 6

t-Test Results Comparing Attendance Rate by Student Group

	Mentees		Non-Mentees		
	M	SD	M	SD	t
Attendance Rate	93.56	3.90	93.63	3.91	-.05

Note. *p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001; M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation. The sample contained 16 mentees and 16 non-mentees. The homogeneity of variances assumption was met, F(1,30) = .03, p =.87.

During the focus group interviews, when asked if the findings of the attendance data supported their experience with their mentee, mentors agreed with these results. All mentors interviewed reported that they did not believe the mentoring program affected the attendance of their mentees in any way. Many mentors explained that their mentees had excellent attendance even before participation in the mentoring program. Therefore, the qualitative data supported the findings of the quantitative data analysis for the first research question.

Research Question 2

The second research question explored to what extent there was a difference between the academic performance of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and those that did not. The researcher conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the Student Growth Percentile of the Star360 Reading assessment for the 2021-2022 school year of school-age girls of color that participated in a mentoring program (mentees) and school-age girls of color that did not participate in a mentoring program (non-mentees). The hypotheses for this statistical test are:

H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean academic performance of

mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m = \mu_n$

H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean academic performance of

mentees and non-mentees; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$

The level of significance for this test is $\propto = .05$. The sample contained 16 mentees and 16 non-mentees (Table 4). Student growth percentiles for mentees, shown in Table 7, ranged from 3.00 - 83.00 (M = 42.38, SD = 27.88). Student growth percentiles for non-mentees, shown in Table 7, ranged from 2.00 - 72.00 (M = 38.13, SD = 23.37).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Student Growth Percentile by Student Group

	Mentees	Non-Mentees
N	16.00	16.00
Mean	42.38	38.13
Median	45.00	41.00
Mode	3.00[a]	72.00
Std. Deviation	27.88	23.37
Minimum	3.00	2.00
Maximum	83.00	72.00

Note. a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Before running the independent samples *t*-test, the researcher reviewed the four assumptions of the *t*-test. The sample consisted of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and their peers that did not. The researcher used analyses from this student sample to generalize to future students. However, it is not a random sample due to the small sample size and the fact the researcher used purposive sampling technique, resulting in an unmet assumption. It is worth noting that with a smaller sample size, it may be difficult to determine normality; therefore, the researcher checked the normality assumption through the inspection of histograms, Q-Q plots, and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The distribution of scores for the mentee and non-mentee groups met the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality ($p>.05$ for both). The visual evidence showed histograms with normal curves demonstrating normal distributions of student growth percentiles for mentees and non-mentees. The Q-Q Plots demonstrated normality as they appeared linear

for both mentees and non-mentees. Finally, Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was met $F(1,30) = .99$, p =.33. Therefore, the student growth percentile data met all the assumption tests to conduct the independent samples *t*-test.

The independent samples *t*-test results showed no statistically significant difference between the mean student growth percentiles for mentees and non-mentees, MD= 4.25 t(30) = .47, p=.64 (Table 8). Therefore, we retain the null hypothesis as there is no significant difference in the student growth percentile between mentee and non-mentee groups; $\mu_m \neq \mu_n$.

Table 8

t-Test Results Comparing Student Growth Percentile by Student Group

	Mentees		Non-Mentees		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*
Student Growth Percentile	42.38	27.88	38.13	38.13	.47

Note. *p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001; M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation. The sample contained 16 mentees and 16 non-mentees. The homogeneity of variances assumption was met, $F(1,30) = .99$, p =.33.

During focus group interviews, when asked if the findings of the academic data supported their experience with their mentee, mentors agreed with these results. Many mentors who participated in interviews reported that during their meetings and conversations with their mentees, the focus was on providing social/emotional support. Therefore, many mentors felt they could not accurately determine if the program influenced their mentees' academics. Regarding the second research question, the qualitative data supported the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

Research Question 3

The third research question explored mentor perceptions about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees as measured by a survey and focus group interviews. Table 9 provides descriptive information about the mentors who volunteered to participate in this research study. This information helped guide the researcher's analysis of the interviews. The researcher designed initial questions to establish rapport and gain background information on mentors' motivation to participate in this mentoring program. The remaining interview questions, developed from the results of the survey, helped the researcher gain a complete understanding of mentors' perceptions of program effectiveness and the growth of self-efficacy in their mentees through participation in the mentoring program.

The researcher performed a factor analysis on the mentor survey to group common items, identifying four factors from the 16 items in the survey. The first factor, mentor perception of development of self-efficacy, consisted of eight survey items. The second factor, program effectiveness: the mentoring relationship, consisted of three survey items. The third factor, program effectiveness: cultural responsiveness, consisted of three survey items. The fourth factor, program effectiveness: family/community culture, consisted of two survey items. See Appendix C for the mentor survey, factor analysis, and matrix.

Table 9

Description of Mentor Participants

Mentor	Area	Race	Reason(s) for participating in mentoring:
Alice	Music	White	Wanted an opportunity to get to know students better on an individual basis.
Angela	Elementary	Black	Lives in the community and has an awareness of the needs of the community; knows that the students need positive role models.
Darla	Bilingual	Hispanic	Sought out by program coordinator to mentor a particular student; agreed to participate.
Dena	Elementary	White	Previously involved with the school's mentoring program pre-Covid; wanted to continue.
Eve	Elementary	White	Lives and works in the community and understands the needs of the students; wanted to be someone that the student(s) could talk to.
Jane	Bilingual	Hispanic	Understands that students need someone to talk to and relate to.
Joy	Reading	White	Wanted to support students socially/emotionally rather than just academically.
Yuliana	TESOL	Black	Involved with many mentoring groups in the community; wanted to participate within the school setting to help the students.

Following the administration of the mentor survey, the researcher analyzed the results. A review of the descriptive statistics for the mentor survey (Table 10) followed. The researcher also reviewed the frequency of responses for each factor (Tables 11 - Table 14). The researcher used the results of this quantitative data analysis to develop focus group interview questions. See Appendix D for the mentor focus group interview protocol.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of Mentor Survey Items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	10	3	5	4.1	0.568
2	10	3	5	4.4	0.699
3	10	3	5	4.3	0.675
4	10	2	5	3.9	0.994
5	10	1	5	3.5	1.65
6	10	3	5	4	0.471
7	10	2	4	3.6	0.699
8	10	4	5	4.8	0.422
9	10	3	5	4.3	0.675
10	10	4	5	4.6	0.516
11	10	1	5	2.4	1.506
12	10	3	5	3.9	0.876
13	10	1	4	1.8	1.033
14	10	4	5	4.1	0.316

15	10	3	5	4.7	0.675
16	10	3	5	4.2	0.632

Table 11

Frequency Distribution of Growth of Self-Efficacy Factor

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Not Applicable	1	10.00
Agree	7	70.00
Strongly Agree	2	20.00

Table 12

Frequency Distribution of Mentoring Relationship Factor

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Not Applicable	1	10.00
Agree	4	30.00
Strongly Agree	5	60.00

Table 13

Frequency Distribution of Cultural Responsiveness Factor

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	1	10.00
Not Applicable	1	10.00
Agree	5	50.00
Strongly Agree	3	30.00

Table 14

Frequency Distribution of Family and Community Culture Factor

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	20.00
Disagree	3	30.00
Not Applicable	1	10.00
Agree	3	30.00
Strongly Agree	1	10.00

Artifacts in the form of program materials were collected, organized into categories, and analyzed by the researcher. The researcher conducted a content analysis of the study's artifacts to organize and code them into categories that matched the themes that emerged from the data into the following categories: Mentee Information, Mentoring Program Protocols, Mentoring Guidelines, and Helpful Suggestions for Mentors. Analyzing the artifacts allowed the researcher to identify emerging themes and patterns,

which assisted in answering the research questions.

The researcher utilized analysis of themes to identify specific themes and details that support the themes, from the qualitative data collected. The researcher used an inductive process of narrowing the data into a few prevalent themes.

The analysis of the qualitative data led to 56 initial codes, which the researcher reduced to 28 codes. The researcher identified themes using codes that occurred most often in the analyzed interview transcriptions. Overall, during mentor focus group interviews, mentors referenced the mentoring relationship 75 times, cultural responsiveness 42 times, and growth of self-efficacy of mentees 46 times. Therefore, the themes established through the analysis of the interviews and artifacts were: Mentoring Relationship, Cultural Responsiveness, and Growth of Self-Efficacy (Table 15).

Table 15

Emergent Themes

Theme	Data Source
Mentoring Relationship	Interviews
	Artifact Analysis
Cultural Responsiveness	Interviews
	Artifact Analysis
Growth of Self-Efficacy	Interviews
	Artifact Analysis

Note. Emergent themes were established through data analysis.

Themes

Mentoring Relationship

  A prominent theme that emerged from analyzing the qualitative data was the importance of a strong mentoring relationship. The mentor survey data showed that 90% of mentors agreed that they fostered a positive and trusting relationship with their mentees.

  Through the interviews, the mentors expressed the importance of developing an individualized, one-to-one relationship with their mentees. Dena explained that as a mentor, she looked forward to the one-to-one relationship and the opportunity to get to know her mentee. Dena stated:

    My mentee and I had a great experience, and I feel that we developed a good rapport. The program was a positive experience for both of us because I really enjoyed talking to her (mentee) and getting to know her on such an individual basis.

  Alice expressed that as a music teacher, she is fortunate to teach all the students in the building; however, she does not typically have an opportunity to get to know students individually. Therefore, Alice enjoyed this mentoring program because she was able to truly get to know her mentee one-to-one, allowing them to foster a closer relationship.

  Mentors also explained that it was critical in the mentoring relationship that mentees were comfortable with their mentors so that they may express themselves and talk freely. Mentees needed to know that they could trust and confide in their mentors. Joy expressed that throughout the program, her mentee's comfort level increased. Her mentee was somewhat shy initially, but as the year went on, her mentee was excited to

see her and update her on what was going on in her life. Joy's mentee often expressed that she enjoyed going to her classroom and spending time with her. Alice explained that her mentee always felt welcome and comfortable when coming to her classroom, which was made possible due to their close relationship. Alice elaborated, "My mentee really trusted me. I could tell because she would come to talk to me not only about school issues but also about things going on in her personal life at home." Her mentee felt comfortable doing so because she knew she could talk to Alice in confidence. Yuliana explained that she felt her role as a mentor was to support her mentee with anything she needed- whether it was related to home or school. By building a strong mentoring relationship, she could help her mentee figure out problems she was having. Yuliana's mentee understood, unless she was experiencing harm or in danger in some way, anything she said was confidential and not shared with anyone.

During the interviews, mentors reported that it is important to the mentoring relationship that mentors listen to their mentees to be able to provide support and advice when needed. Eve expressed that as a mentor, she felt her role was to be a listening ear to her mentee. Eve said,

I wanted to be able to provide advice and suggestions from a different perspective, other than her family and friends. I felt it was important to truly listen to her to be able to understand where she was coming from.

Darla explained that as a mentor, she also felt that she needed to be a listening ear. She thought of it as an opportunity to share her experiences from when she was her mentee's age so that her mentee felt she could relate and would hopefully be more receptive to her advice.

Another aspect of the mentoring relationship that mentors felt was very important was being able to build connections with mentees through shared experiences. Darla explained that the program coordinator purposely paired her with her mentee as the coordinator felt they had similar backgrounds and personalities. Darla felt it truly was a great fit as they were able to make connections over shared experiences. Dena explained that her mentee was having issues at home dealing with her parents' divorce. Dena shared with her mentee that her parents also divorced when she was younger. Dena wanted her mentee to understand that many people have similar issues at home and that she was not alone, and that Dena could relate to her and what she was going through. Yuliana stated she built connections with her mentee by sharing things about herself. Yuliana explained,

> when my mentee expressed how she was struggling in class, I shared that I also
> struggled with math when I was in school. I was able to guide her by offering
> advice on seeking extra help and resources.

Yuliana felt discussing experiences that they had in common strengthened their relationship.

Overall, throughout the interviews, the mentor participants emphasized that mentees needed a trusted adult at school they could connect to on an individualized level. Mentors felt it was important that mentees were able to speak freely and to receive advice and support in confidence. Mentors expressed that a strong mentoring relationship is characterized by mentors and mentees being able to build connections over shared experiences.

Cultural Responsiveness

Another prominent theme that emerged from analyzing the qualitative data was

the cultural responsivity of the mentoring program and mentoring relationships. The mentor survey data showed that 80% of mentors were confident that the program, and their relationship, were culturally responsive to the cultural backgrounds and experiences of the mentees.

Whether the mentor-mentee pairs were of similar cultures or not, the mentors expressed that they were able to relate to their mentees in various ways. Angela explained that when her mentee was told who her mentor would be, she said, "Oh, the pretty brown one?" which showed that her mentee was excited to have someone she could relate to physically and culturally. Darla and Jane both expressed that they were able to relate to their mentees as they are both Latina as were their mentees. Their mentees felt they were relatable because they shared similar cultural backgrounds and upbringings. Alice, on the other hand, explained that she and her mentee had different cultural backgrounds as she is White, and her mentee was Latina. However, Alice explained,

> This didn't have a negative effect on our relationship, but rather it enhanced it. My mentee and I were able to talk about our differences in culture, upbringing, traditions, and more. It was a great experience because we were able to learn from and about one another.

Mentors felt they were able to make connections with their mentees over shared cultural experiences, backgrounds, and upbringings, making them more relatable to their mentees. Angela discussed how she was able to build her relationship with her mentee over shared experiences as she grew up in the same neighborhood, went to the same elementary school, and was able to relate to many of the same experiences and feelings her mentee had due to being raised in the same community. Eve explained that even

though she had a different cultural background than her mentee, they were able to find common ground in the fact that both of their families were very religious. Eve felt that her mentee found it comforting that she could relate in that way. Yuliana discussed that even though she is Haitian, and her mentee was Latina, her mentee felt comfortable because she knew Yuliana could relate to her in a way. Yuliana explained:

> My mentee also knew another thing we had in common was that both of our parents were immigrants. We were able to build a connection over having shared experiences at home- I was able to relate to my mentee's struggles, and sometimes frustrations, with having to assist her parents with many things due to the cultural and language barriers they faced.

Overall, throughout the interviews, mentors reported that the mentoring program, and the mentoring relationships they formed, were culturally responsive to the mentees. This was evident in the connections mentors and mentees built over shared experiences and upbringings- whether the pairs were of the same culture or not, they worked together to find commonalities.

Growth of Self-Efficacy

The third prominent theme that emerged from analyzing the qualitative data was the growth in self-efficacy that the mentors perceived in their mentees. The mentor survey data showed that 90% of mentors felt their mentees exhibited growth in their self-efficacy through participation in this mentoring program.

Mentors felt the mentees exhibited growth in self-efficacy as they tried their best and put forth greater effort as the year progressed. Angela felt that her mentee put more

effort into participating in the mentoring program and in building their mentoring relationship. Angela said,

> My mentee was very shy at first, but as the year went on, she put forth a genuine effort into getting to know me better. She began seeking me out more, she would ask for my advice, and she willingly participated in the program.

> Joy explained that she saw progress in her mentee throughout the program as well. Joy's mentee progressed academically, socially, and emotionally. Joy observed that her mentee put more effort into her schoolwork, and that she was eager to share her successes.

Mentors felt that mentees also exhibited growth in their self-efficacy through increased self-confidence. Yuliana expressed that she discussed many things with her mentee, such as appreciating the importance of a good education, trying her best, and working on her insecurities. Yuliana's mentee showed substantial growth in her self-confidence, both academically and socially/emotionally, throughout the program. Yuliana's mentee was eager to share her progress and improved her mindset to be more confident in her abilities as the school year progressed. Jane reported that her mentee showed improved self-confidence also. Jane explained,

> My mentee was a bilingual student and was apprehensive in social situations due to her struggles with speaking English. I had many conversations with her about my bilingual students over the years and how they had to learn English as well. I shared the success stories of many of my students- where they were now and what they have accomplished in school.

Jane encouraged her mentee to try her best and take risks. As the year progressed,

Jane's mentee began volunteering more in class and even began to join group activities at recess.

Mentors reported that mentees exhibited growth in self-efficacy through their increased maturity and their willingness to advocate for themselves. Alice stated that she witnessed profound growth in her mentee. Through conversations with her mentee, Alice felt her mentee had increased confidence and maturity in many ways. When Alice's mentee sought her advice, Alice explained that they would discuss ways to handle different situations. Alice's mentee would utilize the strategies they discussed and then update her afterward to explain how she handled those situations. Alice expressed that it was great seeing her mentee begin to speak up and advocate for herself in many ways. Joy also felt that her mentee matured throughout the mentoring program. Joy said,

> My mentee improved in being responsible and accountable for her assignments, as well as her actions, as the year progressed. For one thing, she would bring her agenda book to show me that she completed her assignments. And if she had an issue with a friend or classmate, she would often talk to me about it. Earlier in the year, she would usually talk about what the other student did to her; but as the year went on, I noticed she was honest about the part her actions would play in the situation. My mentee absolutely showed growth in her maturity and in taking ownership for her actions- both academically and socially.

Most mentors reported that they felt their mentees exhibited growth in their self-efficacy from participating in this mentoring program. They observed growth in self-efficacy through their mentees' increased effort, self-confidence, maturity, and self-advocacy.

Summary

This explanatory, sequential mixed methods case study used quantitative data through student attendance rates, student academic performance, mentor survey data, and qualitative data through focus group interviews and artifact analysis to answer three research questions.

The first research question explored to what extent there was a difference between the attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and those that did not. The researcher collected quantitative data in the form of attendance rates. Data analysis determined there was no statistically significant difference between the attendance rates of girls who participated in mentoring compared to their peers that did not. Mentors' interview data agreed with this finding. All mentors interviewed reported that they did not believe the mentoring program affected their mentees' attendance in any way. Therefore, the qualitative data supported the findings of the quantitative data analysis for the first research question.

The second research question explored to what extent there was a difference between the academic performance of school-age girls of color who participated in mentoring and those that did not. The researcher collected quantitative data in the form of Student Growth Percentile scores on the Star360 Reading assessment. Data analysis determined there was no statistically significant difference between the academic growth of girls who participated in mentoring compared to their peers that did not. Again, mentor interview data supported this finding. Many mentors interviewed reported they felt that they could not accurately determine if the program influenced their mentee's academics as they primarily targeted social/emotional concerns of mentees. Regarding the second

research question, the qualitative data supported the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

The third research question explored mentor perceptions about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees as measured by a survey and interviews. Artifacts were also analyzed. Mentor perspectives gleaned from the focus group interviews supported the data obtained from the mentor survey. After coding and analyzing the qualitative data to identify themes and patterns, the researcher established three prominent themes: Mentoring Relationships, Cultural Responsiveness, and Growth of Self-Efficacy. The researcher triangulated data through the survey, interviews, and artifacts to obtain the most trustworthy findings and to improve the generalization of the outcomes. This thorough analysis will increase the likelihood that other schools and districts will be able to use the results of this study to apply these effective practices to their mentoring programs. In the discussion in Chapter 5, the researcher will review the implications of the findings from this chapter and how it relates to prior research. The researcher will also discuss the limitations of this study, and their recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study is a sequential, explanatory mixed methods case study in which the researcher addressed three research questions to determine the extent to which participation in a mentoring program affects the sense of self-efficacy of school-age girls of color. In this study, the researcher first collected quantitative data in the form of student attendance, student academic growth scores, and a mentor survey. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and the researcher used the results to develop interview questions. The researcher then conducted focus group interviews and collected artifacts. The qualitative data were inductively analyzed using Dedoose to identify three prevalent themes: mentoring relationships, cultural responsiveness, and growth of self-efficacy.

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented quantitative and qualitative data analysis results. In Chapter 5, the researcher presents further discussion and interpretation of the data analysis. This chapter includes the conclusions and implications drawn from the integrative data analysis of this study. The researcher related the implications of this study to the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and prior research presented in Chapter 2. Additionally, this chapter presents the limitations of the study and recommendations for future practice and research.

Implication of Findings

The theoretical framework that guided this study was critical race feminism (CRF) and self-efficacy. CRF aims to address the intersections between race and gender

and to give a voice to women of marginalized groups. CRF stresses the importance of highlighting the perspectives of girls of color and their perseverance through challenges and multiple forms of oppression. CRF is an effective framework for addressing the experiences of girls of color in educational spaces and changing the focus of studies of girls of color from damage-centered research to resiliency instead. Regarding mentoring, it is critical to consider CRF and the program's impact on the experiences and perspectives of girls of color. Self-efficacy is grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy is a multi-faceted set of constantly evolving beliefs that influence how one feels, thinks, motivates oneself and behaves during different tasks or situations. Academic self-efficacy is a student's belief about their ability to learn or to perform within a school environment. Self-efficacy is both a social and personal construct that impacts relationships. It is crucial to consider self-efficacy and the influence that mentoring relationships have on the lives of mentees and the development of positive conceptions of self. Three primary sources of self-efficacy related to mentoring are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion.

The research questions explored (1) to what extent is there a difference between the attendance rate of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring; (2) to what extent is there a difference between the academic performance of school-age girls of color who participate in mentoring and those that do not participate in mentoring; (3) the perceptions mentors have about the growth of feelings of self-efficacy in their mentees.

For research question one, the data indicated that participation in this mentoring program did not influence the mentees' attendance in this study. An attendance rate was

calculated for each student to determine days present in school for the 2021-2022 school year. Note that Covid-19 health and safety protocols were still in effect. Any person exposed to Covid-19 or tested positive for Covid-19 was required to isolate for 10 days through January 2022. In February 2022, the isolation period changed to five days. The researcher carefully reviewed attendance records for student participants in this study. The researcher found that seven mentee participants had medically excused absences where they were absent up to 10 days from school. Only one non-mentee participant had a medically excused absence where she was absent up to 10 days from school. The mean attendance rate for mentee participants was 93.56, while the mean attendance rate for non-mentees participants was 93.63. The researcher believes the number of absences due to Covid-19 protocols skewed mentee participants' attendance data. The Covid-19 protocols in place likely influenced the attendance data in this study. During focus group interviews, mentors supported the quantitative findings regarding attendance as they felt their mentees did not exhibit any attendance concerns. Furthermore, mentors felt their experience with this mentoring program focused on the social/emotional well-being of the mentees, not on student attendance.

Regarding research question two, the data indicated that participation in this mentoring program did not influence the academic performance of the mentees in this study. The Star360 Student Growth Percentile (SGP) score is reported on a scale of 1-99. Lower numbers indicate lower relative growth (1-34); middle numbers indicate typical relative growth (35-65); higher numbers indicate higher relative growth (66-99). A SGP score of 50 indicates a typical year of growth. In this study, the mentees' mean SGP was 42.38, and non-mentees' mean SGP was 38.13. Both student groups performed at the

lower end of typical relative growth; however, neither group met the typical year of growth SGP score of 50. This is likely due to all students exhibiting learning loss from the pandemic. It is important to note that the district just returned to a typical five-day, in-person instructional model for the 2021-2022 school year. During focus group interviews, mentors supported the academic growth quantitative findings as they felt their experience with this mentoring program focused on the social/emotional well-being of the mentees, not on academics.

For research question three, the data indicated that mentors identified strong mentoring relationships and cultural responsivity as critical components of this mentoring program. Furthermore, mentors indicated there was growth in mentees' self-efficacy in this program through increased effort, self-confidence, maturity, and self-advocacy.

This study relates to CRF as it aimed to focus on positive outcomes for school-age girls of color rather than negative stereotypes. For example, the researcher examined attendance rate instead of truancy and academic growth instead of academic failure. However, this mentoring program, rightfully so, aimed to address the needs of the mentee population. Therefore, in this mentoring group, the mentees sought trusted guidance from their mentors in social/emotional aspects of their lives rather than their academics. However, this study's outcomes are still related to CRF as it considered the experiences and perspectives of girls of color as perceived by their mentors. Additionally, there is evidence that girls of color face adversities that challenge their coping abilities and that girls that receive support from their family, community, and school can improve their resiliency. This study is related to CRF as mentors provided additional support to the girls at school in the mentoring program. Mentors reported increased self-advocacy in

mentees during difficult situations, which is evidence of resiliency during adversity.

These findings relate to self-efficacy as the mentoring relationships in this program influenced mentees to develop positive conceptions of self. The prominent primary source of self-efficacy in this study was social persuasion which increases self-efficacy through verbal persuasion and encouragement by others. The mentoring program provided the mentees access to trusted, supportive adults in the school setting. Mentors and mentees developed relationships through many conversations and built connections through shared experiences. Mentors reported that mentees felt comfortable seeking their assistance and enjoyed spending time with them. Through these mentoring relationships, where mentors listened to mentees and provided support, advice, and encouragement, mentees demonstrated growth in self-efficacy.

The conceptual framework in Chapter 2 explained that mentoring and self-efficacy are affected by many variables. Prior research has shown many factors, including, but not limited to, gender, cultural identity, family and community culture, academic achievement, cultural responsiveness, and strong mentoring relationships, influence the effectiveness of mentoring programs.

This study explored how these factors influenced the self-efficacy of school-age girls of color that participated in a mentoring program. The extent to which these variables affected the self-efficacy of the mentees included in this study was determined by gathering and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The data indicated that a strong mentoring relationship was the most important factor with this population of mentors and mentees. The mentoring relationship influenced all other factors in this study. Data indicated that cultural responsiveness in the mentoring program and

mentoring relationship was another crucial factor. Through the cultural responsivity of mentors, the mentees were able to explore their cultural identity as well. While parents and families were not active partners in the mentoring program or mentoring relationships, many mentees discussed issues they experienced at home with their mentors. Therefore, there is an implication that family and community culture did influence the self-efficacy of the girls. Since all participants in this study were female, it is difficult to ascertain if gender affected the mentees' self-efficacy in this study. However, the data clearly indicated that academic achievement did not directly affect the self-efficacy of mentees in this study. Therefore, the conceptual framework for this study, with this population of mentors and mentees, would have a different visual representation than Chapter 2 (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Revised Conceptual Framework
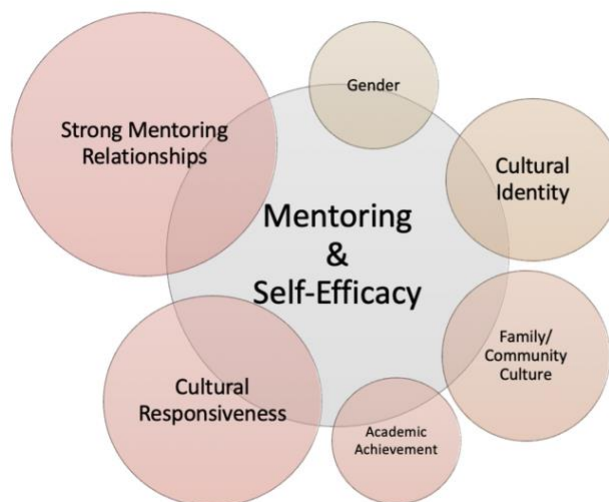
Relationship to Prior Research

The review of related literature in Chapter 2 discussed family and community cultures, youth mentoring, culturally responsive mentoring practices, and best practices in mentoring. The researcher deduced these four prevalent themes of mentoring girls of color from research on this topic. The researcher hopes that this case study will add to the body of research on positive outcomes of school-age girls of color, specifically how participation in a culturally responsive mentoring program may have positive effects on girls of color.

Family and Community Cultures

From the research conducted, the researcher concluded that the neighborhood and family cultural context did shape the social/emotional well-being of the girls in this study. Prior research has shown that low socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with fewer socio-emotional and intellectual resources, which may be a result of a lack of parental involvement and availability (Thompson et al., 2013). While this Title I school did have many resources available for the students, including the mentoring program, there is a lack of parental/family involvement which is an ongoing concern. Regarding this mentoring program, there is no parental/family involvement besides obtaining consent from the parent/guardian for the child to participate. Thompson et al. (2013) explained that challenging parent-child relationships among low SES youth align with parent stress, distress, depression, and from parents' perceived isolation and lack of support. While the interview data did reveal that many mentees discussed issues at home relating to their parents and their relationship with their parents, the researcher could not determine the cause of the difficulties in these parent-child relationships due to a lack of parental/family

involvement. Therefore, mentors provided advice based on their own family experiences and the mentees' perspective. However, mentors expressed that they preferred that parents were not involved in the mentoring program. Mentors felt that mentees may not have been as open to sharing if they felt their families would receive information or feedback from the mentors in the program. The lack of communication and trust between mentors, mentees, and families, highlights the absence of a home-school connection within this program. If there had been communication and trust between the mentoring program and the families, there might have been some insight into the home situations of mentees that were experiencing struggles. Additionally, mentors may have been able to offer support to mentees and their families in other ways.

Case (2017) explained that historically, minority youths living in low-income communities experience social and structural factors that increase their risk of delinquent behaviors. This population often lacks access to community facilitators of healthy development. Based on this study, one could argue that this Title I elementary school, and the district at large, provides access to facilitators and programs to promote healthy development for their students. Many programs are available to students and their families, and this mentoring program is evidence of such. Mentors did not report any delinquent behavior of the mentees included in this study; however, the researcher did not explore that variable as this study aimed to focus on positive outcomes for school-age girls of color.

Youth Mentoring

Youth mentoring is an individualized relationship between a trusting, supportive, non-familial adult mentor and a child or adolescent mentee. DuBois et al. (2011) asserted

that youth mentoring is related to more positive social relationships, higher performance, less problem behavior, positive self-image, emotional adjustment, and psychological well-being. From the research conducted, the researcher concluded that this case study supports these findings. According to the interview data, mentors reported that mentees showed growth in self-efficacy in many ways: increased effort, self-confidence, maturity, and self-advocacy. While this study did not find that the mentoring program affected mentee academics, the mentor-mentee relationships formed and the support the mentees received from their mentors, helped to promote positive social/emotional behaviors and the overall well-being of the mentees.

Suffrin et al. (2016) indicated that higher perceived cultural competence, stronger relationships with mentees' families, and greater mentor satisfaction with the mentoring organization predicted greater mentoring satisfaction overall. While mentor satisfaction was not a focus of this research, a strong mentoring relationship was imperative to this study's findings. Furthermore, there is evidence that mentor satisfaction has positive outcomes for the mentee. From the interview data, most mentors expressed satisfaction with mentoring; however, many mentors conveyed that they needed and preferred more time with their mentees to further build their relationships. Mentors expressed frustration with the mentoring program regarding mentor-mentee pairing. Some mentors stated that the program matched them with sixth-grade students, meaning they would only be working together for one school year. The mentors felt this did not give them or their mentees enough time to build a strong mentoring relationship. In this program, mentors did not interact with their mentee's family; however, many mentors expressed that they preferred it to be this way. Mentors expressed concern that their mentees would not be as

open about things troubling them at home if they knew their parents and families were involved in the program and thought their parents/families would receive feedback on things discussed during mentoring. Therefore, in this mentoring program, the mentors were not seeking a strong relationship with the mentee's family. They preferred they were not involved, so it did not impact mentor satisfaction in a negative way. Overall, the mentors were satisfied with mentoring and perceived positive outcomes for mentees through growth in their self-efficacy.

Culturally Responsive Mentoring Practices

Research has shown that it is critical that girls of color have culturally responsive mentoring programs. Peifer et al. (2016) assert that a mentor's cultural sensitivity enables mentees' exploration of and commitment to their cultural identities. Mentors willing to engage in their own ethnic identity help mentees feel safe to explore their own cultural identity. Furthermore, ethnocultural empathy contributes to effective cross-cultural youth mentoring. From the research conducted, the researcher concluded that this mentoring program and its mentors were culturally sensitive to the mentees. During interviews, many mentors expressed that they connected with their mentees over their cultural backgrounds- whether they were similar or different- they found ways to relate. Some mentors explained that they were relatable to their mentees because they were of similar cultures and had similar upbringings. Others explained that they had different backgrounds from their mentees but found other ways to relate and used it as an opportunity to learn from one another about their culture. In this case study, the mentoring program exhibited effective cross-cultural youth mentoring due to the cultural sensitivity of mentors and their willingness to engage and explore in their own ethnic

identity.

In mentoring, Kayser et al. (2018) found that Black girls have three main needs: (1) programs that develop partnerships with parents and families; (2) adults who will both advocate for them and teach them how to advocate for themselves; (3) mentors who share their racial identity. In this case study, the researcher concluded that this mentoring program met these needs for girls of color in mentoring, except for developing partnerships with parents and families. Again, parental involvement is lacking in this school. However, it was not necessarily welcomed by mentors in this program as many mentors reported that they prefer the parents and families not to be involved due to the sensitive information their mentees shared. Mentors preferred not to risk the comfortability of mentees or have mentees question the confidentiality of this program by having parental and family involvement. From this research, one could imply that the mentees did have mentors to advocate for them and mentors that taught them how to advocate for themselves. During focus group interviews, many mentors reported that they perceived an increase in self-advocacy in their mentees. Mentors expressed that mentees would seek their advice and suggestions when needed and act on the advice to handle various difficult situations. Also, several mentor-mentee pairs shared similar racial identities. Some pairs that had different racial identities found other things in common to help them build connections. Overall, this mentoring program and its mentors were culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of the mentees.

Best Practices in Mentoring

Prior research indicated there are several best practices for improving mentoring program effectiveness. From the research conducted, the researcher concluded that the

mentoring program, in this case study, utilized many of these practices.

Smith et al. (2015) found that through the development of a supportive trusting relationship, youth can be taught social skills and develop appropriate visions for their futures. They found that a critical factor of effective mentoring relationships is the consistent presence of a supportive, caring adult. In this case study, the researcher found that mentors viewed the mentoring relationship as the most significant factor of the mentoring experience. This was evident in the mentor survey data, as 90% of mentors reported they fostered a positive and trusting relationship with their mentees. Overall, throughout the course of the interviews, the mentor participants emphasized that mentees needed a trusted adult at school they could connect to on an individualized level. Mentors felt it was important that mentees were able to speak freely and receive advice and support in confidence. Mentors expressed that a strong mentoring relationship is characterized by mentors and mentees being able to build connections over shared experiences.

McDaniel and Besnoy (2019) indicated that mentoring programs should include five best practices for program effectiveness: (1) a component where the fidelity of program implementation is monitored; (2) ongoing training for mentors; (3) parental/family involvement; (4) structured, appropriate activities for mentors and mentees; (5) clearly stated high expectations of attendance for mentors. By following the New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) guidelines, and maintaining ongoing communication with the program's regional director, the mentoring program in this case study meets four of these five best practices. The program coordinator oversees the mentors and mentees, and in conjunction with the NYSMP regional director: program

fidelity is monitored; mentors are provided with ongoing training; mentors have unlimited access to resources, which includes structured, appropriate activities; and mentors are provided with clear expectations that they must acknowledge prior to committing to the program. Again, the only area this program lacks, according to prior research, is parental/family involvement. In this case study, the researcher found that mentors viewed the mentoring program as effective through their perceptions of the program, mentoring relationships, and positive mentee outcomes.

The researcher reviewed current, peer-reviewed research on best practices of culturally responsive youth mentoring programs in Chapter 2. The research suggested family community involvement, a strong mentoring relationship, and cultural responsiveness were factors in effective mentoring programs which positively affected girls of color. The researcher concluded that this case study supported the prior research as this mentoring program utilized culturally responsive and effective practices and positively affected school-age girls of color's sense of self-efficacy.

Limitations of the Study

A mixed methods case study design is a study in which the quantitative and qualitative data collection, results, and integration provide in-depth evidence for a case. A case may be an individual, organization, or activity that is bounded by certain criteria (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the strengths of mixed method case study designs are that they are useful for understanding the complexity of a case, and they provide a detailed level of information about the case that offers a realistic picture. There are limitations to this research design as well. McLeod (2019) explained that since a case study deals with only one individual,

organization, or activity, it is uncertain if the case study investigated represents the broader body of similar instances. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from a particular case may not be transferable to other settings. Also, case studies focus on the analysis of qualitative data and the researcher's interpretation of that data. Therefore, there is the potential for researcher bias.

The limitations of this study include a small sample size, lack of student mentee input, and limited generalizability. During Covid-19, the mentoring program was on hiatus as strict health and safety protocols were in place. When the district returned to a five-day, in-person instructional model in September 2021, many students involved in the mentoring program had already moved to the middle school. Although the program coordinator has been actively recruiting new mentor and mentee participants over the last year, participation was still lower than prior years. This explains the small number of mentee participants (n=16) and mentor survey participants (n=10). There was no student input in this study, resulting in a lack of perspective of the mentees. Instead, mentor perceptions determined the girls' growth in self-efficacy. The findings and implications of this study are only generalizable to the setting in which it took place. The setting of this study was a single setting: a Title I suburban elementary school in a central Suffolk County school district implementing the New York State Mentoring Program model. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this study may not be transferable to other settings. To address researcher bias, the researcher (a) recognized that bias may exist, (b) kept detailed records of data, (c) utilized ethical research practices throughout the study, and (d) had the study peer-reviewed to ensure objectivity in data analysis and interpretation.

To address the limitations of the study and trustworthiness of the design, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were confirmed. The researcher validated the findings of this study through the triangulation of data collected through the survey, interviews, and artifacts. The researcher also engaged in member checking with focus group participants to ensure the accuracy of the account. The researcher utilized these strategies to obtain the most trustworthy findings and to improve the generalization of the outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The school in this study followed best practices of mentoring using the New York State Mentoring Program (NYSMP) guidelines. This mixed methods case study indicated positive outcomes on the self-efficacy of school-age girls of color that participated in a mentoring program. Additionally, prior research indicated that girls of color need educational spaces that cultivate community with same-race, same-gender peers to share their unique and collective racialized and gendered experiences. Furthermore, schools should institutionalize these spaces as part of the explicit school curriculum and school day (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). From prior research and the results of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations and suggestions to practitioners and policymakers in the field of education.

The researcher recommends that the New York State Education Department include mentoring as part of Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 (CR Part 154). CR Part 154 establishes the legal requirements for the education of English Language Learners (ells) in New York State. Part 154-2 outlines services and standards for school districts having ells to assure that such students have opportunities to achieve the same

educational goals and standards that have been established by the Board of Regents for all students.

In the spring of 2022, New York State initiated the Latina Mentoring Initiative (LMI) to further support young Latinas. The goals of the LMI are to empower and support Latina youth by promoting self-advocacy, confidence, and nurturing aspirations. The program also connects young Latinas to scholarship, internship, and professional development opportunities. This program is part of the NYSMP and has been implemented statewide in schools, nonprofits, and foster care agencies for Latinas ages 8-21.

Since the school district where this study occurred has an enrollment of 80% Hispanic/Latinx students, the researcher recommends that the NYSMP's LMI be adopted districtwide to meet the proposed CR Part 154 mandate of mentoring. By implementing these effective mentoring programs, students in the district would have an increased opportunity to participate in mentoring and leverage the multiple jeopardies they face.

Previous research suggests that family involvement may be an effective strategy to promote cultural responsiveness within mentoring and afterschool programs (Kayser et al., 2018). However, mentor interviews in this study revealed a lack of parental/family involvement in the mentoring program. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the school district elicit alums, parents, and community members to participate as mentors in the district's mentoring programs. This would help improve the home-school connection and provide students with opportunities to engage with same-race, same-gender adults from their own community.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher makes the following recommendations for future research to extend the study. This mixed methods case study took place in one single setting. Research could extend to other schools and districts implementing the New York State Mentoring Program. In this study, the researcher interviewed eight mentors that worked within the school building. It might have been helpful to gain the perspectives of other mentors from outside the school building through focus group interviews. Additionally, it might have been helpful to gain the perspectives of the mentees. Future research might include a mentee survey or interviews to gain insight into their perspectives of the mentoring program, their mentors, and their self-efficacy. Students participating in this mentoring program may also attend other programs designed to increase social time with peers and offer academic support. The students may receive academic intervention services, educationally related support services, and special education-related services during the school day. Students may also participate in Title III and ARP-ESSER (American Rescue Plan- Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief) extended day programs aimed to target learning loss from the pandemic and extracurricular activities after school. Future research might be limited to students only participating in mentoring to better determine the effects of participation in a culturally responsive mentoring program rather than having an influence of other targeted academic or social programs. This study included school-age girls of color, in grades four through six. Since prior research has shown evidence of more substantial self-efficacy drops for girls during the transition from elementary to middle school, future research should consider studying

mentee participants during the elementary to middle school transition to analyze the effects of mentoring on self-efficacy during that phase.

Conclusion

The findings of this mixed methods case study revealed that participation in a mentoring program positively affected the sense of self-efficacy of school-age girls of color. The data indicated that participation in this mentoring program did not influence the mentees' attendance rate or academic performance; however, mentors did report growth in the self-efficacy of mentees in this program through increased effort, self-confidence, maturity, and self-advocacy.

The researcher concluded that this study supported the prior research as this mentoring program developed strong mentoring relationships, utilized culturally responsive and effective practices, and positively affected the sense of self-efficacy of school-age girls of color. However, instead of having outcomes that exceeded prior research in showing growth in this field, the findings were consistent with previous outcomes. This highlights the need for improved programs and resources for school-age girls of color.

While New York State educational reforms and mandates have evolved to adapt to the changing demographics and needs of the diverse groups who enter schools, the focus of these reforms is typically on academic progress and growth. Recently, since the effects on mental health from the pandemic have come to light, greater efforts are being focused on social-emotional learning. However, due to the multiple jeopardies they face, girls of color needed support beyond the classroom long before the pandemic. Moving forward, educational leaders at the state and district level need to enact reforms and

mandates targeting these marginalized groups' social/emotional needs. One hopes that, through this study, the researcher has revealed to educational leaders and professionals the positive outcomes that mentoring can have on school-age girls of color, and the potential of mentoring to effect positive change and provide leverage for the challenges faced by these marginalized groups.

Appendix A St. John's University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Jan 15, 2023 10:09:52 AM EST

PI: Nicole Lefferts
CO-PI: Anthony Annunziato
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2023-117** *The effects of mentoring on the self-efficacy of school-age girls of color: A mixed methods case study*

Dear Nicole Lefferts:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *The effects of mentoring on the self-efficacy of school-age girls of color: A mixed methods case study*. The approval is effective from January 15, 2023 through January 14, 2024.

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Appendix B Superintendent of Schools Approval

█████████████ **UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

CHOOLS

NDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION

NDENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

PERINTENDENT FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

MINISTRATOR

December 5, 2022

Attn: St. John's Institutional Review Board

     I have reviewed Nicole Lefferts' research protocol "The effects of mentoring on self-efficacy of school-age girls of color: A mixed methods case study." I understand what she is asking of the individuals and grant her permission to conduct her study in the ████████ School District. I have the authority to do so. If I have any further questions about this research study, I understand that Nicole can be reached at ████████ or via e-mail at nicole.lefferts08@my.stjohns.edu. I also understand that if I have any questions regarding this IRB approval or the rights of research participants I can contact Raymond DiGiuseppe, Ph.D., Chair, St. John's Institutional Review Board, at (718) 990-1440 or via e-mail at digiuser@stjohns.edu.

Respectfully,

_____
Signature

12/6/22
_____
Date

Appendix C Mentor Survey Documents

Mentor Survey

1= Strongly Disagree   2= Disagree 3= Not Applicable   4= Agree   5= Strongly Agree

1.	My mentee believes she can achieve her goals she has set for herself.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	My mentee asks for my opinion or advice when she has a problem (e.g.: academic difficulty, social/emotional struggle, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
3.	My mentee feels a sense of belonging in our mentoring program and school.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	My cultural background makes it easy for me to relate to my mentee; I have had similar life experiences that help me to understand the challenges and barriers she faces.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I have fostered a positive, meaningful, and supportive relationship with the parents/guardians of my mentee.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	My mentee believes she can resist peer pressure to do things that would get her in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	My mentee feels confident when facing difficult tasks or situations.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I have been able to create a supportive, safe, and nurturing space for my mentee that celebrates her culture and values.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	My mentee feels she can express her opinions when they are different from others.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	My mentee is open with me about her life and experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	My mentee's parents/guardians are actively involved in our program.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My mentee can complete classwork and homework assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	There are limits in my mentoring relationship that are caused by differences in my cultural background and that of my mentee.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	My mentee believes she is motivated to do her best in school.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I have been able to develop a positive, meaningful, caring, and trusting relationship with my mentee.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	My mentee believes she can learn and do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Are you willing to be interviewed?	Yes			No	

Mentor Survey Factor Analysis

Factor	Survey Items
Mentor Perception of Development of Self-Efficacy	• My mentee believes she can achieve her goals she has set for herself. • My mentee feels a sense of belonging in our mentoring program and school. • My mentee believes she can resist peer pressure to do things that would get her in trouble. • My mentee feels confident when facing difficult tasks or situations. • My mentee feels she can express her opinions when they are different from others. • My mentee can complete classwork and homework assignments. • My mentee believes she is motivated to do her best in school. • My mentee believes she can learn and do well in school.
Program Effectiveness: *Mentoring Relationship*	• My mentee asks for my opinion or advice when she has a problem (e.g.: academic difficulty, social/emotional struggle, etc.). • My mentee is open with me about her life and experiences. • I have been able to develop a positive, meaningful, caring, and trusting relationship with my mentee.
Program Effectiveness: *Cultural Responsiveness*	• My cultural background makes it easy for me to relate to my mentee; I have had similar life experiences that help me to understand the challenges and barriers she faces. • I have been able to create a supportive, safe, and nurturing space for my mentee that celebrates her culture and values. • There are limits in my mentoring relationship that are caused by differences in my cultural background and that of my mentee.
Program Effectiveness: *Family/Community Culture*	• My mentee's parents/guardians are actively involved in our program. • I have fostered a positive, meaningful, and supportive relationship with the parents/guardians of my mentee.

Mentor Survey Matrix

Item	Variable	Premise/Research
1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16	Mentor Perception of Development of Self-Efficacy	Eby et al. (2008) DuBois et al. (2011) Kuperminc et al. (2011) McDaniel & Besnoy (2019) Muno (2014)
2, 10, 15	Program Effectiveness: *Mentoring Relationship*	Brinkman et al. (2018) Frels et al. (2013) Smith et al. (2015) Suffrin et al. (2016)
4, 8, 13	Program Effectiveness: *Cultural Responsiveness*	Alvarez et al. (2009) Peifer et al. (2016) Sanchez et al. (2019)
5, 11	Program Effectiveness: *Family/Community Culture*	Case (2017) Onyeka-Crawford et al. (2017) Thompson et al. (2013)

Appendix D Focus Group Interview Protocol

1. How did you hear about this mentoring program?

2. What experiences contributed to your decision to be involved with this mentoring program?

3. The mentor survey data shows 90% of mentors agree that they have fostered a positive and trusting relationship with their mentee.

   a. How would you describe your role as a mentor?

   b. How would you describe your relationship with your mentee?

   c. What do you think your mentee thinks about you and/or your relationship?

4. The mentor survey data shows that about 80% of mentors are confident that the program, and their relationship, is culturally responsive to the cultural background and experiences of the girls. What do you think your mentee thinks about being able to relate to you?

5. The mentor survey data shows that most mentors do not feel that parents/guardians have developed an active or supportive relationship with the program or with their child's mentor. Do you feel this lack of parental involvement in the mentoring program has had an impact on your mentee's self-efficacy?

6. Overall, most mentors reported that they feel their mentee has exhibited growth in their self-efficacy through their participation in this mentoring program. Have you seen progress in your mentee's self-efficacy? If so, how?

7. For attendance purposes, each girl's attendance rate was analyzed by reviewing how many days they were present in school for the 21-22 school year. The data

showed that both the mentee and non-mentee student groups had an average

attendance rate of about 93%. Therefore, there was no statistically significant

difference between the attendance rates of girls that participated in mentoring

compared to their peers that did not participate in mentoring. Does the attendance

data support your experience with your mentee(s)?

8. For academic purposes, I analyzed each girl's SGP to review their academic

growth for the 21-22 school year. The data showed that the mentee student group

had an average SGP score of about 42, while the non-mentee student group had

an average SGP score of about 38. However, there was no statistically significant

difference between the academic growth of girls that participated in mentoring

compared to their peers that did not participate in mentoring. Does the academic

data support your experience with your mentee(s)?

9. What is something you've learned from participating in this mentoring program?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

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