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# MENTEE VOICE: MENTEE PERSPECTIVES OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMS

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**PROGRAMS**


By


ROD S. CROWLEY


A doctoral dissertation submitted to the
College of Education
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Education
in Organizational Leadership


Southeastern University
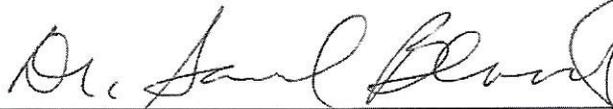November 2020

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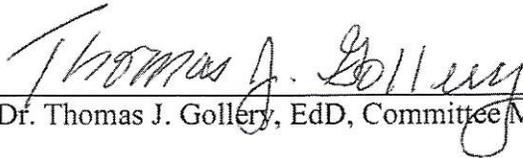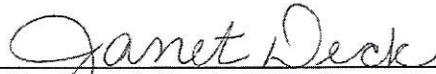
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Dr. James A. Anderson, PhD, Dean, College of Education

My doctoral journey at Southeastern University is dedicated to my wonderful family. First and foremost is my amazing wife, Jeanette, who never gave up on the realization of this dream even when I had. Jeanette knows all my strengths and weaknesses, and truly loves me unconditionally. Her magnetic personality and inner happiness are infectious. She is the steering mechanism that guides me with unwavering trust and devotion. Jeanette has supported my educational goals always, even when interference with family activities and demanding schedules conflicted. Jeanette is the foundation that bonds us all together in the most perfect way. I love her more than life itself.

Second, I dedicate this journey to my immediate family. My family has always encouraged me and displayed outward pride in my educational journey. My father, Brent, passed when I was 19 years old, being just 41. I am blessed that, up to that point, he instilled a work ethic and inquisitive intelligence which serves me to this day. He was a respected firefighter and paramedic, and no one admired him more than me. My mother, Margil, provides constant love and communication on all topics, especially politics and sports. She has been an unwavering rock through life and family challenges. I can never thank her enough. My sister, Brenda, has always told me how much she admires my efforts and accomplishments. She, on the other hand, is the true hero working in home health care during an unprecedented pandemic. My younger brother, Jeff, passed unexpectedly late in the doctoral degree process. I miss him and his deep love of nature every day. He battled pain and suffering for as long as I can recall, but

rarely did he complain or frown.  Thank you, Jeff, for all you did to inspire me to reach higher and accomplish more.  I know without doubt that you are an Angel of the Lord watching and protecting Jeanette; our boys, Peyton and Jaxson; and me.

Third, I dedicate this journey to my extended family, who are the most special anyone could be blessed with.  My father in-law, Darold, and mother in-law, Evelyn Anderson make every day appreciated and joyful.  My family in Washington state inspires me to lead and model from afar.  My niece, Sarah; brother in-law, Zack; great nephew, Sean; nephew, Chris; and brother in-law, Mark are full of life and energy.  During my brother's passing, we all became extremely close in order to build stronger connections and greater appreciation for each other.

Last, I dedicate all my educational accomplishments, culminating with this doctoral degree, to those who have directly and indirectly supported me throughout life.  Teachers, coaches, students, coworkers, supervisors, community leaders, pastors, mentors, and those who have entered my life through God's grace, have all impacted my life greatly.  Sam Nimah recruited me from a warehouse in Las Vegas, Nevada to join him in Lakeland, Florida.  Sam also introduced me to Southeastern University through The Forum Leadership Conference.  That move and exposure ultimately provided for me the perfect family and career that God chose to complete my days.  God's plan for my life was revealed clearly and definitively, and His plan is perfect.  God created and refined my life for this time, and I dedicate my life to serving God, my family, and others.

5

**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. An extant survey instrument, the Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR) was utilized to provide data necessary to address the study's topic and research problem. The YSOR yielded a good level of internal reliability (George & Mallery, 2016) in addressing study participant perceptions of satisfaction with the mentoring program featured in the study. A non-probability sampling approach was adopted, featuring a convenient, purposive methodology. The study's sample of participants were youth mentees ($n=$ 1,183) specifically accessed from a Central Florida agency that provides youth mentoring programs. A noteworthy, statistically significant level of overall study participant satisfaction with the mentoring program was achieved in the study. The research instrument domain of "comfort" manifested the highest mean score for study participant response effect of perceived satisfaction amongst the five domains. Study participant satisfaction levels were similar for both genders and all ethnicities represented in the study. The duration of the mentor/mentee match represented a statistically significant correlate and predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the mentoring program featured in the study.

*Keyword*s: Mentee voice, match duration, youth mentoring, mentoring program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

I. Introduction

Mentee perspectives of the effectiveness of mentoring programs, which specifically serve youth, are crucial in evaluating past, immediate, and future success of mentoring programs. Many factors determine a child's success in life, and a caring adult is assuredly an important contributing component to the realization of the child's potential. Pierson (2013) stated, "Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be" (7:18). Mentors can complement a situational void or enhance a stable setting. Expansion of effective youth mentoring programs are critical for continued development of safe and productive communities. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) stated, "Mentoring has been shown to improve self-esteem, academic achievement, and peer relationships and reduce drug use, aggression, depressive symptoms, and delinquent acts" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, para. 1). Robust statistical analysis of mentee perspectives could lead to groundbreaking research on the previously noted outcomes, child resilience, youth target populations, and mentoring program enhancement.

This study provided a baseline for research on mentee perspectives on the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. The OJJDP defined youth mentoring and stated that, "youth mentoring—a consistent, prosocial relationship between an adult or older peer and one or more youth—can help support the positive development of youth" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020,

para. 1).  The OJJDP asserted that, "there continues to be documented variation in both the quality of mentoring and its impact on youth outcomes" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, para. 1), while research on youth mentoring program effectiveness from mentee perspectives is minimal.  Additionally, the OJJDP "…has long supported mentoring programs, awarding more than $956 million in grants to mentoring organizations from FY 2008 to FY 2019" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, para. 2).  Research on mentee perspectives could be pivotal to more efficient resource allocation, measurement of program outcomes, and improvements to existing and future mentoring efforts.  Mentoring potentially enhances resilience to adverse experiences. Mentoring can also heighten mindfulness, compassion, rapport, and empathy in homes and communities.  As Borba (2016) stated, "The road to a meaningful life all starts with empathy. And the Empathy Advantage is what our children need most to succeed both now and later and in every arena of their lives" (p. xix).

## Background and Review of Relevant Literature

Included in the Bible, mentoring is a meaningful and essential topic.  It is written in Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (New International Version).  Youth mentoring is also specifically mentioned in Scripture.  Proverbs 22:6 teaches, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."  Contemporarily, there are several definitions and delineations of mentoring, many with varying implications (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011).  Haggard et al. (2011) described "approximately 40 different definitions used in the empirical literature since 1980" (p. 280).  The goals and objectives of the background and review of relevant literature served to research and conduct an exhaustive examination of the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs.  Determination of the comprehensiveness of previous research in youth mentoring

program effectiveness, specifically mentee perspectives, were important foci.  Defining youth

mentoring terminology, and the influence of multiple approaches, are important details in

determining program effectiveness from the mentee perspective.

Educational faculty, peer, corporate, and management mentoring efforts add to the

diversity and complexity of mentoring designs, yet this study focused on mentee voice and

perspectives in existing youth mentoring programs.  There are many youth mentoring programs

and agencies in the United States, including the YMCA of the USA, Boys and Girls Clubs,

Reading is Fundamental, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS).  The BBBS mission

is to "Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of

youth" (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2020, para. 3).  Agencies and programs which

mentor youth employ various types of mentoring approaches.  Mentoring programs can occur at

school or within the community, in an individual or group setting, and transpire in person or

through use of technology.  While BBBS mentoring programs focus on individual settings, other

agencies mentor youth in group settings through activities and sports.  Exemplifying the group

setting, YMCA of the USA (2020) locations in many instances have facilities and grounds

featuring pools, gyms, athletic fields, and confidence courses.

The Florida Mentoring Partnership program, formerly the Governor's Mentoring

Initiative, began in 1999 under the leadership of Governor Jeb Bush (State of Florida, 2020).

Under the Florida Mentoring Partnership Initiative, "state employees are encouraged to help

young Floridians excel in school and life by becoming a mentor to a student in need... up to one

hour of administrative leave per week" (State of Florida, 2020, para. 1).  State employees may

"participate in mentoring, tutoring, guest speaking and providing any services related to your

participation in an established school district's mentoring program" (State of Florida, 2020, para.

1).  As a generous opportunity and statewide effort, a greater number of participants from the State of Florida could provide an expanded opportunity for feedback and improvement.

Mentee voice related to youth mentoring programs is recorded both qualitatively and quantitatively, though in limited capacities.  Some qualitative studies have attempted "to voice some of the girls' experiences of being mentored" (Russell, 2007, p. 51).  In other cases, mentee perspectives gained through quantitative survey results are primarily used to identify point of view discrepancies between that of the mentee and mentor, and not as measurement tools of mentee feedback (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).  Rarely is robust statistical analysis performed to gather or examine mentee voice.  The position of ChildWise Institute (2014) raised great concern for minors stating, "There exists a huge gap between the common assumptions… the protection and support our governments *presume* children should receive, and what these children and their families actually need" (Advocating Change, para. 1).  Gathering and measuring mentee perspectives could partially address governmental presumptions.

Gathering student or mentee perspectives can be powerful.  Mitra and Gross (2009) wrote, "while we often write about adolescents as full of turmoil and angst, focusing on 'student voice' instead highlights ways in which young people can learn… by sharing their opinions and working to improve school conditions for themselves and others" (p. 522).  Mitra and Gross (2009), although focusing on school reform, furthermore suggested, "Student voice can help to increase the tension and focus on pressing issues when needed; it can also calm turbulence occurring within individual adolescents" (p. 522).  Gathering and closely examining the perspectives of mentees enrolled in mentoring programs could greatly impact research and development of future mentoring programs nationally.

Nationally, the National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC) is a vast resource provided by the OJJDP, a subsidiary of the U.S. Department of Justice- Office of Justice Programs. The NMRC publishes a complete checklist and guideline for effective mentoring programs, entitled, "Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring" (The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015). The National Mentoring Partnership (2015) outlines and expands upon six overarching standards: "recruitment, screening, training, matching and initiating, monitoring and support, and closure" (p. 5). The effectiveness of programs must follow these standards, or similarly rigorous and nationally accepted requirements.

Identification of current challenges, trends, and future directions is crucial. As such, the NMRC provides several mentoring model and population reviews, "with the intention of examining the full body of rigorous evidence as it pertains to either mentoring for a specific population of youth (e.g., youth with disabilities, immigrant youth) or a specific model of mentoring (e.g., group mentoring, e-mentoring)" (The National Mentoring Resource Center, 2020, What Works in Mentoring- Mentoring Model/Population Reviews, para. 1). These youth populations and mentoring models include a plethora of opportunities to record and study the mentee voice. The full list of these populations from the National Mentoring Resource Center (2020) includes the following:

Black male youth; Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP); e-mentoring; group

mentoring; immigrant and refugee youth; LGBTQI-GNC (lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, questioning, intersex, and gender nonconforming); mentoring and domestic

radicalization; youth and young adults during reentry from confinement; one-to-one

cross-age peer mentoring; youth in foster care; youth involved in commercial sex

activity; and youth with mental health challenges. (Mentoring Model/Population

Reviews, para. 3)

With so many challenges and concerns facing youth in modern times, gathering and using

mentee perspectives is extremely important. Youth facing tough challenges, such as a broken

home, abuse, addiction, and bullying, have acquired ways to build resiliency through awareness

and training. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are measured through an online test

developed by ChildWise Institute for its subsidiary Elevate Montana (2016). Researchers at

Elevate Montana (2016) stated, "We overcome adversity through resilience and it's empowering

to know that we can build resilience at any age" (News, para. 2). Resilience at any age is

especially encouraging given the damaging effects of ACEs. Researchers at Elevate Montana

(2016) elaborated, "a child does not have to actually witness the violent act itself (be it physical

or verbal) for this damage to occur. Simply *hearing* acts of violence is enough to cause the

damage in a child's development and emotions" (para. 1).

Funding for mentoring programs comes from a variety of governmental and non-

governmental organizations. As previously stated, a large source of national funding comes

from the OJJDP, which has awarded "more than $956 million in grants to mentoring

organizations from FY 2008 to FY 2019" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, para. 2). In

Florida, state-based funding is provided by two large sources: Florida Department of Juvenile

Justice (DJJ) and Florida Department of Education (FDOE) (youth mentoring agency CEO,

personal communication, January 31, 2018). Approximately $30 million annually is awarded by

the Florida Legislature for after school and mentoring programs. Additional sources include

private donations, agency fundraising events, corporate giving, living trusts, and in-kind

donations (youth mentoring agency CEO, personal communication, January 31, 2018). A key

16

point of consideration is that additional funding allows more children to be served by mentoring organizations, removing these children from mentor waiting lists.

Serving more children increases opportunities to record and analyze mentee voices, yet long waiting lists are common at mentoring agencies. Dawson (2015) wrote referencing BBBS, "more than 3,100 'littles' got a 'big' last year in the Tampa Bay area… but that still left more than 1,100 children on a waiting list to be matched" (para. 5). Dawson (2015) quoted Pam Iorio, Tampa's former mayor and the National President of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America who stated, "the long waiting list has existed since the organization started in Tampa in the 1980's [sic], and exists at each of the 325 Big Brothers Big Sisters branches operating throughout the nation" (para. 12). There is substantial need for mentors and funding of youth mentoring programs nationally.

In summary, mentee perspectives of the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs must be researched further. Most research and studies on the topic examined were conducted and written nine or more years ago (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Russell, 2007). The research does not employ quantitative collection and robust analysis of youth feedback on the mentee voice of satisfaction, program effectiveness, or mentor relationship strength from a large sample size ($n > 400$) (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Mentee satisfaction and match duration are two substantive areas which require additional research (Russell, 2007). Participant demographic data, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and education level of mentees, as well as mentors, requires further analysis using descriptive statistical techniques. Increasing youth empathy and insight through mentoring helps begin the journey to a meaningful life (Borba, 2016). There is a clear and present need to capture the mentee voice regarding effective mentoring programs, learn what is already known, engage current challenges, and guide the future of youth.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. By listening to mentee voice, overall satisfaction of youth served, and match duration, were statistically analyzed, along with independent mentee variables of age, gender, and ethnicity. Concurrently, overall satisfaction of youth served, and match duration, were predictively analyzed, along with independent mentor variables of age, ethnicity, gender, and education level.

## Overview of Methodology

This study is broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research. Descriptive statistics were used to present study results. Gay et al. (2012) stated, "statistical procedures help describe the information gathered during a research study. These procedures…called descriptive statistics, provide basic information about the number of participants in a study, their characteristics, and how they did on a test or outcome" (p. 319). The target population for this study is all youth mentees in mentoring programs in the United States matched with adult mentors. A convenience, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees ($n= 1,183$) was drawn from a Central Florida agency which provides youth mentoring programs. Gay et al. (2012) stated, "beyond a certain point (about $N= 5,000$), the population size is almost irrelevant and a sample size of 400 will be adequate" (p. 139). The accessible population within the cluster was drawn from seven Central Florida counties and is most representative to Central Florida youth mentoring programs, despite the sample size exceeding $n=400$. Prior to the formal address of the study's research questions and hypotheses, preliminary data analyses were conducted. Specifically, the extent and randomness of missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response, and essential demographics were assessed.

18

A sufficient extant measuring tool in Mental Measurements Yearbook was not discovered. To quantitatively measure mentee voice in effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective, an extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR) and data set was used. The YSOR survey instrument is a tool employed by a national youth mentoring agency. The YSOR assesses mentee agreement with 10 statements regarding the match relationship using a five-item Likert-type scale (5 representing the highest level of agreement on the scale) (Appendix A). Reverse coding of responses to four questions was required to ensure consistency in results. The questions requiring reverse coding were numbers three, four, six, and eight. These four questions measured the perception of the youth toward being ignored, mad, disappointed, and bored. The agency logo and certain terms were edited or redacted from Appendix A to preserve agency anonymity. Acquisition of an anonymous extant survey data set reduced concerns of working directly with children. IRB approval was secured, and the study was deemed exempt by the Southeastern University Institutional Review Board. Regarding the YSOR, prior parent/guardian permission to participate in agency surveys for all youth approved and entered into the agency's mentoring programs is obtained upon completion of an initial written match agreement (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey instrument is used annually by a large youth mentoring agency, which conducts mentoring programs within seven Central Florida counties. The agency is one of several that have been rated as "Effective" by OJJDP, indicating a "program has strong evidence that it achieves justice-related goals when implemented with fidelity" (The National Mentoring Resource Center, 2020, Mentoring Program Reviews, para. 4). Youth matched with an adult mentor within the agency range from six to 18 years of age. The agency attempts to obtain

responses, initially at the three-month point, then annually, prior to the annual match date from all youth matched with an adult mentor in various agency programs (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).  For school-based programs, the survey is conducted initially at three months, then at end of school year (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey is intended to be completed by phone or in person with trained agency personnel, but some are completed by mail, if necessary (youth mentoring agency Vice President of Programs, personal communication, March 2, 2018).  Respondent data is subsequently entered into a master agency database by trained agency personnel.  Response data obtained for this study included name-redacted demographic information, including age, ethnicity, gender, education level, and match duration.  Baseline understanding through robust statistical analysis is essential to further studies on listening to mentee voice in youth mentoring perceptions of program effectiveness.

**Research Questions**

For the researcher to address the stated research purpose, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the overall level of agreement with regards to mentee response to the Youth Strength of Relationship survey instrument?

2. Is there a statistically significant effect for participant gender and ethnicity in the overall satisfaction with the program's mentor match?

3. Does the duration of mentor/mentee match represent a robust, statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the match?

**Null Hypotheses**

The following Null Hypotheses were retained or rejected based on the findings of statistical significance for research questions two through three:

$H_0$ 2: There will be no statistically significant effect for participant gender or ethnicity upon the perceived overall mentee satisfaction score.

$H_0$ 3: Duration of mentor/mentee match will not represent a statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the mentor/mentee match itself.

**Overview of Analyses**

**Preliminary Analyses**

Data was analyzed, interpreted, and reported utilizing IBM SPSS (Version 25). Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office 365, Version 1807) files represented the original platform by which study data was collected and compiled prior to transfer to IBM SPSS (Version 25) for analysis, interpretation, and eventual reporting. Specific preliminary analyses conducted in advance of the formal address of the study's research questions included: missing data, internal reliability, and essential demographic information.

**Missing Data**

Multiple imputation (MI) of missing data was considered to proceed with the study's analytics if the level of missing data was found to be evident at an unacceptable level or insufficiently random in nature. When $p > .05$, the missing data was considered sufficiently random in nature, using the Little's MCAR test statistic.

**Internal Reliability**

Cronbach's Alpha *(a)* was used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of response to the study's survey instrument items. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance of finding the internal consistence of response (reliability) by gender of participant and for the overall satisfaction response.

**Essential Demographics**

Participant demographics data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, mean scores and percentages were used for comparative purposes. Inferential analysis of the variable "ethnicity" was conducted using the chi-square goodness of fit (GOF) test. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance regarding the distributions.

**Data Analysis by Research Question**

Research questions were addressed through a combination of both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The following represents how the research questions were addressed analytically:

Research Question 1 was assessed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Percentages and mean scores represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques. The evaluation of statistical significance of finding was conducted using the single sample *t*-test. Respective survey item mean scores were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance regarding the study's 10 survey items.

Cohen's *d* represented the test statistic used for interpreting the magnitude of effect of difference (effect size) in derived mean scores and the null value for Research Question 1.

In Research Question 2, the *t*-test of independent means was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for female and male participants, employing an alpha level of $p > .05$ as the threshold value for statistical significance of finding. Hedges' *g* was used to assess the magnitude of effect (effect size) in the comparison considering the foreseen imbalance of sample sizes in the comparison inherent in Research Question 2. A 1 x 6 one-way ANOVA was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for participant ethnicity representation, employing an alpha level of $p > .05$ as the threshold value for statistical significance of finding. Cohen's *d,* or Hedges' *g,* was used to measure the overall effect (effect size) for participant ethnicity upon the dependent measure of overall satisfaction with mentor match.

In Research Question 3, the simple linear regression test statistic was utilized to evaluate the independent variable mentor/mentee match duration for its ability to predict mentee overall satisfaction level. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating statistical significance regarding mentor/mentee match duration for its ability to predict mentee overall satisfaction level. Predictive model fitness was evaluated through the interpretation of ANOVA table findings. *F* values of .05 or less were considered indicative of predictive model viability. Predictive effect was measured using the formula $R^2 / 1 - R^2$.

## Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of this study included the lack of current research regarding youth mentoring programs and the scarcity of research, which incorporates robust, statistical analysis of mentee voice relating to the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. The absence of an adequate and

23

tested measuring tool in the Mental Measurements Yearbook was a further study limitation. Prior research mainly focused on small sample sizes ($n$<10) and was conducted over 10 years ago. Delimitations center around the survey instrument chosen and the sample accessible from the agency selected for research. This study confines itself to youth responses on the YSOR from one Central Florida youth mentoring agency serving seven counties. Respective survey item mean scores on 10 questions were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes. The data set provided from a cluster sample represents 1,183 youth responses, yet due to its purposive, convenience nature, the results are not generalizable to the target population of all youth involved in mentoring programs in the United States.

## Definition of Key Terms

*Match duration:* Duration of the mentoring relationship (The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015).

*Mentoring program:* An organization or agency (often nonprofit) whose mission involves connecting mentors and mentees. including monitoring and supporting the relationship over time (The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015).

*Youth mentoring:* Youth mentoring is a consistent, prosocial relationship between an adult or older peer, including one or more youth (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020).

II. Review of Literature

The purpose of this broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research study was to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. An extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR), along with a data set, were used. A convenient, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees ($n= 1,183$) was drawn from a Central Florida agency, which provides youth mentoring programs. Overall satisfaction of youth completing the YSOR and match duration were statistically and predictively analyzed, along with independent mentor variables of age, ethnicity, gender, and education level.

Included in the Bible, mentoring is a meaningful and essential topic. It is written in Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (New International Version). Youth mentoring is also specifically mentioned in Scripture. Proverbs 22:6 teaches, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Contemporarily, there are several definitions and delineations of mentoring, many with varying implications (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011). Haggard et al. (2011) described "approximately 40 different definitions used in the empirical literature since 1980" (p. 280). The goals and objectives of the background and review of relevant literature served to research and conduct an exhaustive examination of how effective youth mentoring programs are for the mentees. Determination of the comprehensiveness of previous research in youth mentoring program effectiveness, specifically mentee perspectives, were important foci.

Defining youth mentoring terminology and the influence of multiple approaches are important details in determining program effectiveness from the mentee perspective.

## Sociocultural Theory

This study is framed with the sociocultural theory, as proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Inherent to sociocultural theory is the idea that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development. In addition, the theory encompasses the view that human development is a process of social mediation, and through this process, children develop problem-solving strategies, along with their beliefs and cultural values, because of meaningful dialogue and interactions with more educated and experienced people. Vygotsky believed that at birth every child is equipped with early mental functions, including sensation, attention, memory, as well as perception. These functions develop into more sophisticated higher mental functions as children mature.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory consists of two main principles: The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). MKO usually indicates an older adult, such as a teacher or mentor, who has more experience and education than the child. ZPD is the concept that demonstrates the difference between a child's independent ability and what the child is able to accomplish with guidance from the MKO. Therefore, the MKO is connected to ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). When children have access to the MKO, one who is trusted, experienced, and knowledgeable, they are more likely to thrive within their ZPD.

## Overview and Types of Mentoring Programs

Educational faculty, as well as peer, corporate, and management mentoring efforts add to the diversity and complexity of mentoring designs, yet this study focused on mentee voice and perspectives in existing youth mentoring programs. There are many youth mentoring programs

and agencies in the United States, including the YMCA of the USA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Reading is Fundamental, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS). The BBBS mission is to "Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth" (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2020, para. 3). Agencies and programs which mentor youth employ various types of mentoring approaches. Mentoring programs can occur at school or within the community, in an individual or group setting, and transpire in person or through use of technology. While BBBS mentoring programs focus on individual settings, other agencies mentor youth in group settings through activities and sports. Exemplifying the group setting, YMCA of the USA (2020) locations, in many instances, have facilities and grounds featuring pools, gyms, athletic fields, and confidence courses.

Formerly entitled the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, The Florida Mentoring Partnership program began in 1999 under Governor Jeb Bush's leadership (State of Florida, 2020). Under the Florida Mentoring Partnership initiative purports that, "state employees are encouraged to help young Floridians excel in school and life by becoming a mentor to a student in need... up to one hour of administrative leave per week" (State of Florida, 2020, para. 1). State employees may "participate in mentoring, tutoring, guest speaking and providing any services related to your participation in an established school district's mentoring program" (State of Florida, 2020, para. 1). As a generous opportunity and statewide effort, a greater number of participants from the State of Florida could provide an expanded opportunity for feedback and improvement.

### Mentee Perspective

Mentee voice, related to youth mentoring programs, is recorded both qualitatively and quantitatively, though in limited capacities. Some qualitative studies have attempted "to voice some of the girls' experiences of being mentored" (Russell, 2007, p. 51). In other cases, mentee

perspectives gained through quantitative survey results are primarily used to identify point of view discrepancies between that of the mentee and mentor, and not as measurement tools of mentee feedback (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).  Rarely is robust statistical analysis performed to gather or examine mentee voice.  The position of ChildWise Institute (2014) raised great concern for minors, stating, "There exists a huge gap between the common assumptions… the protection and support our governments *presume* children should receive, and what these children and their families actually need" (Advocating Change, para. 1).  Gathering and measuring mentee perspectives could partially address governmental presumptions.

Gathering student or mentee perspectives can be powerful.  Mitra and Gross (2009) wrote, "while we often write about adolescents as full of turmoil and angst, focusing on 'student voice' instead highlights ways in which young people can learn… by sharing their opinions and working to improve school conditions for themselves and others" (p. 522).  Mitra and Gross (2009), although focusing on school reform, furthermore suggested, "Student voice can help to increase the tension and focus on pressing issues when needed; it can also calm turbulence occurring within individual adolescents" (p. 522).  Gathering and closely examining the perspectives of mentees enrolled in mentoring programs could greatly impact research and development of future mentoring programs nationally.

### Mentoring Funding, Programs, and Resources

Funding for mentoring programs comes from a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations.  As previously stated, a large source of national funding comes from the OJJDP, which has awarded "more than $956 million in grants to mentoring organizations from FY 2008 to FY 2017" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, para. 2).  In

Florida, state-based funding is provided by two large sources: Florida Department of Juvenile

Justice (DJJ) and Florida Department of Education (FDOE) (youth mentoring agency CEO,

personal communication, January 31, 2018). Approximately $30 million annually is awarded by

the Florida Legislature for after school and mentoring programs. Additional sources include

private donations, agency fundraising events, corporate giving, living trusts, and in-kind

donations (youth mentoring agency CEO, personal communication, January 31, 2018). A key

point of consideration is that additional funding allows more children to be served by mentoring

organizations because of removing these children from mentor waiting lists.

Serving more children increases opportunities to record and analyze mentee voices, yet

long waiting lists are common at mentoring agencies. Dawson (2015) wrote referencing BBBS,

"more than 3,100 'littles' got a 'big' last year in the Tampa Bay area… but that still left more

than 1,100 children on a waiting list to be matched" (para. 5). Dawson (2015) quoted Pam Iorio,

Tampa's former mayor and the National President of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, who

stated, "The long waiting list has existed since the organization started in Tampa in the 1980's

[sic], and exists at each of the 325 Big Brothers Big Sisters branches operating throughout the

nation" (para. 12). There is substantial need for mentors and funding of youth mentoring

programs nationally.

Nationally, the National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC) is a vast resource provided

by the OJJDP, a subsidiary of the U.S. Department of Justice- Office of Justice Programs. The

NMRC published a complete checklist and guideline for effective mentoring programs, entitled,

"Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring" (The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015).

The National Mentoring Partnership (2015) outlines and expands upon six overarching

standards: "recruitment, screening, training, matching and initiating, monitoring and support, and

closure" (p. 5). The effectiveness of programs must follow these standards, or similarly rigorous and nationally accepted requirements.

Identification of current challenges, trends, and future directions is crucial. As such, the NMRC provided several mentoring models and population reviews, "with the intention of examining the full body of rigorous evidence as it pertains to either mentoring for a specific population of youth (e.g., youth with disabilities, immigrant youth) or a specific model of mentoring (e.g., group mentoring, e-mentoring)" (The National Mentoring Resource Center, 2020, Mentoring Model/Population Reviews, para. 1). These youth populations and mentoring models include a plethora of opportunities to record and study the mentee voice. The full list of these populations from the National Mentoring Resource Center (2020) includes the following:

> Black male youth; Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP); e-mentoring; group
> mentoring; immigrant and refugee youth; LGBTQI-GNC (lesbian, gay, bisexual,
> transgender, questioning, intersex, and gender nonconforming); mentoring and domestic
> radicalization; youth and young adults during reentry from confinement; one-to-one
> cross-age peer mentoring; youth in foster care; youth involved in commercial sex
> activity; and youth with mental health challenges. (Mentoring Model/Population
> Reviews, para. 3)

In a study on the effects of an online peer-mentoring program, Leidenfrost, Strassnig, Schutz, Carbon, and Schabmann (2014) examined the differences made in individual mentoring in light of the impact of mentee performance in academics. The two objectives included measuring how academic performance was affected during the first term of and whether academic performance was affected based on mentoring style. The participants included 417 psychology students (328 mentees and 89 non-mentees) from the University of Vienna, Austria.

The demographics of the participants were 79% female, 21% male, and the age distribution ranged between 18 and 45, with the median age of 19.9. Among the 48 peer mentors, there were three mentoring styles represented: "Evaluated Best," indicated by a high level of online mentoring activities with messages that were motivating, as well as informative; "Evaluated Average," was demonstrated by average lengths of the messages, where messages were twice as informative as motivating; "Evaluated Worst," indicated by the length of messages that were the shortest, which showed negative mentoring activities having the highest percentage, including information that was lacking.

To examine the different online mentoring styles effects, the researchers (Leidenfrost, et al., 2014) collected data from the mentee average grades and number of courses passed, as well as the mentoring style. Two sample t tests and ANOVA were computed for the three mentoring styles, comparing mentees and non-mentees. The results of the study were statistically significant. After the first year, mentees grades improved, passing more courses than non-mentees. This result was consistent after the second year. The results of the mentoring styles did not have any statistically significant differences. The data suggested that mentoring, regardless of style, was better than no mentoring.

**Mistrust, Maltreatment, Resilience, and Adverse Childhood Experiences**

With so many challenges and concerns facing youth in modern times, gathering, and using mentee perspectives is extremely important.  Youth facing tough challenges, such as a broken home, abuse, addiction, and bullying, have acquired ways to build resiliency through awareness and training.  Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are measured through an online test developed by ChildWise Institute for its subsidiary Elevate Montana (2016). Researchers at Elevate Montana (2016) stated, "We overcome adversity through resilience and

it's empowering to know that we can build resilience at any age" (News, para. 2). Resilience at

any age is especially encouraging given the damaging effects of ACEs. Researchers at Elevate

Montana (2016) elaborated, "A child does not have to actually witness the violent act itself (be it

physical or verbal) for this damage to occur. Simply *hearing* acts of violence is enough to cause

the damage in a child's development and emotions" (para. 1).

Chesmore, Weiler, and Taussig (2017) examined the relationship quality with mentors

and coping strategies later in time for maltreated preadolescents. Children (*n=154*) participated

in a study of foster care placed youth. Hierarchical regression was employed to evaluate

association of reports of children's relationship with their mentor post-intervention and four

coping strategies six months post-intervention. Chesmore, et al. (2017) stated how children who

were maltreated had the ability to develop quality relationships with adults who were not in the

parent role, but who also served as role models. Further, Chesmore, et al. (2017) hypothesized

that when there was a positive mentoring relationship with children, a higher evidence of

engaging in coping strategies was demonstrated (Active and Support-seeking), including lower

disengagement evidence (Avoidance and Distraction) for coping strategies post-intervention.

Children in foster care were randomly recruited for the controlled trial intervention,

which was a nine-month mentoring group program for maltreated children focusing on skills

(aged 9-11). The control condition consisted of usual services, while the intervention condition

represented atypical, expanded services. Children participated from 2007 to 2011 in a study if

(a) they had been maltreated within the year before and placed by court order in foster care; (b)

at the time of the baseline interview, they had a continuing residence in foster care; and (c) their

cognitive ability enabled them to comprehend the interview questions. Chesmore, et al. (2017)

stated that prevention programs, that had been built to help children who had been maltreated,

needed to focus on children's relationships with caring adults which enabled them to cope. This focus has implications for designing prevention programs designed for these types of children who are exposed to many chronic stressors.

The findings suggested that mentoring programs for maltreated children may improve vulnerable children's coping skills, and that positive, mentoring relationships may enable maltreated children to develop and use coping strategies. This study reported that a child who developed a solid relationship with a mentor, after completing a mentoring and skill-based intervention, appeared to demonstrate higher levels of Active and Distraction coping for at least six months following program completion. There appeared to be no evidence supporting the connection between the quality of a child's relationship with a mentor and that child's Avoidance coping. Chesmore, et al. (2017) stated that the findings demonstrated that a maltreated child's coping skills may be modified indirectly through the means of a positive mentoring relationship which is high quality.

In a study on the constrained effect of risk vulnerability on an effectual intervention for children who were maltreated, Weiler and Taussig (2019) examined an intervention program, Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF), and its moderation of baseline risk exposure of children. Participants were 156 children ages 9-11 (50.7% female) who were racially and ethnically diverse and were recently maltreated, which led to placement in foster care. The study's objective was to examine whether maltreated children who had experienced immense exposure to detrimental childhood experiences (ACEs) had the reduced trauma symptoms post-participation in the positive youth development program intervention relative to those children with lower exposure to adversities.

The FHF is a nine-month preventative intervention of individual mentoring for maltreated preadolescent children, 9 to 11 years of age, developing skills groups, with sessions conducted weekly. To examine variations in children with varying ACE scores, Weiler and Taussig (2019) randomized children into a single block of intervention by cohort and control groups. The first component involved weekly mentoring by social work graduate students, two to four hours per week, with intervention strategies tailored to each individual child. This Positive Youth Development (PYD) program gave significant attention to a relationship and good-byes that were healthy. The basic group that came second used cognitive-behavioral activities connected with process-oriented material, addressing positive appropriately developmental social skills. The FHF curriculum included emotion recognition, coping with change and loss, being able to use perspective to problem solve, development of communication and anger management, as well as dealing with peer pressure and anxiety. This longitudinal study data was collected each year between the years of 2002-2006.

Of the 156 participating children, at the six-month post-intervention interview, 12 were lost to attrition. Of the final analysis sample (*n*=144), there were 76 who were randomized into the intervention group, with 68 randomized into the control group (Weiler & Taussig, 2019). The sample had a mean age of 10.38 and was 50.7% female. There were no variations to racial/ethnic distribution expectations. This study used a linear regression model series of the rates of attendance in the program, number of ACEs, and unions between mental health and risk outcomes. On average, attendance was 25/30 for children in the intervention skills groups and 26.7/30 for mentoring visitations. Children in the intervention group were chosen because they reported fewer posttraumatic stress symptoms, fewer risk exposures, and less disassociation than control group counterparts. Weiler and Taussig (2019) noted that children with high ACE scores

experienced an unequal trauma symptom reduction post-intervention as the participants who had fewer trauma instances.

In a longitudinal qualitative study, Sapiro (2020) explored decisions made by young women living with mental health conditions regarding their trust of helping professionals. Sapiro (2020) conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews in two data collection phases with 13 women, median age of 18.23, who had been diagnosed with an anxiety or mood disorder. Study participants were almost half White. Remaining participants were 15% African American, 15% Latina, and 23% biracial or multiracial. The remainder identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Eighty-five percent of the participants were low income.

Data for the Sapiro (2020) study was federally funded, taking place at a mental health clinic in an urban section in the northeastern United States. The interview data were collected in two phases. In the first set of interviews, participants answered open-ended semi-structured interviews regarding a "formal helper" (Sapiro, 2020, p. 4). Eleven of the participants discussed therapists, social workers, or educators. In the second interview, the participants answered questions regarding relationships with friends and family. Both sets of interviews explored the nature of support of the "helpers." Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded both inductively and deductively. Overarching themes and sub-themes emerged. Four themes resulted from the analysis:

- Lack of understanding and acceptance in families,
- Factors in assessing trustworthiness, including genuine caring, understanding, non-judgmental acceptance, and respect for youth agency,
- Decisions about disclosure, specifically regarding confidentiality and mandated reporting,

- Central relational paradox in helping relationships (Sapiro, 2020, p. 4-6).

Sapiro's (2020) findings illustrated the need for trustworthy relationships to help mentees navigate anxiety and mood disorders. Because youth living with these conditions felt judged or misunderstood, the presence of genuine caring, understanding, and nonjudgmental influenced the decision regarding whether or not to trust a helping professional. The conclusion of the Sapiro (2020) study indicated that, providers need to build genuine and long-lasting relationships with older youth that have mental health conditions. In addition, providers need to be patient with the process and willing to discuss concerns regarding trust, judgment, and disclosure.

<div align="center">**Racial-Ethnic Mentoring**</div>

In order to examine educational values, motivation in academic, and the quality of the mentoring relationship, Anderson, Sanchez, and McMahon (2019) examined the quality of the relational and instrumental roles with natural mentors, impacting academic intrinsic motivation for Latinx adolescents and their perceived value of education. According to this study, there was an association with the perceived economic value of education and the natural mentoring relationship quality. Participants included 256 Latinx students with an average age of 15.07 years old. Participants were 116 male and 140 female teens in ninth and 10th grades who completed surveys.

Two low income urban high schools with predominantly Latinx youth in a large Midwestern city were used for this study. The two high schools served predominantly Latinx (>90%) and low-income (>85%). Participants self-identified as 93% Mexican/Mexican American, 6% Puerto Rican, and 5% other Latino ethnicities. Participants were majority second generation immigrants, while 22% were first generation, and 16% were third generation and beyond. Participants were asked in ninth grade whether they had a mentor, age 18 or older, a

parent or guardian, more experienced than the participant, giving support and guidance.

Participants were reminded that a mentor can be counted on, cares for them, believes in them,

and influences good choices.  Participants with mentors completed the *Youth Mentoring Survey*

*(YMS)*.  Intrinsic motivation toward participants' genuine academic learning interest learning was

assessed using the *Academic Motivation Scale* five-point Likert-type scale.  Perceived economic

value of education (EVE) was assessed by *The Benefits and Limitations of Education* scale in

ninth and tenth grade (Anderson, et al., 2019).

A mean of 2.46 mentors was reported in ninth grade, with 63% reporting three mentors.

Most of the mentors who were not parents or guardians were family members, with the highest

level of education being a high school diploma.  This study found that Latinx adolescents'

perceived EVE was influenced by quality and intrinsic motivation in the mentoring relationship.

Higher perceived benefits and fewer limits of education in ninth grade translated into a more

genuine interest toward academics.  As adolescents become more independent in tenth grade,

mentorship support may shift, and natural mentor relationship quality was not associated with

perceived EVE.  In addition, the results indicated that intrinsic motivation was a mechanism for

meaningful relationships with natural mentors to influence EVE perception over time (Anderson,

et al., 2019).

In a study using a sample of girls of color, Sanchez, Pryce, Silverthorn, Deane, and

Dubois (2019) examined the roles of how cultural mistrust and the perception of mentor support

for ethnic-racial identity impacted successful mentoring.  In a community-based mentoring

program, forty adolescent girls of color were placed with racially-ethnically diverse women

mentors.  Participants were 40 girls with an 11.75 mean age, and 40 women mentors.  The girls'

ethic make-up was 63% African American- Black, 23% Latina, 3% Asian American, and 10%

Biracial. Approximately 70% of the participants were from low-income families with single-headed female households. The women volunteers mean age was 30.5 and 55% identified as White, 22.5% African American-Black, 10% Latina, 8% Biracial, 2.5% Asian American, and 3% Native American- American Indian. Eighty-three percent of the mentors worked full-time, 75% possessed a bachelor's degree or higher, and 85% recorded $30,000 or higher annual household income. Sixty-three percent of the girls with women of color mentors were same-race mentoring relationships; seven percent were cross-race mentoring relationships.

Prior to intervention in the larger study (T1), and three months later (T2), and one year after T1, which concurred with the end of the intervention (T3), the youth participants were surveyed. At T2 and T3, youth participants were asked to complete a six-item measure assessing perception that their mentor supported their racial-ethnic background, including their culture and identity. Sanchez, et al. (2019) found that in an unexpected direction mentor race represented a moderate connection between the mentor's support for the girl's ethnic-racial identity and her possible identity exploration. For racially ethnic girls with White mentors, ethnic identity exploration increased as the mentor's support for ethnic-racial identity increased. However, the association was not significant for girls with women mentors of ethnic diverse backgrounds. Sanchez, et al. (2019) found this finding puzzling and in need of further study.

The Sanchez, et al. (2019) study has several implications. Examining the impact of how the role of a girl's cultural mistrust in their relationship with their mentor was the focus of the study. The findings suggested that a barrier may exist in relationships between White mentors and girls of color caused by cultural mistrust. This finding demonstrated how important it is in providing quality training, as well as supervision, in the understanding of the cultural and relational dynamics in mentoring relationships. Particularly between girls of color who may

have cultural mistrust and White mentors.  Sanchez, et al. (2019) stated that mentoring programs must include a positive ethnic-racial identity, along with traditional goals (i.e. academic achievement and preventing problem behaviors) as goals of their programs.  Effective interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences should be the focus, determining that this can support more knowledgeable mentors in assisting girls of color, aiding them in improving resistance, resilience, and healthy positive development.

## Summary

Recent literature reviewed is justifiably focused mainly on maltreatment, coping, adverse childhood experiences, cultural implications, and trustworthiness.  All of these are important topics requiring additional examination.  Mentee perspectives of the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs, however, must be researched further.  Most research and studies on the topic examined were conducted and written nine or more years ago (Mitra & Gross, 2009; Russell, 2007).  The research does not employ quantitative collection and robust analysis of youth feedback on the mentee voice of satisfaction, program effectiveness, or mentor relationship strength from a large sample size ($n > 400$) (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).  Mentee satisfaction and match duration are two substantive areas which require additional research (Russell, 2007).  Participant demographic data, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and education level of mentees, as well as mentors, requires further analysis using descriptive statistical techniques.  Increasing youth empathy and insight, through mentoring, helps begin the journey to a meaningful life (Borba, 2016).  There is a clear and present need to capture the mentee voice regarding effective mentoring programs, learn what is already known, engage current challenges, and guide the future of youth.

III. Methodology

The purpose of this broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research study was to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. An extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR), including a data set, were used. A convenience, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees ($n= 1,183$) was drawn from a Central Florida agency, which provides youth mentoring programs. Overall satisfaction of youth completing the YSOR and match duration were statistically and predictively analyzed.

**Overview of Methodology**

This study was broadly quantitative, and specifically nonexperimental survey research. Descriptive statistics were used to present study results. Gay et al. (2012) stated that "statistical procedures help describe the information gathered during a research study. These procedures…called descriptive statistics, provide basic information about the number of participants in a study, their characteristics, and how they did on a test or outcome" (p. 319). The target population for this study was all youth mentees matched with adult mentors in mentoring programs in the United States.

**Study Sample**

A convenient, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees ($n= 1,183$) was accessed from a Central Florida agency which provides youth mentoring programs. Gay et al. (2012) asserted that "beyond a certain point (about $N= 5,000$), the population size is almost irrelevant and a

40

sample size of 400 will be adequate" (p. 139). The accessible population within the cluster was

selected from seven Central Florida counties and was most representative to Central Florida

youth mentoring programs, despite the sample size exceeding $n = 400$. Prior to the formal

address of the study's research questions and hypotheses, preliminary data analyses were

conducted. Specifically, the extent and randomness of missing data, internal consistency

(reliability) of participant response, and essential demographics were assessed.

**Instrumentation**

A sufficient extant measuring tool in *Mental Measurements Yearbook* was not discovered

for specific study purposes. To quantitatively measure mentee voice in effectiveness of youth

mentoring programs from the mentee perspective, an extant survey instrument titled Youth

Strength of Relationship (YSOR) and its accompanying data set were used. The YSOR survey

instrument is a tool currently employed by a national youth mentoring agency. The YSOR

assesses mentee agreement with 10 statements regarding the match relationship, using a five-

item Likert-type scale (5 representing the highest level of agreement on the scale) (Appendix A).

Reverse coding of responses to four questions was required to ensure consistency in results. The

questions requiring reverse coding were numbers three, four, six, and eight. These four

questions measured the perception of the youth toward being ignored, mad, disappointed, and

bored. The agency logo and certain terms were edited or redacted from Appendix A to preserve

agency anonymity. Acquisition of an anonymous extant survey data set reduces concerns of

working directly with children. IRB approval was secured, and the study was deemed exempt by

the Southeastern University Institutional Review Board. Regarding the YSOR, prior

parent/guardian permission to participate in agency surveys for all youth approved and entered

into the agency's mentoring programs was obtained upon completion of an initial written match agreement (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey instrument is used annually by a large youth mentoring agency, which conducts mentoring programs within seven Central Florida counties. The agency is one of several that have been rated as "Effective" by OJJDP, indicating a "Program has strong evidence that it achieves justice-related goals when implemented with fidelity" (The National Mentoring Resource Center, 2020, Mentoring Program Reviews, para. 4). Youth matched with an adult mentor within the agency range from six to 18 years of age. The agency attempts to obtain responses, initially at the three-month point, then annually prior to the annual match date from all youth matched with an adult mentor in various agency programs (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018). For school-based programs, the survey is conducted initially at three months, then at the end of the school year (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey is intended to be completed by phone, or in person, with trained agency personnel, but some are completed by mail, if necessary (youth mentoring agency Vice President of Programs, personal communication, March 2, 2018). Respondent data is subsequently entered into a master agency database by trained agency personnel. Response data obtained for this study included name-redacted demographic information, including age, ethnicity, gender, education level, and match duration. Baseline understanding through robust statistical analysis is essential to further studies on listening to mentee voice in youth mentoring perceptions of program effectiveness.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

For the researcher to address the declared purpose statement, the following research questions and hypotheses were posed:

1. What is the overall level of agreement with regard to mentee response to the Youth Strength of Relationship survey instrument?

2. Is there a statistically significant effect for participant gender and ethnicity in the overall satisfaction with the program's mentor match?

3. Does the duration of mentor/mentee match represent a robust, statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the match?

$H_0$ 2: There will be no statistically significant effect for participant gender or ethnicity upon the perceived overall mentee satisfaction score.

$H_0$ 3: Duration of mentor/mentee match will not represent a statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the mentor/mentee match itself.

**Data Analysis**

*Preliminary Analysis*

Study data were analyzed, interpreted, and reported utilizing IBM SPSS (Version 25). A Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office 365, Version 1807) file represented the original platform, by which study data was collected and compiled prior to transfer to IBM SPSS (Version 25) for analysis, interpretation, and eventual reporting. Specific preliminary analyses conducted in advance of the formal address of the study's research questions included: missing data, internal reliability, and essential demographic information.

*Missing Data*

Multiple imputation (MI) of missing data was considered, in order to proceed with the study's analytics if the level of missing was found to be evident at an unacceptable level or insufficiently random in nature. The level of missing data was minimal in nature, thus not necessitating the employment of imputation procedures. Moreover, the study's missing data were considered sufficiently random in nature using Little's MCAR test statistic ($p > .05$).

*Internal Reliability*

Cronbach's Alpha *(a)* was used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of response to the study's survey instrument items. The alpha level of p < .05 was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance of finding the internal consistence of response (reliability) by gender of participant and for the overall satisfaction response.

*Essential Demographics*

Participant demographics data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Specifically, mean scores and percentages were used for comparative purposes. Inferential analysis of the variable *ethnicity* was conducted using the chi-square goodness of fit (GOF) test. The alpha level of p < .05 was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance regarding the distributions.

## Data Analysis by Research Question

Research questions were addressed through a combination of both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The following represents how the research questions were addressed analytically:

**Research Question 1: What is the overall level of agreement with regard to mentee response to the Youth Strength of Relationship survey instrument?**

Research Question 1 was assessed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Percentages and mean scores represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques. The evaluation of statistical significance of finding was conducted using the single sample *t*-test. Respective survey item mean scores were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating the statistical significance regarding the study's 10 survey items. Cohen's *d* represented the test statistic used for interpreting the magnitude of effect of difference (effect size) in derived mean scores and the null value for Research Question 1.

**Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant effect for participant gender and ethnicity in the overall satisfaction with the program's mentor match?**

In Research Question 2, the *t*-test of independent means was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for female and male participants, employing an alpha level of $p < .05$ as the threshold value for statistical significance of finding. Hedges' *g* was used to assess the magnitude of effect (effect size) in the comparison in light of the foreseen imbalance of sample sizes in the comparison inherent in Research Question 2. A 1 x 6 one-way ANOVA was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for participant ethnicity representation, employing an alpha level of $p < .05$ as the threshold value for statistical significance of finding. Hedges' *g* was used to measure the overall effect (effect size) for participant ethnicity upon the dependent measure of overall satisfaction with mentor match. Null Hypothesis 2 will be retained if there is no statistically significant finding for effect of participant gender and ethnicity upon the overall mentee satisfaction score.

**Research Question 3: Does the duration of mentor/mentee match represent a robust, statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the match?**

In Research Question 3, the simple linear regression test statistic was utilized to evaluate the independent variable mentor/mentee match duration for its ability to predict mentee overall satisfaction level. The alpha level of $p < .05$ was employed as a threshold for evaluating statistical significance regarding mentor/mentee match duration for its ability to predict mentee overall satisfaction level. Predictive model fitness was evaluated through the interpretation of ANOVA table findings. *F* values of .05 or less were considered indicative of predictive model viability. Predictive effect was measured using the formula $R^2 / 1 - R^2$. Null Hypothesis 3 will be retained if the duration of the mentor/mentee match does not represent a statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the mentor/mentee match itself.

## Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of methodology, including a description of the study's sample, instrumentation, preliminary analyses, and data analysis by research question. The following chapter will report the results of the study using this methodology. The study's six research questions will be addressed using the data obtained and utilizing the statistical analyses described. In addition, the study's two research hypotheses will be retained or rejected based on the results of statistical significance obtained through the data analysis.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research study was to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. An extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR), including data set, were used. A convenience, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees ($n = 1,183$) was drawn from a Central Florida agency, which provides youth mentoring programs. Overall satisfaction of youth completing the YSOR and match duration were statistically and predictively analyzed along with independent mentor variables of age, ethnicity, gender, and education level.

The target population for this study is all youth mentees in mentoring programs in the United States matched with adult mentors. The accessible population within the cluster sample was drawn from seven Central Florida counties; therefore, due to its purposive, convenience nature, the results are most representative to Central Florida youth mentoring programs. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to present the results of each research question and null hypothesis presented in this chapter.

**Preliminary Analyses**

Prior to the formal address of the study's research questions and hypotheses, preliminary data analyses were conducted. Specifically, the extent and randomness of missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of participant response, and essential demographics were assessed.

**Missing Data**

The level of missing data was minimal (0.40%), with only 47 missing datum out of the

data set's total of 1,183. As such, the imputation of missing data using multiple imputation

analysis was not considered necessary in order to proceed with the study's analytics.

**Internal Reliability**

Cronbach's alpha *(a)* was used to assess the internal consistency (reliability) of response

to the study's survey instrument items. The internal consistency of response (reliability) by

gender of participant and for the overall response set are considered adequate ($a \geq .70$). Male

participants manifested a slightly higher level of internal consistency of response to the study's

survey items when compared to their female counterparts.

Table 1 contains a summary of finding for internal reliability of participant response for

the overall response set and by participant gender.

Table 1

*Internal Reliability: Overall and by Participant Gender*

| Measure | *a* |
|---------|------|
| Overall | .74*** |
| Female | .72*** |
| Male | .76*** |

***$p < .001$

**Essential Demographics**

Participant demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques.

Specifically, means and percentages were used for comparative purposes. Inferential analysis of

the variable ethnicity was conducted using the chi-square goodness of fit (GOF) test.  The

comparison of the variable ethnicity by mentee and mentor reflected a statistically significant

level ($x^2_{(5)} = 75.90; p < .001$) regarding the respective distributions.

Table 2 contains a summary of both mentee and mentor demographic information by

respective gender, ethnicity, and age.

Table 2

*Essential Demographic Information: Age, Gender, and Ethnicity*

| Demographic Category | Mentee | Mentor |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mean Age | 12.26 | 37.25 |
| Age Range | 9.00 - 20.00 | 15.00 – 89.00 |
| Female | 58.1% | 63.3% |
| Male | 41.9% | 36.7% |
| Ethnicity: White | 26.1% | 60.3% |
| Ethnicity: Black | 44.0% | 15.0% |
| Ethnicity: Hispanic | 18.6% | 7.4% |
| Ethnicity Multi-Ethnic | 9.7% | 13.8% |
| Ethnicity: Asian/Pacific Islander | 1.4% | 3.3% |
| Ethnicity: American Indian | 0.2% | 0.2% |

Additionally, two essential demographic variables were identified and analyzed for study

purposes: mentor educational level and match duration (length of match).  Regarding mentor

educational level, 464 of 803 (57.7%) mentors possessed a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 3 contains a summary of finding for both mentor educational level. The match duration between mentor and mentee in the study's data set is contained in Table 4.

Table 3

*Mentor Educational Level*

| Mentor Education Level | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| No/Some High School | 86 | 10.7% |
| High School Graduate | 42 | 5.2% |
| Some College/AA Degree | 211 | 26.3% |
| Bachelor's Degree | 290 | 36.1% |
| Graduate Degree | 149 | 18.6% |
| PhD/JD/MD | 25 | 3.1% |
| Total | 803* | 100% |

*383 data points missing for Mentor Educational Level

Table 4

*Mentor/Mentee Match Duration (In Months)*

| Statistic | Value |
|---|---|
| Mean | 25.73 |
| Median | 17.60 |
| Mode | 11.60 |
| Minimum | 4.30 |
| Maximum | 161.00 |

# Analyses by Research Question

To address the purpose statement in this dissertation, the following research questions and null hypotheses were addressed as follows:

**Research Question 1: What was the overall level of agreement with regard to mentee response to the Youth Strength of Relationship survey instrument?**

The Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR) survey instrument assessed mentee agreement with 10 statements regarding the match relationship using a five-item Likert-type scale (5 representing the highest level of agreement on the scale). Research Question 1 was assessed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Percentages and mean scores represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques. The evaluation of statistical significance of finding was conducted using the single sample $t$-test. Respective survey item mean scores were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes.

The overall mean score was 4.84, reflecting a very high level of overall agreement with satisfaction within the mentee/mentor relationship. The overall mean score was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(1182)} = 202.11$; $p < .001$).

Table 5 contains a complete summary of finding for all 10 survey items of the study.

Table 5

*Findings for all 10 Survey Items*

| Survey Item | n | Mean | SD | t | 95% CI Lower | 95% CI Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1183 | 4.72 | 0.75 | 78.37*** | 1.67 | 1.76 |
| 2 | 1179 | 4.66 | 0.81 | 70.17*** | 1.62 | 1.71 |
| 3 | 1182 | 4.95 | 0.36 | 185.63*** | 1.93 | 1.87 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 1180 | 4.98 | 0.20 | 342.40*** | 1.97 | 1.99 |
| 5 | 1183 | 4.92 | 0.43 | 153.61*** | 1.89 | 1.94 |
| 6 | 1182 | 4.96 | 0.31 | 216.90*** | 1.85 | 1.98 |
| 7 | 1179 | 4.84 | 0.53 | 118.68*** | 1.81 | 1.87 |
| 8 | 1183 | 4.88 | 0.44 | 147.52*** | 1.86 | 1.91 |
| 9 | 1181 | 4.75 | 0.83 | 72.11*** | 1.70 | 1.79 |
| 10 | 1181 | 4.77 | 0.71 | 85.72*** | 1.73 | 1.81 |

***$p < .001$

### *Survey Instrument Domains*

A statistically significant effect was manifest in the descriptive and inferential analysis of finding for the five domains inherent in the study's 10 survey items. The domain of Comfort manifested the highest mean score of perceived satisfaction amongst the five domains (4.95).

Table 6 contains a summary of finding in Research Question 1 for the five study domains inherent in the survey instrument's 10 items.

Table 6

*Findings for Study Domains*

| Domain | Mean | SD | *t* | *95 % CI* | *95% CI* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *Lower* | *Upper* |
| Centered on Youth Needs | 4.71 | 0.61 | 96.31*** | 1.67 | 1.74 |
| Comfort | 4.95 | 0.21 | 325.15*** | 1.93 | 1.96 |
| Competence | 4.92 | 0.43 | 153.61*** | 1.89 | 1.94 |
| Centrality | 4.84 | 0.53 | 118.68*** | 1.81 | 1.87 |
| Closeness | 4.77 | 0.71 | 85.72*** | 1.73 | 1.81 |

***$p < .001$

**Research Question 2: Was there a statistically significant effect for participant gender and ethnicity in the overall satisfaction with the program's mentor match?**

Considering gender of study participant, the impact of the mentoring program, although robust for each respective gender, did not exert a statistically significant effect favoring female or male participants in the study. The *t*-test of independent means was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for female and male participants. In light of the sample sizes' differences, Hedges' *g* was used to assess the magnitude of effect (effect size) in the comparison.

Table 7 contains a complete summary of finding for the comparison of mentoring program effect for female and male participants inherent in Research Question 2.

Table 7

*Comparison of Overall YSOR Mean Score by Participant Gender*

| Gender | Mean | SD | *t* | *g* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female (n = 687) | 4.85 | 0.30 | 1.28[a] | 0.06[b] |
| Male (n = 496) | 4.83 | 0.34 | | |

[a] $p > .05$  [b] Weak Effect Size ($g \leq .20$)

Considering ethnicity of study participant, the impact of the mentoring program, although robust for each respective ethnicity represented in the study, did not exert a statistically significant effect for participant ethnicity nor favored any specific participant ethnicity in the study. A 1 x 6 one-way ANOVA was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for participant ethnicity representation. Cohen's *d* was used to measure the overall effect (effect size) for participant ethnicity upon the dependent measure of overall satisfaction with mentor match.

Table 8 contains a complete summary of finding for the comparison of mentoring program effect for participants by ethnicity affiliation.

Table 8

*Comparison of Overall YSOR Mean Score by Participant Ethnicity*

| Participant Ethnicity | Mean | SD | *F* | *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White (n = 308) | 4.86 | 0.29 | 0.57[a] | 0.002[b] |
| Black (n = 520) | 4.83 | 0.33 | | |
| Hispanic (n = 220) | 4.84 | 0.32 | | |
| Multi-Ethnic (n = 115) | 4.85 | 0.30 | | |
| Asian/Pacific Is. (n = 17) | 4.79 | 0.36 | | |
| American Indian (n = 2) | 5.00 | 0.00 | | |

[a] $p > .05$     [b] (Weak Effect: $d \leq .20$)

*Null Hypothesis (H₀ 2):* **There will be no statistically significant effect for participant gender or ethnicity upon the perceived overall mentee satisfaction score.** In light of the non-statistically significant finding for effect of participant gender and ethnicity upon the overall mentee satisfaction score, the null hypothesis (H₀ 2) for Research Question 2 is retained.

**Research Question 3: Does the duration of mentor/mentee match represent a robust, statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the match?**

Using the linear regression test statistic, the independent variable mentor/mentee match duration was evaluated for its ability to predict mentee overall satisfaction level. The variable

match duration accounted for slightly over 2% (adjusted $R^2 = .023$) of the explained variance in

the dependent variable overall mentee satisfaction and was found to be a statistically significant

predictor of the dependent variable overall mentee satisfaction.

Table 9 contains a summary of finding for Research Question 4.

Table 9

*Predicting Overall Mentee Satisfaction by Duration of Mentor/Mentee Match*

| Model | B | SE | *Standardized β* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 4.79 | 0.01 | |
| Match Duration | 0.00(2) | 0.00 | .15*** |

***p < .001

Considering the predictive robustness of duration of match by gender of mentor, the

variable represented a statistically significant predictor of overall mentee satisfaction for both

female and male mentors ($p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .02$ Female/.03 Male).  Participant mentor

ethnicity, however, represented the independent variable of match duration as a statistically

significant predictor of overall mentee satisfaction for only mentors identified as black ($p = .01$;

adjusted $R^2 = .03$), multi-ethnic ($p = .003$; adjusted $R^2 = .05$), and white ($p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 =$

.02).  Mentor educational level represented a statistically significant variable for duration of

match predicting overall mentee satisfaction for only mentors possessing a bachelor's degree ($p$

$= .006$; adjusted $R^2 = .02$).

*Null Hypothesis ($H_0 3$)*: **Duration of mentor/mentee match will not represent a statistically**

**significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the mentor/mentee match itself.**  In

light of the statistically significant finding for duration of match in Research Question 3, the null

hypothesis ($H_0 3$) is rejected.

## Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to listen to mentee voice to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. The level of missing data was minimal (0.40%), with only 47 missing datum out of the data set's total of 1,183 survey responses. The internal consistency of response (reliability) by gender of participant and for the overall response set are considered adequate ($a \geq .70$). Male participants manifested a slightly higher level of internal consistency of response to the study's survey items when compared to their female counterparts. The mean age of youth mentees was 12.26 years. Mentors matched with youth mentees represented a mean age of 37.25 years. Mentees were 58.1% female and 41.9% male. Mentors were 63.3% female and 36.7% male. Nearly half (44.0%) of mentees were black while over half (60.3%) of mentors were white. The comparison of the variable ethnicity by mentee and mentor reflected a statistically significant level ($x^2_{(5)} = 75.90$; $p < .001$) regarding the respective distributions. Regarding mentor educational level, 57.7% of mentors possessed a bachelor's degree or higher. Mentee/mentor match duration exhibited a range of 4.3 months to 161.0 months with a mean length of 25.73 months.

The YSOR survey's overall agreement of mentee response mean score was 4.84, reflecting a very high level of satisfaction within the mentee/mentor relationship. Considering gender and ethnicity of study participant and the impact of the mentoring program, overall satisfaction was robust for each respective gender and ethnicity represented in the study, yet did not exert a statistically significant effect or favor any specific participant gender or ethnicity.

Chapter V provides further summary and a more detailed discussion of the findings. Implications for policy and practice, along with possibilities for further research in youth mentoring, are also discussed in the next chapter.

V. Discussion

 

The purpose of this broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research study was to examine the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. An extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR), including a data set were used. A convenience, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees (*n*= 1,183) was drawn from a Central Florida agency which provides youth mentoring programs. Overall satisfaction of youth completing the YSOR, including match duration, were statistically and predictively analyzed, along with independent mentor variables of age, ethnicity, gender, and education level.

**Review of Methodology**

This study is broadly quantitative, nonexperimental survey research. Descriptive statistics were used to present study results. Gay et al. (2012) stated, "statistical procedures help describe the information gathered during a research study. These procedures…called descriptive statistics, provide basic information about the number of participants in a study, their characteristics, and how they did on a test or outcome" (p. 319). The target population for this study is all youth mentees in mentoring programs in the United States matched with adult mentors. A convenient, purposive cluster sample of youth mentees (*n*= 1,183) was drawn from a Central Florida agency, which provides youth mentoring programs. Gay et al. (2012) stated, "beyond a certain point (about *N*= 5,000), the population size is almost irrelevant and a sample size of 400 will be adequate" (p. 139). The accessible population within the cluster was drawn

57

from seven Central Florida counties and is most representative to Central Florida youth

mentoring programs, despite the sample size exceeding *n*=400. Prior to the formal address of the

study's research questions and hypotheses, preliminary data analyses were conducted.

Specifically, the extent and randomness of missing data, internal consistency (reliability) of

participant response, and essential demographics were assessed.

A sufficient extant measuring tool in *Mental Measurements Yearbook* was not

discovered. To quantitatively measure mentee voice in effectiveness of youth mentoring

programs from the mentee perspective, an extant survey instrument titled Youth Strength of

Relationship (YSOR), including the data set, was used. The YSOR survey instrument is a tool

employed by a national youth mentoring agency. The YSOR assesses mentee agreement with 10

statements regarding the match relationship, using a five-item Likert-type scale (5 representing

the highest level of agreement on the scale) (Appendix A). Reverse coding of responses to four

questions was required to ensure consistency in results. The questions requiring reverse coding

were numbers three, four, six, and eight. These four questions measured the perception of the

youth toward being ignored, mad, disappointed, and bored. The agency logo and certain terms

were edited or redacted from Appendix A to preserve agency anonymity. Acquisition of an

anonymous extant survey data set reduces concerns of working directly with children. IRB

approval was secured, and the study was deemed exempt by the Southeastern University

Institutional Review Board. Regarding the YSOR, prior parent/guardian permission to

participate in agency surveys for all youth approved and entered into the agency's mentoring

programs is obtained upon completion of an initial written match agreement (youth mentoring

agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey instrument is used annually by a large youth mentoring agency which conducts mentoring programs within seven Central Florida counties. The agency is one of several that have been rated as "Effective" by OJJDP, indicating a "Program has strong evidence that it achieves justice-related goals when implemented with fidelity" (The National Mentoring Resource Center, 2020, Mentoring Program Reviews, para. 4). Youth matched with an adult mentor within the agency range from six to 18 years of age. The agency attempts to obtain responses, initially at the three-month point, then annually, prior to the annual match date from all youth matched with an adult mentor in various agency programs (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018). For school-based programs, the survey is conducted initially at three months, then at the end of school year (youth mentoring agency representative, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

The survey is intended to be completed by phone or in person with trained agency personnel, but some are completed by mail, if necessary (youth mentoring agency Vice President of Programs, personal communication, March 2, 2018). Respondent data is subsequently entered into a master agency database by trained agency personnel. Response data obtained for this study included name-redacted demographic information, including age, ethnicity, gender, education level, and match duration. Baseline understanding through robust statistical analysis is essential to further studies on listening to mentee voice in youth mentoring perceptions of program effectiveness.

## Summary of Results

Chapter IV contained a formal reporting of the study's findings. High levels of internal reliability of response to the study's research instrument were noted, along with minimal levels of missing data within the study's data set. Three distinct research questions were addressed

using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. As a result, high satisfaction levels with the mentor/mentee relationship were noted with no discriminatory effect for both gender and ethnicity of study participants. Duration of the mentor/mentee match represented a viable predictor of satisfaction with the mentor/mentee relationship. Chapter V contains a thorough discussion of the findings achieved in Chapter IV of the study.

<div align="center">**Discussion by Research Question**</div>

**Research Question 1: What was the overall level of agreement with regard to mentee response to the Youth Strength of Relationship survey instrument?**

The Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR) survey instrument assessed mentee agreement with 10 statements regarding the match relationship using a five-item Likert-type scale (5 representing the highest level of agreement on the scale).  Research Question 1 was assessed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.  Percentages and mean scores represented the primary descriptive statistical techniques.  The evaluation of statistical significance of finding was conducted using the single sample $t$-test.  Respective survey item mean scores were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes. The overall mean score was 4.84, reflecting a very high level of overall agreement with satisfaction within the mentee/mentor relationship.  The overall mean score was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(1182)} = 202.11$; $p < .001$).

Mentees have a high level of satisfaction with the youth mentoring programs. There were 10 questions on the YSOR survey, and the overall response on all 10 had a high level of overall agreement, 4.66 to 4.98. The YSOR survey asked the mentees about time spent with their mentor, how they felt when they were with their mentor, how close they were to their mentor, how the mentor helped them, when they were upset how they could rely on their mentor to

navigate those negative emotions. Their answers to those questions identified that mentees had a high level of trust in their mentor. Their overall view of the relationship was positive and necessary for the development of the mentee.

This high level of satisfaction indicated that mentees had trust in their mentors, which in most cases may have been the first instance in which mentees had been able to establish a meaningful trust relationship with an adult. The finding is perhaps significant in light of prior research on the inability of at-risk youth to develop meaningful trusting relationships with authority figures (Chesmore, Weiler, & Taussig 2017). The finding is further significant due to the fact that mentees involved in youth mentoring programs build a bank of positive life experiences.

**Research Question 2: Was there a statistically significant effect for participant gender and ethnicity in the overall satisfaction with the program's mentor match?**

Considering the gender of study participants, the impact of the mentoring program, although robust for each respective gender, did not exert a statistically significant effect favoring female or male participants in the study. The *t*-test of independent means was used to assess the statistical significance of difference in overall mean scores for female and male participants. In light of the sample sizes' differences, Hedges' *g* was used to assess the magnitude of effect (effect size) in the comparison.

Even though the data demonstrated that there was no statistical difference between male or female participants with regard to match satisfaction, this data indicated a high level of satisfaction with the match and was non-discriminatory with regard to gender, 4.85 for female and 4.83 for male. The overall satisfaction was 4.84 for both genders, so the data were almost identical to the overall satisfaction. Whether a female match or male match, the level of

fulfillment and gratification of mentees was very high.  Whether survey questions were related to feelings, closeness, open discussion, reliance, or assistance, both female and male participants responded with high ratings.

Further, the data indicated that there was no statistical significance regarding ethnicity of mentee.  Overall satisfaction scores ranged from 4.79 to 5.0, which indicated high impact of satisfaction across all reported ethnicities.  The ethnicities of White, Black, Hispanic, and multi-ethnic all ranged at or within .02 of the overall satisfaction score of 4.84.  According to results of Research Question 2, the youth mentoring programs are impactful, and the perceptions are decisive.  With 1,183 participants, the findings are in support of the concept that within the areas of gender and ethnicity, there were excellent findings across all categories, supporting the nondiscriminatory effect of the mentoring intervention.  This program seems to have been satisfactory to all participants with no discrimination based on gender or ethnicity.

**Research Question 3: Does the duration of mentor/mentee match represent a robust, statistically significant predictor of mentee overall satisfaction with the match?**

The variable match duration accounted for slightly over 2% of the explained variance in the dependent variable overall mentee satisfaction and was found to be a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable overall mentee satisfaction.  Match duration was found to be a statistically significant predictor of overall mentee satisfaction.

The mentor/mentee relationship duration is a predictor of overall satisfaction because of several elements of communication. When a mentor makes a commitment of time duration in the mentor/mentee relationship, the outcomes for the mentee are more beneficial than a short-term commitment by the mentor. In a mentor/mentee relationship, a higher level of communication exists, including the exchange of ideas, multiple opportunities for contact, resulting in rapport

building. Because mentor/mentee programs inherently requirement time commitment, the result is a greater level of presence, togetherness, and a broad range of experiences. All of those factors can assist in building resilience in childhood experiences. Having a strong mentor/mentee relationship can assist the mentee in navigating the challenges of youth. Consistency, continuity, and longevity of the match may lead to lifelong friendships, relationships, and social bonds.

## Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of this study included the lack of current research regarding youth mentoring programs and the scarcity of research, which incorporates robust, statistical analysis of mentee voice relating to the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs. The absence of an adequate and tested measuring tool in the *Mental Measurements Yearbook* was a further study limitation. Prior research mainly focused on small sample sizes ($n<10$) and was conducted over 10 years ago. Survey responses are non-experimental perceptions provided by youth of ages five to 20. A limitation of the developmental age of the youth participating in the YSOR survey also exists. Some youth received assistance in completing the YSOR survey and others were surveyed by phone. Delimitations center around the survey instrument chosen and the sample accessible from the agency selected for research. This study confines itself to youth responses on the YSOR from one Central Florida youth mentoring agency serving seven counties. Respective survey item mean scores on 10 questions were compared to the Likert scale's null value of 3 for significance testing purposes. The data set provided from a cluster sample represents 1,183 youth responses, yet due to its purposive, convenience nature, the results are not generalizable to the target population of all youth involved in mentoring programs in the United States.

## Implications for Future Practice

Because the results of this study indicated that there was a significant correlation of positive perceptions because of the duration of the mentor/mentee relationship, mentors should be trained to be resilient in their role as mentors in order to provide longevity. In addition, qualifications of mentees may need to be evaluated to determine whether or not the mentee has a genuine need for mentoring. The scope of the evaluation may need further reexamination.

Even though the data were not significant, the data to answer research question two indicated that mentoring programs were not discriminatory for gender or ethnicity. This result while "insignificant" is significant because both males and females, as well as all ethnicities, benefit from the mentor/mentee relationship. Increasing numbers of mentors from both genders and all ethnicities could fill the mentor gap for mentees needing the guiding adult relationship.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Because research from mentees' perspective is limited, further research on the mentor/mentee relationship with emphasis on mentee perceptions would fill a critical gap. Using this same YSOR instrument for a quantitative data collection with the addition of qualitative data would add richness to the study. Exploring the "why" of the YSOR responses with participants would be valuable to the study. Understanding the "why" of the responses would provide mentoring organizations with information as a foundation for a training program for mentors.

In addition to a mixed methods study, because the current study only examined one mentor/mentee program, the YSOR could be used to examine satisfaction of mentees in other mentor/mentee programs. Providing larger numbers of participants from other organizations could bring clarity to the needs of mentees, particularly as cultural and societal needs change.

As mentees advance and/or "age out" of the mentoring program, a longitudinal study would give clarity on the long-term effects of mentoring. Surveying mentees as adults, after they have "aged out" of the mentoring program would give further details on how to better serve the mentoring needs of mentees involved in the programs.

## Conclusion

The foundational theoretical underpinning of the study was the sociocultural theory as proposed by Vygotsky (1978). The theory encompasses the view that human development is a socially mediated process, and through this process, children develop cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies because of meaningful dialogue and interactions with more educated and experienced people. When children have access to the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), one who is trusted, experienced, and knowledgeable, they are more likely to thrive within their Zone of Proximal Development. A More Knowledgeable Other is the person in a child's life who "insists they become the best they can possibly be" (Pierson, 2013).

A major focus of attention of study involved the effectiveness of youth mentoring programs from the mentee perspective. The Youth Strength of Relationship (YSOR) data set were used to evaluate overall satisfaction, satisfaction by gender and ethnicity, and an analysis of match duration and satisfaction according to the youth mentee. This study's findings are supportive of the notion that youth mentoring programs are impactful, and the perceptions are decisive. Overall satisfaction was very high. Within the areas of gender and ethnicity, findings reflected a nondiscriminatory effect of the mentoring intervention. In addition, longer match duration provided higher satisfaction due to a greater level of presence and togetherness and a broad range of experiences. Though examination of mentee voice, the study has reinforced the vision that "All youth achieve their full potential" (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2020, para. 4) .

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## Youth Strength of Relationship Survey (YSOR)

For each of the sentences below, decide how true the sentence is for your feelings about your mentor. Then, circle one number that fits best. If you think the statement is NOT AT ALL TRUE, circle "1"; if you think it is MOSTLY NOT TRUE, circle "2"; if the statement is A LITTLE TRUE, circle "3"; if you think it is MOSTLY TRUE, circle "4"; and if the statement is COMPLETELY TRUE, circle "5."

|  | (Circle One) | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not at all True | Mostly Not True | A Little True | Mostly True | Completely True |
| 1. My mentor has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My mentor helps me take my mind off things by doing something with me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When I am with my mentor, I feel ignored. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. When I am with my mentor, I feel mad. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. When I am with my mentor, I feel safe. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. When I am with my mentor, I feel disappointed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. My relationship with my mentor is very important to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. When I am with my mentor, I feel bored. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. When something is bugging me, my mentor listens while I talk about it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I feel close to my mentor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |