An Investigation of Mentor Characteristics Associated with Mentor Satisfaction with Mentor Relationships

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Abstract

School based mentoring of youth at risk is a widely used intervention. However, mentoring relationships often end prematurely, which may place a vulnerable mentee at even greater risk for negative outcomes. Research suggests that mentors who are more satisfied with the relationship may be more likely to persist in the relationship. The purpose of this study was to identify specific within mentor characteristics associated with mentor perceived relationship quality with the mentoring experience. Independent variables included mentor motivations and mentoring style. Five mentoring programs with a total of 72 mentors were included in the study. Results from the study suggest that mentors' perceptions of relationship quality was predicted by mentoring style, a within- mentor characteristic. This within-mentor characteristic explained 22% of the variance of mentor perception of relationship quality. Limitations of the study and contributions to the field of mentoring and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: youth mentoring, mentor satisfaction, mentor characteristics, high risk adolescents, mentor motivation

There is growing concern about anti-social behavior within schools. Antisocial behavior includes behavior that violates social norms from disrespect, defiance, and rule infractions to more serious acts such as vandalism, violence, illegal drug use, and unsafe sexual practices (Lewis, Newcomer, Trussell, & Richter, 2006; Van Acker, 2007). Disruptive and disrespectful behavior within academic settings takes time and attention away from academic instruction and often results in student removal from the classroom (Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, & Marsh, 2008). This is particularly unfortunate because these students are often the ones in greatest need of academic and social skill instruction (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Lewis et al., 2006; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrill, 2008). Further, without effective interventions, grade school children who display minor antisocial behavior are at risk for progressing to more serious acts of aggression and violence as they mature into adolescence (Christle et al., 2005). As a result of the need to more systematically intervene with students at risk for academic and social problems, schools today have increased interest in prevention-based systems as a means of helping all students achieve at a higher rate (Conroy et al., 2008; Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Specifically related to social behavior, many schools across the country are relying less on reactive and exclusionary practices, such as suspension, and placing more emphasis on research-based systems and strategies (Lewis et al., 2006; Mellard et al., 2010; Sailor, Stowe, Rutherford, Turnbull, & Kleinhammer-Tramill,2007). As more schools strive to develop positive, supportive plans for individual students at risk, school-based mentoring is becoming more prevalent as a school based intervention (Baker & Maguire, 2005; DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Herrera & Karcher, 2013; Keller, 2007). However, there is a dearth of research on school-based mentoring even though it is widely supported and used in practice (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). One important area in need of more investigation is the level of satisfaction mentors feel when in a mentoring relationship. This sense of satisfaction may help them to persist, particularly through the early relationship development.

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Some researchers have suggested that volunteer mentors with particular characteristics might be more likely to establish and persist in youth mentoring relationships (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2008; Stukas, Clary, Snyder, 2013). Therefore it is imperative to understand how school based mentoring programs, which generally utilize adult volunteers, can be effectively supported, particularly in the early days of the relationship, in order to build and sustain quality mentor/mentee relationships for positive student outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between specific within mentor characteristics and mentor satisfaction. A review of relevant literature follows.

Mentoring Programs

School-based mentoring programs are generally administered within a school building with the mentors and mentees meeting at school during non-academic times such as before or after school, or during lunch (Herrera et al., 2000). Over the past twenty years there has been an increase in school-based programs. For example, school-based mentor/mentee matches just within the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program alone increased from 27,000 students in 1999 to 126,000 students in 2006 (Wheeler, Keller, & DuBois, 2010). Presently, school-based mentor programs comprise almost three fourths of all site-based programs (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). However, this increase in mentoring programs, according to many mentoring researchers, has taken place too quickly. The result has been that well-intentioned enthusiasm has replaced a critical evaluation of empirical research to date regarding mentoring (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008; Spencer, 2006). One of the first comprehensive efforts to gather information from across the field of mentoring was published in 2002. DuBois and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of studies ranging from approximately 1970 through 1998. The purpose of this work was to analyze program impacts, considering variation of program design and implementation, methods of assessment, as well as characteristics of the mentors, mentees, and relationships between the dyads (DuBois et al., 2002). Across the 55 mentoring programs included, the overall positive effects for youth were quite small. However, when program impact was examined among programs using best practices, such as mentor training and support and structured activities for the dyads, the impact was considerably higher. More recently, a second meta-analysis was conducted with 73mentoring programs, which had been evaluated between 1999 and 2010 (DuBois et al., 2011). Similar to the previous meta-analysis, a modest level of gain was documented forspecific outcome measures such as academic improvement, conduct issues, social relational and attitudinal/ motivational issues. However, there was evidence that outcomes tended to be higher for mentees in programs that matched mentors/mentees across similar interests and when the background and/or experience of the mentor matched the outcome goals of the program (e.g, a program that wants to improve the academic outcomes of mentees may recruit teachers). This may support the idea that a mentor who has similar interests as the mentee may find it easier to make connections, and may be more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment; for instance a mentor who has a background as a teacher may feel very comfortable helping a student to improve their reading skills, whereas a mentor without an educational background may not feel as effective in this role.

Mentor Characteristics and Satisfaction with Mentoring

Although there is some available research on school-based mentoring, more research is needed on specific characteristics within programs or mentors that may be associated with more positive outcomes (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2008; Spencer & Liang, 2009). One specific variable that has been examined in relation to positive mentee outcomes is the length of the mentoring relationship. For instance, research suggests matches of at least one year in duration have more positive mentee outcomes, while matches that are less than one year, especially those that end abruptly, can be less productive or even detrimental for mentees (Herrera et al., 2007; Spencer, 2006). In an experimental design study of 959 youth who applied to be matched to mentors in Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs, Grossman & Rhodes (2002) determined that mentees who were in a mentoring program for more than one year reported improved outcomes in behavioral, academic, and psychosocial areas. However, when relationships lasted shorter amounts of time, the magnitude of the effect decreased; in relationships that terminated in less than three months, mentees' self-reported a statistically significant decrease in self-worth and academic success compared to their ratings at the beginning of the relationship. This finding is especially disturbing considering that nearly one half of mentoring relationships end before they have reached their six month anniversary, with the majority being ended by the mentor, not the mentee (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, Liang, & Spencer, 2009). It is reasonable to assume that an adolescent, referred to a mentoring program because of high risk of academic and social failure, will have trouble forming or maintaining relationships and may resist the initial efforts of the mentor.

If the mentor is not able to persevere in his/her efforts long enough to gain the trust of the mentee, the relationship may end prematurely and be perceived as yet another failed relationship for the mentee (Rhodes, 2002). This is particularly damaging since, according to Grossman & Rhodes (2002), the higher the risk level of the mentee (e.g., loss of a residential parent, sustained emotional or physical abuse) the more likely he or she is to attribute the failure of the mentoring relationship to a personal deficit, which may make issues such as low self-esteem even worse. Grossman & Rhodes (2002) examined specific mentor characteristics such as age, background, or skill level for their possible association with the length of the mentoring relationship. Their evidence suggested that mentors between 25 and 30 years of age who were married were most prone to early termination. However, if mentors in this age group were able to form relationships with their mentees that they perceived as rewarding, and they therefore expressed satisfaction with the relationship, marital status was less likely to negatively influence the length of the match. Some researchers have suggested that additional characteristics of mentors, such as their motivation to mentor and mentoring style (i.e., what they value in terms of how they spend their time with their mentees), may influence their satisfaction with the experience which would, in turn, contribute totheir persistence in the mentoring relationship (Karcher & Lindwall, 2003; Spencer, 2007a). Because of the vulnerable status of the population of adolescents generally referred to mentoring programs, it is imperative to identify the particular characteristics of mentors, as well as the types of training and support needed to positively influence the satisfaction of mentors (Keller, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between within mentor characteristics and mentor satisfaction. Specifically investigated were mentors' motivations for engaging in the mentoring program and mentoring style in relationship to mentor satisfaction. The investigation of these characteristics is important because increased levels of mentor satisfaction may increase the likelihood that a mentor will persist longer in the mentoring relationship, thereby increasing the possibility of more positive outcomes for the mentee. The research questions follow.

Research Questions

1. Are there specific within mentor characteristics that are associated with mentor perception of relationship quality within present mentoring relationships?
    1a. Does the motivation to participate in a mentoring program contribute to the perception of relationship quality within the present mentoring relationship?
    1b. Does the mentoring style of a mentor contribute to the perception of relationship quality within the present mentoring relationship?
2. If specific within mentor characteristics are associated with mentor perception of relationship quality, which are significant unique predictors and what amount of variance do they explain in mentor satisfaction?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study included 72 mentors from five groups of mentoring groups. The mentoring groups were from various parts of the United States, within primarily urban settings. The total number of mentors in each group varied from 18 to 42.All of the mentors described their education level of at least "some college" with 72% of the mentors reporting some type of degree and43% of the mentors reporting an advanced degree.

Procedures

The data for this research project were collected with an online questionnaire. Specific areas of inquiry were based on a review of relevant research in the area of mentor perception of relationship quality. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, a pilot study of the online survey was conducted utilizing a small group of mentors from a local school-based mentoring organization ($n=10$) who had similar characteristics as the targeted population for the study for the purpose of proactively identifying potential problems or barriers to participation. Overall, the feedback received concerning the content of the questions and ease of understanding was positive and confirmed the face validity of the instrument. Next mentor program administrators were invited to participate in the study via multiple venues to reach administrators of school-based mentoring organizations.

Venues included an electronic mentoring list serve, a newsletter of a mentoring support organization and various professional contacts of the investigator. As administrators were identified who were willing for their program to be involved, appropriate information was sent to allow the administrators to invite their mentors. Incentives were offered to the program administrators as well as the mentor participants in the form of information and a tangible incentive in the form of a lottery.

Instrument Development

Three specific within mentor characteristics were measured, including two independent variables (motivation and relationship style) and one dependent variable (mentor perception of relationship quality). Two instruments with established psychometric principles, the Match Characteristics Questionnaire (MCQ) (Harris & Nakkula, 2008), and Mentor Volunteering Outcomes (Clary et al., 1998) were used for this purpose. In the following sections, the reliability and validity of the two established instruments will be discussed, as well as the specific rationale regarding the appropriateness of the instruments.

Motivation to Mentor

The instrument used to assess the motivation of the mentor was the Mentoring Volunteer Outcomes survey (Clary et al., 1998; Karcher et al., 2005). The six different functions that may underlie a person's decision to volunteer were identified according to functionalist theory as applied by Clary et al. (1998). The six functions identified are: (a) Values, (b) Understanding, (c) Social, (d) Career, (e) Protective, and (f) Enhancement. The six subscales were tested through a factor analysis study of 30 questions presented to 467 volunteers associated with five separate organizations providing assorted human services to populations that often have need of volunteer services, such as cancer patients, victims of disaster, individuals with physical handicaps, etc. After exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Clary et al. (1998) determined the 30 questions clearly loaded on the six individual factors. The average inter-scale correlation of the six subscales was .34. This low correlation score further confirmed that the subscales were in fact measuring six separate functions of volunteering. The questions on this instrument were designed to explore which of the six functions (values, understanding, social, career, protective, enhancement) are most associated with mentors' decisions to mentor. The participants responded according to a seven point Likert scale with a 1 response indicating, "not at all important/accurate for me" and a 7 response indicating, "extremely important/accurate for me." Cronbach alphas for the current study for the functions were strong, ranging from .80-.89

Mentoring Style

The instrument used to gather this information is the second section of the Match Characteristics Questionnaire (MCQ) (Harris & Nakkula, 2008). The authors report in the administration guide for the MCQ (2010) that more than 1000 groups have been surveyed using this instrument, the largest group consisting of the evaluations of the Yavapai Big Brothers Big Sisters in Arizona. Each section of the MCQ utilizes a Likert rating scale of 6 points (Nakkula & Harris, 2005). The answer options range from 1 (Never) to 6 (Always). Each section also contains reverse-scored questions. A Likert rating scale is an appropriate method of soliciting the mentors' responses, since the purpose is to probe for the mentors' attitudes toward the mentoring experience to find their level of satisfaction with the experience (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). For assessment of mentoring style, section two of the MCQ was used and includes 20 items concerning the value a mentor places on engaging in different types of activities with different purposes, such as building the relationship or working together on a structured project. According to Karcher and Nakkula (2010), the five purposes represented in this section are equally valuable in developing an emotional bond between the mentor/mentee. The particular activity is less important than the process and the sharing of decision making. These items are explained below according to the specific purpose of the activity. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for each of the individual subscales is presented and a sample question is provided.

Fun purpose. This section includes questions about the value the mentor feels should be placed on activities that are simply about the mentor and mentee having fun in low stress activities, such as playing games or hanging out together. These types of activities are classified as developmental (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002), with the actual purpose being helping the youth develop the ability to relate appropriately to peers and adults. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for this section is 0.79. There are four questions in this section. A sample question is: How important do you consider the focus: Having times when you do nothing but fun things with your mentee?

Sharing purpose. The four questions in this section address the value the mentor places on activities that allow the mentor and mentee to engage in discussions that build a rapport between the dyad. The questions focus on a two way process of sharing, with both parties having an opportunity to talk and listen. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for this section is 0.68. There are four questions in this section. A sample question is: How important do you consider the focus: Sharing your life experiences with your mentee?

Character development purpose. The questions in this section focus on the value the mentor places on more instructional activities designed to help the mentee develop and practice socially appropriate behaviors and thought patterns. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for this section is 0.81. There are two questions in this section. A sample question is: How important do you consider the focus: Getting your mentee to develop his/her character (be honest, responsible, etc.)?

Outlook purpose. These questions are concerned with the value the mentor places on getting the mentee to think about the future, going beyond the day to day issues. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for this section is 0.77. There are four questions in this section. A sample question is: How important do you consider the focus: Encouraging your mentee to push beyond what is comfortable or easy (to make more of him/herself)?

Academic purpose. The questions in this section inquire about the value the mentor places on academic related activities. This includes working directly on learning activities, but also on attempting to positively direct the mentee's attitude towards school. The Chronbach's alpha reliability estimate for this section is 0.79. There are four questions in this section. A sample question is: How important do you consider the focus: Doing or saying things to improve your mentee's attitude towards school (or keep it positive if it is already good)?

Dependent variable: Mentor perceived relationship quality. Relationship quality, within the context of a mentor and mentee relationship, entails the formation of the crucial emotional bond between the mentor and mentee (Rhodes, 2002). Mentoring professionals are in agreement that without this bond, there can be little chance of relationship sustainment between the mentor and mentee (Eby et al., 2007; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Spencer, 2007b). Section 1 of the MCQ was used to measure the mentor's perception of relationship quality, including the mentor's belief that the relationship is worthwhile and helpful to the mentee, which is the beginning of this crucial bond (Harris & Nakkula, 2008). The MCQ was previously discussed as it was also used to assess mentor style (Section 2). In this study, the seven subscales were combined for the dependent variable overall relationship quality. The internal consistency for the combined subscales was calculated in this study. The Cronbach alpha was 0.92.

Data Screening and Analysis Plan

Data screening is a process to examine the data in order to assure appropriate assumptions are met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). In this case, the data were examined for normality of distribution and homoscedasticity. These assumptions were tested by visual examination of histograms. Although the data were determined to have a slight positive skew, it was not extreme, and the decision was made to continue with the variables unchanged (Meyers, Well, & Lorch, 2010). To address the research questions, correlations were conducted (see Table 1) to determine relationships among mentor characteristics, and reported perceived relationship quality. Then, using significant variables from the correlation analyses, hierarchical regressions were conducted to examine whether specific characteristics predicted mentor reported perceived relationship quality. The correlational data yielded 5 significant relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable. Three *mentor style* subscales, *share, fun,* and *outlook* respectively had the highest correlation coefficients of mentor perception of relationship quality (.41-.48). Two additional *mentor style* subscales, character development and academic had small but significant correlations with mentor perception of relationship quality (PRQ) (.27-.28). The model was statistically significant $F_{1, 64}$= 19.55, $p <$ .000 but only one of the independent variables, mentor share, was a significant predictor b = 2.371, R^2 = .234 $R^2_{adjusted}$ = .222 explaining 22% of the variance of perceived relationship quality. Mentor fun was approaching significance in the model T= 1.692, $p <$ .096 but did not explain any unique variance in perceived relationship quality. This analysis is illustrated in Table 2.

Descriptive summary. Because *Mentor Style Share* was a significant predictor, the mentors' responses to each of the 4 items on this scale are presented in Table 3. The means for each item in *Share* were at 2.75 or above, which placed 3 items in the "pretty important" range, with the remaining item, "telling your mentee about your job" still close to this range. The item, "spending time just talking with your mentee", was answered in the "very important" or above range by 77% of the participants. Two of the items, "Sharing your life experiences with your mentee" and "Focusing on feelings and emotional things with your mentee" were each answered as "very important" or above by more than 50% of the participants.   The item with the lowest scores in the "very important" or above range, "Telling your mentee about your job", still had almost a fourth of the participants answering in the "very important" or above range.

The mean score for perceived relationship quality ranged from 1.66 to 4.41. There were six questions in which the mean responses fell within the 4.01 or greater range, and only 3 questions had mean responses of less than 2.0. Sixteen of the questions (73%) ranged from 2.75 to 4.41 generally indicating a positive perceived relationship attribute. Also, there were six questions that had zero responses in the *never* category, another indication of positive perceived relationships.

Discussion

Research has clearly documented that mentees who experience longer term and higher quality relationships with their mentors are more likely to benefit from mentoring relationships (DuBois et al., 2011; Flores & Obasi, 2005; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Fedlman, et al., 2007; Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2010; Karcher, 2008a; Rhodes, 2005; Spencer, 2006).   The purpose of this study was to identify specific mentor characteristics that are associated with perceptions of higher quality relationships. Specifically considered was whether mentors' styles and motivations for engaging in mentoring programs were associated with mentors' perception of relationship quality. A main finding of this study was that Mentor *style-share* accounted for 23% of the variance in mentor perception of relationship quality. The subscale *Mentor style-share* consists of four items with content related to if the mentors share on a fairly personal level with the mentee, such as sharing their personal experiences, telling their mentee about their job, spending time talking about feelings, and just talking. The mean scores of the mentor responses for these four items were between 2.75 (3=*pretty important)* and 4.34 (4= *very important).* The two items that the mentors rated of highest importance are somewhat more open ended (focusing on feelings, emotions $M=$ 3.77, and just talking $M=$ 4.34) while the two remaining questions (telling your mentee about your job $M=2.75$ and sharing life experiences with your mentee $M=3.56$), while still falling into the *pretty important* range, focus more on sharing more specific ideas and thoughts. Overall, the connection between sharing and mentor perception of relationship quality may be because the mentor senses the development of trust in the relationship if the mentee is willing to actively engage in substantive and introspective conversations. Thus, according to this study, the mentor's perception of the quality of the relationship is likely associated with the perceived quality of the interactions overall.   According to Karcher and Nakkula (2010), interactions are discreet events that happen each time the mentor and mentee meet, and the relationship is built not on a few discreet events, but rather the cumulating effect of these events over time. The mentors' overall perception of relationship quality is likely to be shaped by their interpretation of this process (Spencer, 2006).

The subscale *Mentor style-fun* was also moderately correlated with the mentors' perception of relationship quality, but did not contribute to the variance more than *Mentor style-share.* Questions here related to the importance mentors placed on activities that were just for fun such as being light-hearted, laughing, and having a good time. The results may strengthen the position that positive interactions, times when there are fun interchanges between the dyad provide positive feedback to the mentor and possibly increase the mentor's perceptions of growth within the relationship. The exploration of mentors' perception of relationship quality is important because research has shown that close to one half of mentoring relationships end before the sixth month anniversary of the relationship, and often these are ended by the mentor (Rhodes, 2008). Because of the possibility of emotional harm to already vulnerable youth, it is imperative to understand more about the mentoring relationship from the perspective of the mentor. This information can then be used by mentoring program administrators to effectively train and support mentors.

Motivation

There was no evidence found in this study indicating that any of the six areas of possible motivation (*career, social, values, enhancement, protective, understanding*) identified in the instrument Mentor Volunteering Outcomes (Clary et al., 1998*)*, significantly predicted the mentors' perception of the quality of the mentoring relationship. Although motivation subscales were not associated with mentors' perception of relationship quality, there were interesting patterns. The motivation subcategories *Values* and *Understanding* had the largest mean scores and *Career and Social* received the lowest mean scores. Both *Values* and *Understanding* represent a more outwardly focused motivation, such as doing the right thing and gaining understanding of others. This is in contrast to lower mean scores of *Career* and *Enhancement*, both of which have a more inward focus, such as gaining something, or bettering one's self, rather than more fully focusing on other people. Some interesting examples of responses to questions within the *Motivation* category highlight the importance the participants placed on these particular areas. For example, in the *Values* subcategory, "By mentoring, I can do something for a cause that is important to me," 94% of mentors answered that this was important, very important, or extremely important. This is in contrast to a question within the subcategory *career*, "Mentoring will allow me to succeed in my chosen profession," which was answered by 48% of the mentors as being either unimportant, or somewhat unimportant. In the category of *protective*, representing the idea of self-protection, or being more inwardly focused, the question, "No matter how bad I've been feeling, being a mentor could help me to forget about it," was answered with some degree of importance by 38% (n=28) of the participants. However, another question in this same subcategory, "Mentoring will help me work through my own personal problems," was answered as unimportant by almost 80% of the mentors. Although it is possible that this is a valid response, it is also possible that the participants felt that admitting to this type of motivation, such as mentoring a child or adolescent because they felt it would help themselves rather than the child, would be a socially unacceptable response.

The findings in this study concerning motivation both confirm and contradict past research to some degree. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, Clary et al, (1998) found the overall level of motivation to be highly predictive of the likelihood that a mentor would find the experience satisfying and be more likely to continue, but this finding was not evident in the present study. However, within the subcategories, both groups of respondents, those reported in Clary et al. (1998) as well as the current study, placed significant importance to items within the subcategory *values* and *understanding*, and somewhat less importance to items within *career* and *social,* suggesting similar relative importance of more outwardly focused motivations as opposed to motivations that may be more inwardly focused. In this study specific types of motivation were investigated, however, an overall level of motivation was not included in analyses. As another connection to other research on mentor motivation, foundational mentoring research conducted by Styles and Morrow (1992) reported a greater perception of relationship quality in developmental relationships, defined by the researchers as relationships where the mentor was guided by the mentee's needs, for instance, letting the youth know they were free to talk openly about fears, activities, or family issues without judgment or reproach by the mentor. This more outwardly focused mentor attitude also appears consistent with the present study in which mentors were more likely to be motivated by an outward focus such as wanting to do something for others, rather than an inward focus, as in career advancement.

Limitations

This study was descriptive in nature in the sense that no variables were directly manipulated and the results are based on respondents' self-reports. Another limitation is the size and makeup of the sample of mentor participants. The sample is relatively small (n=72) and there is some evidence that some characteristics of the participants may not be representative of all mentors. For instance, the level of education and experience of this group was relatively high. All of the mentors indicated some type of post high school education or training, and a very large number of the mentors indicated college degrees, with many indicating advanced degrees. Since many programs rely fairly heavily on college students and even high school students, the level of support and training that this group of mentors felt was adequate may be different than a group which included younger, less experienced mentors. A larger, more varied group may have produced different statistical results. Another possible limitation is, as mentioned earlier, the reliance on self-reporting instruments.

Implications for Practice and Research

Implications may be drawn from this study to aid in the administration of high quality mentoring programs. The results are consistent with the premises of previous research, which suggest the style of mentor interactions, and the value the mentor and mentee place upon the interactions and activities they engage in, are important to the development of the relationship (Cavell et al., 2009; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Not only should mentor administrators take care to make sure that mentors are aware of the potential value that the relationship between themselves and the mentee can potentially have to the mentee, they should include an interactive component of training and ongoing support so that mentors have an opportunity to provide input into the potential types of activities and settings that they feel would allow substantive interactions with their mentee. This shared, ongoing input may allow the mentor to engage in interactions that they feel are important to their mentee, and may therefore be more likely to allow relationship growth (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Also, although the similarity of the mentor's levels of experience was recognized as a potential limitation to the study, it is also worth noting that mentoring programs, especially smaller, more localized programs as some of the programs involved in this study were, may very well draw from a particular population depending on such possible variables as the particular area of the country, the manner of recruitment, or the population of mentees. For instance, an area with a large university population may be more likely to rely on university students, whereas an area with a large population of retirees may draw from the retired community (Rhodes, 2008). Because mentoring is a highly individualized intervention, there are many different variables that may influence the relationship and the best manner to support the mentor and mentee. Some additional variables not explored in this study, that may possibly influence the relationship include the particular culture, gender, and socio-economic status of both the mentee and the mentor. Previous research has suggested that these variables can be influential in mentoring programs, especially when there are vast differences between the mentor and mentee (Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007b). Additionally, more research focused on further exploration into the specific variables and nuances within the relationship development of the mentoring dyad would be beneficial. Future research that includes mentees' ratings of relationship satisfaction is also needed.

Conclusion

Relationship quality has been highlighted by this study as well as previous research (Spencer & Liang, 2009)as the central tenet of mentoring.   This study revealed important information about mentors' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their mentees and the ways this information may contribute to their likelihood to persist in their mentoring relationships.   Although school-based mentoring programs are prolific, there is still much that is not known about what specifically happens within the relationship and the ways that program administrators may best support the dyads (DuBois et al., 2011; Herrera et al., 2010). Although there is a sense of urgency because of a large number of children and youth at risk and large numbers of potential mentees on waiting lists (Herrera, 2011), it is imperative that mentoring programs are developed and run utilizing research based practices in order that strong, positive mentor/mentee relationships can be developed and sustained.   Understanding specific methods of supporting mentors so that strong mentor/mentee relationships can develop may increase this possibility of positive outcomes.

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Table 1: Intercorrelations among Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Mentor PRQ	1	.477*	.452*	.272*	.283*	.408*	.045	-.127	.185	-.170	-.101	.087
2 Share	.477**	1	.656**	.571**	.478**	.825**	.101	.146	.180	.294*	.341**	.399**
3 Fun	.452**	.656**	1	.300*	.291*	.623**	.084	.242*	.219	.256*	.293*	.388**
4 Char-Develop	.272*	.571**	.300*	1	.759**	.658**	.234*	.146	.117	.256*	.296*	.300*
5 Academic	.283*	.478**	.291*	.759**	1	.592**	.195	.109	.209	.232*	.301*	.231
6 Outlook	.408**	.825**	.623**	.658**	.592**	1	.070	.191	.306**	.352**	.348**	.395**
7 Mot-career	.045	.101	.084	.234*	.195	.070	1	.413**	-.095	.444**	.539**	.496**
8 Mot-social	-.127	.146	.242	.146	.109	.191	.413**	1	.075	.634**	.609**	.508**
9 Mot-value	.185	.180	.219	.117	.209	.306**	-.095	.075	1	.065	-.018	.266*
10 Mot-enhance	-.170	.294*	.256*	.256*	.232	.352**	.444**	.634**	.065	1	.794**	.686**
11 Mot-protect	-.101	.341**	.293*	.296*	.301*	.348**	.539**	.609**	-.018	.794**	1	.541**
12 Mot-understand	.087	.399**	.388**	.300*	.231	.395**	.496**	.508**	.266*	.686**	.541**	1

**Correlation   is   significant   at   the   0.01   level   (2   tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).
n=72

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Examining Predictors of Perceived Relationship Quality

Predictor Variables	β	t	Sig.	R^2	ΔR^2	R^2 Change	F
1 Share	.48	4.42	.000	.23	.22	.234	.000
2 Fun	.25	1.70	.096			-----	
3 Outlook	.05	0.27	.786			-----	
4 Academic	.10	0.80	.428			-----	
5 Character Development	.012	0.09	.930			-----	

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Mentor Style Share

Question	Not Important	A little Important	Pretty Important	Very Important	Extremely Important	Most Important	N	M	SD
How important is this focus to you?									
1.Sharing your life experiences with your mentee?	1%	14%	33%	28%	16%	4%	72	3.56	1.10
2. Focusing on feelings and emotional things with your mentee?	1%	12%	28%	29%	20%	7%	72	3.77	1.16
3. Telling your mentee about your job?	12%	35%	25%	13%	9%	1%	72	2.75	1.21
4.Spending time just talking with your mentee?	0	4%	14%	35%	29%	13%	72	4.34	1.03