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Perceptions of Mentor Relationships by Gender for Students in a Private Liberal Arts University in Arkansas

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PERCEPTIONS OF MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS BY GENDER FOR STUDENTS IN

A PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY IN ARKANSAS

by

Kimberlee Shaffer Kirkman

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PERCEPTIONS OF MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS BY GENDER FOR STUDENTS IN

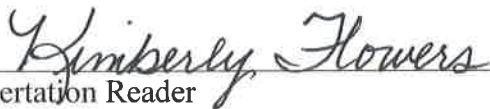A PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY IN ARKANSAS

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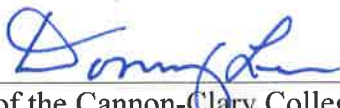Dissertation Advisor

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constant encouragement. Most importantly, I am eternally grateful for my hope in Christ

and the perfect modeling of the ideal mentor.

ABSTRACT

by
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Title: Perceptions of Mentor Relationships by Gender for Students in a Private Liberal Arts University in Arkansas.

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine the effects of university experience on male and female students on the perceptions of mentoring relationships. The study was designed to aid university leadership in developing a rationale that could better strengthen undergraduate mentor relationships. For the study, the mentoring theory by Garza, Reynosa, Werner, Duchaine, and Harter provided the core framework for the research. Each of the hypotheses addressed the perception responses to the Ideal-Mentor-Scale in integrity, guidance, relationships, and overall relationships. The research was carried out using a quantitative, 4 x 2 factorial between-groups, causal-comparative study. No significant interaction between university experience and gender was found. Also, the study found no significant main effect of university experience on perceptions of integrity, guidance, relationships, and overall relationships. However, the study found a significant main effect of gender on integrity and the overall importance of mentoring relationships. Women scored significantly higher than men in perceptions of integrity and overall relationships. One limitation that might have affected the study was that this study only used student data collected from one liberal arts university in Arkansas. This study's

results could shape the future related to the value of mentor training development for

mentors and mentees for successful growth on the mentoring theory continuum.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Mentor relationships have a positively perceived value in educational and career platforms. Johnson (2016) believed that few professional activities would surpass the value of a mentoring relationship. Mentors can develop mentees' confidence in navigating undergraduate programs and preparing for future career goals (Rose, 2003). Mentors have robust opportunities to help develop the next generation of people in their fields of expertise. Mentor experiences between mentees and their mentors could coalesce into how important the role is valued and pursued. Academic mentoring is the transference of moral responsibility—values, ethical principles, and cultural mores of diverse professions (Johnson, 2016). Mentees left on their own may develop undesirable traits and potentially find low satisfaction in future careers. The overall positive benefit for mentees to be engaged in a mentoring relationship can reap highly perceived value in academic and career success.

Although highly valued, a low percentage of undergraduate students engage in mentoring relationships. Gallup (2014) revealed that from a random sample of 29,560 adults in the United States with at least a bachelor's degree, only 14 % reported having a college mentor who encouraged them to follow their goals and dreams, cared about them as a person, and made them excited about learning. Johnson (2016) evaluated the inaugural Gallup-Purdue survey results and concluded that higher engagement with

college mentors doubled students' odds of being engaged at work and thriving in their well-being later in their careers. Natural occurring relationships can develop among college professors and undergraduate students, but more intentional development should occur to increase mentoring relationships for mentees and their future career benefits. Seeking career satisfaction mentees are more likely to achieve career satisfaction than unmentored students. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) supported similar mentoring results from empirical research in higher education institutions but noted that the literature was limited and of low quality. Mentor relationship training for mentors and mentees could significantly increase perceptions of value for the mentor and mentee. Undergraduate students need to develop mentoring relationships for optimum educational and future career experiences.

This study began before the global outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic hit the United States in early 2020. Developing and continuing strong mentoring relationships is increasingly essential to educational and career development and maintaining mental health for mentors and mentees (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Measuring undergraduate students' perceptions and mentor relationships during a pandemic will give insight into their more extreme need for guidance and counsel. The paradigm of mentorship during the COVID-19 crisis is another consideration when measuring perceptions. COVID-19 led to many adjustments and significantly affected education and mentoring relationships (Zibold et al., 2021). Evaluating mentee perceptions will provide insight into undergraduate students' perceived needs and what mentor and mentee training development is needed to meet future mentoring experiences in or out of a pandemic.

Statement of the Problem

The purposes of this study were fourfold. First, the purpose was to determine by university years of experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Second, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Third, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Fourth, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Background

Theoretical Framework: Mentoring Theory

Developing mentoring relationships has a predictable paradigm (see Figure 1). Garza, Reynosa, Werner, Duchaine, and Harter (2019) concluded that when a mentor understands the mentoring continuum, the mentor can lead each mentee to the appropriate training model. In the traditional mentoring paradigm, the role of the mentors is to support the mentees to help them survive, supervise the mentees to ensure success in all that is required, and guide the mentees by identifying weaknesses and offering

suggestions for improvements (Ballantyne, Hansford, & Packer, 1995; Blackwell, 1989; Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Garza et al., 2019). The mentor at the traditional level may or may not be effective in all of these essential developmental paradigms of mentoring without guidance and knowledge of the traditional mentoring purposes. Traditional mentoring roles have a significant positive outcome for the mentee, and the mentor must understand this potential to fully develop the mentoring relationship (Johnson & Smith, 2019; Ramos, 2019). Although viewed on the lower level of the continuum and without mentor development, traditional mentoring may not successfully achieve this mentoring level. The mentor's role is to actively move the mentee into the predictable paradigms to engage the mentee in growth and support actively.

Transitional mentoring moves beyond the traditional mentoring level into a more complex relationship. In transitional relationships, Brondyl and Searby (2013) noted that the mentor and mentee are partners and co-learners, cultural gaps are bridged, and differences are honored. The relationship's purpose is to develop strategies to learn how to achieve professional growth (Denyer, 1997; Lunceford, Baker, Griffin, & Johnson, 2013). As mentors and mentees shift into the relationship's transitional paradigm, more collaborative learning occurs for the mentees and the mentors. The transitional mentoring paradigm moves beyond emotional support as mentees develop self-confidence and understand the subject matter. Transitional mentors and mentees plan together, analyze mentees' professional practice, and reflect on challenges and successes (Denyer, 1997; Schon, 1987). Planning together further develops the relationship and formulates expectations for mentor relationship goals. The transitional mentoring paradigm does not

arbitrarily happen; the mentoring relationship achieves this relationship level by actively seeking to move the mentoring relationship to a deeper level.

As the highest mentoring paradigm, transformative mentoring relationships can bring the most innovation to the mentor and the mentee. The transformative mentoring purpose is a joint inquiry into the discipline's real issues (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The mentor and mentee are engaged in creating and innovating new concepts and engaging in collective action to transform ideas and organizations (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). In the transformative paradigm, the mentor and mentee relationship are considered co-learners and have developed to this level over invested time in the relationship at the lower mentor paradigms. Mentors and mentees have seen their relationship development, resulting in a higher-level relationship interaction. Kochan and Pascarelli (2012) suggested in the transformative mentor relationship that the roles of mentor and mentee are more fluid in looking beyond what might be and become more intensified in questioning beliefs, patterns, and habits. Mentors and mentees simultaneously develop their core beliefs, analyze practices, learn from each other, and plan more complex goals. The transformative relationship provides transformation to mentors as well as the mentees.

Mentoring relationship models have been developed to give a conceptual framework and overview of three distinct mentoring paradigms. The traditional, transitional, and transformative paradigms compose a broad spectrum of mentoring approaches (Garza et al., 2019). Each of the three mentoring paradigms reflects the specific mentor-mentee relationship between the faculty and the student. Traditional mentoring is supervisory to training and teaching the mentee and is most developed in

undergraduate mentor-mentee relationships. The contemporary transformative paradigm requires the mentor and mentee equally to engage in discovery and innovation and develop in undergraduate beyond a supervisory relationship when the mentee has matured in the traditional mentor-mentee relationship. The transitional mentoring paradigm is more collaborative, where the mentor and mentee are co-learners, and the exchange of ideas is reciprocal and may continue to develop after the mentee is postgraduate and is developing a career (Garza et al., 2019). At the highest mentoring level, in the transformative paradigm, the mentor and mentee collaborate and engage in collective action to transform the organization. Mentoring relationships can be blended and transition from some or all of the three paradigms over time as relationships develop.

Traditional mentoring paradigms	Transitional mentoring paradigms	Transformative mentoring paradigms
Involves the transfer of skills within authoritative and apprenticeship contexts; traditionally male-based in its origins; status quo culture, values transmitted.	The mentor and protégé are partners, co-learners; the mentor is a guide, supporter. Cultural gaps are bridged and cultural differences honored.	Mentor and protégé are engaged in creativity, discovery, innovation; mentor and protégé roles are fluid and changing; new realities are created as they engage in collective action to transform the organization.
Support (Ballantyne et al., 1995) The purpose is to emotionally and logistically support novices to help them survive the first years on the job. Retention is a goal of this type of mentoring. Terms: Buddy Friend Advisor Counselor	*Instruct* (Denyer, 1997) The purpose is to help novices learn about their practice. The mentor uses various stances and strategies, depending on the situation, like teaching directly and asking probing questions. Together they plan, teach, and analyze practice. Terms: Instructor Teacher Field instructor	*Inquire* (Feiman-Nemser, 2001b) The purpose of this type of mentoring is joint inquiry into real issues of practice. The mentor and novice analyze artifacts of practice as a way to think about the work, learn from one another, and plan the next steps. Terms: Co-learner Field instructor
Supervise (Borko and Mayfield, 1995). The purpose of this type of mentoring is an oversight, and therefore, there is a hierarchical nature to the relationship. The goal is to make sure that the novice does what is required. Terms: Supervisor Field supervisor Sponsor	*Reflect* (Schón, 1987) The purpose is to help novices adopt reflective habits by giving them opportunities for reflection. The goal of reflection is to help them analyze their practice – both successes and challenges – as a means to improve. Terms: Facilitator	
Guide (Blackwell, 1989) The purpose is to help novices improve by identifying weaknesses and offering suggestions. This often involves "putting out fires" and fixing immediate problems. Terms: Coach More knowledgeable Tutor		

Figure 1. Mentoring paradigms (Garza et al., 2019). Reprinted with permission.

The developing relationship is essential to the mentee's educational and career growth potential in any mentoring paradigm. Garza et al. (2019) described a mentor's role

as complex and dynamic relational, and mentors must understand their role and the importance of the mentee's role as they develop professionally. Whether or not the mentor experienced good mentoring, mentoring skills need developing. Smith and Johnson (2021) and Lindsay (2014) supported the mentoring role's importance and indicated the need for mentor training and development to ensure mentors are prepared to support and facilitate professional and personal growth for the mentee and themselves. Understanding mentoring benefits provides validation to engaging and supporting the mentor development.

Historical Overview of Mentoring

Mentoring has a long history of providing support and guidance. The term's first use can be traced back to Homer's *The Odyssey* and Odysseus's journey after the Trojan War (O'Donnell, 2017). Disguised as Mentor, an old family friend named Athena appeared to Odysseus's son Telemachus to offer support and guidance in his father's absence. This valuable interaction is one of the earliest recorded uses of the terminology *mentor*. Athena's intention of appearing before the council of the gods was to put *menos* into Telemachus. *Menos* is a Greek word translated as *heroic strength*, and the meaning behind the action of what a mentor does by giving mental strength to someone else called the mentee (O'Donnell, 2017). The mentor-mentee relationship, either voluntary or assigned, guides the mentee through different life stages. The value of this relationship to the mentee and mentor is unique to each relationship.

A mentor assumes many roles in the educational setting. The mentor is a teacher, advisor, sponsor, and counselor (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Levinson et al., 1978). Rose (2003) categorized the connection between the professor and student into three

different facets: personalities (e.g., sense of humor), professional conduct (e.g., moral and ethical), and personal relationship (e.g., socializing outside of class). Over time, a mentor has become synonymous with other terms: trusted advisor, friend, teacher, and wise person (Lim, 2005). Regardless of the name and meaning used for a mentor, the relationship can occur organically or as part of a formal program designed to empower the mentees to make deliberate, conscious decisions about their lives (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Rose, 2003). The relationship developed by the mentors and mentees, the time invested by both parties, and the relationship's value determine the mentor-mentee relationship's outcome. The need for mentoring outcomes in an educational setting is the foremost reason for developing the mentoring relationship.

Finding the right mentor is a crucial part of development into adulthood. "The mentor relationship is one of the most complex and developmentally important a person can have in early adulthood" (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 97). However, these relationships usually do not just occur; vital mentor-mentee relationships must be initiated intentionally. To seek a faculty mentor, a student must realize the potential value for academic success. Faculty may limit mentor relationships if faculty are only rewarded for research and publishing, serving on committees, and teaching. Of nearly 30,000 adults with at least a bachelor's degree, Gallup (2014) reported that only 22% of the participants polled had a mentor that encouraged them to pursue their dreams and career goals. Mentors and mentees have significant benefits in mentoring relationships between faculty and students. However, less than 50% of undergraduate students reported a mentor relationship with a faculty member. The process and procedure for developing mentor relationships are poorly designed and understudied. An undergraduate student should

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know about a mentor-mentee relationship's long-term value and seek to engage in a mentor relationship to optimize development into adulthood.

A mentor should be intentional in giving the mentee practical advice. Levinson et al. (1978) discovered six components that the traditional mentor, identified by Garza et al. (2019), should help the mentee understand: institutional politics, norms, and values of the institution; skills necessary for advancement; a path for advancement; appropriate ways to gain visibility; and common hurdles. This valuable advice would help the mentees succeed in their educational preparation and stimulate them to seek mentors in their future careers. Without guidance from a mentor, the mentee could miss career advancement opportunities (e.g., not fully understanding the institution climate) and not gain the appropriate skills to take the best path for advancement. A traditional mentor providing practical advice is critical to the mentee's professional development.

Ethics and Mentoring

The American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association established guidelines in each professional field that should be considered when evaluating appropriate relationship standards between faculty and students. The American Psychological Association (2017) standards stated that romantic or sexual relationships are not allowed and could be detrimental to the supervisee's personal and professional development. Likewise, the American Medical Association (2019) used language prohibiting sexual relationships between the physician and the patient because this relationship detracts from the physician-patient relationship's intended goals, exploits the patient, and affects the patient's judgment. Although not addressed in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2015) standards, romantic or sexual

relationships are not permitted between supervisors and supervisees in professional fields. The best practice is for professors to use established standards like the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association to keep relationships with students nonromantic nor sexual.

Professors should be prepared to follow the AAUP standards and their university's standards concerning appropriate conduct with students. The AAUP (2015) developed a *Policy on Professional Ethics* for professors in higher education, and individual universities may have other published standards for professors. Training in these relationship standards should be clear and thorough to ensure faculty understanding and compliance. The language used in the AAUP professional ethics policy stated that the faculty should "exercise critical self-discipline and judgment" (p. 92) and could be applied to relationships of any nature. Relationship standards should be at the forefront of colleges' and universities' continual training to maintain the standards for appropriate conduct by the university and AAUP. Professors might develop personal standards higher than AAUP standards to address specific moral conduct with students.

Trust Building in Mentoring

The mentor's respect demonstrates how the mentee perceives the mentor's integrity. Roberts (2020) argued that mentees learn about the mentors' attitudes by spending time with the mentors, and the mentees develop their sense of personal and professional integrity through that relationship. Limeri et al. (2019) characterized undergraduates' feelings of inferiority, intimidation, humiliation, embarrassment, and other forms of discomfort when the mentors' behaviors appeared to take advantage of their positions of power. Mentees' perceptions of mentor integrity are based on their

interactions with their mentors. A mentor could be viewed as high in personal and professional integrity by one mentee and low in personal and professional integrity by another mentee based on personal experiences. Limeri et al. (2019) concluded that mentors' beneficial practices reflected how mentees perceived behaviors as harmful or unhelpful. Because traditional and transitional mentoring styles involve engaging with mentees to guide, transfer skills, and reflect on work and values, how mentors were engaged with mentees is reflected in their perceptions of their integrity. Gaining respect for how the mentees perceive the mentors' integrity can be based on how they interact with mentees.

Mentees expect to trust their mentors to recognize situations to guide them. One component of outstanding mentoring involved mentors' guidance in deciphering organizational codes for the mentees (Johnson & Smith, 2016). Establishing goals for the mentor relationships provided structure to their mentees' formal plans with timelines and enabled mentors to have opportunities to give their mentees guidance (Nottingham, Mazerolle, & Barrett, 2017). Mentees can recognize that they have far less experience than their mentors in career, education, and life and seek valuable advice from their mentors. Many mentees seek personal connections with their mentor, and as that deeper relationship develops, they begin to value their mentors' guidance with higher esteem. Rose (2005) noted that the most practical mentoring element is guidance, and mentees individually perceived the purpose of guidance was the broader role of mentoring in their long-term lives. Mentees often do not know what to ask or seek out in the mentors' advice but rely on the mentor-mentee relationship and mentor expertise to have confidence in the mentors' guidance. As mentees receive guidance and realize future value, higher trust

levels are developed. Mutual trust built during mentoring relationships strengthens the value of guidance perceived by the mentee.

The chemistry in the mentor-mentee relationship is significant to the relationship goals. Mentors and mentees perceive naturally occurring mentor relationships as more effective and meaningful (Johnson, 2002, 2003). Formalized mentoring programs can result in an interpersonal mismatch where mentors and mentees have different preferences, work styles, and communication preferences and lower goal achievement (Bailey, Voyles, Finkelstein & Matarazzo, 2016; Limeri et al., 2019). Mentees are drawn to potential mentors who exhibit similar attitudes, work styles, and communication styles. Most mentor relationships do not occur spontaneously, so formal mentoring programs are needed. The key to successful mentoring programs is to match styles between mentor and mentee as best as possible. Johnson (2002) concluded that mentees who enjoy mentorship during (graduate school) training are more "satisfied with the experience and more confident and successful as new professionals" (p. 94). Experts in mentoring research have agreed that the more personal connections between the mentor and mentee, the higher perceived satisfaction in the relationship occurs. Organically developed mentor relationships have higher success rates for mentee results.

Obstacles in Mentoring

Mentoring functions and the career effects for mentors have to be weighed. The two distinct categories of risks for the faculty mentors are psychosocial and instrumental or career (Ensher & Thomas, 1997; Kram, 1983; Lunsford et al., 2013). Faculty may experience the emotional costs in the psychosocial aspect of mentoring through burnout (e.g., mentoring too many students), anger (e.g., mentoring students that are unresponsive

to feedback), and grief (e.g., student leaving the program) (Kram, 1983; Lunsford et al., 2013). As faculty invest in mentoring students when building their careers in academia, they must evaluate these emotional risks and determine whether these risks have value. The mentors' risks may weigh heavily on their job productivity and be detrimental to career advancement. Kram (1983) and Lunsford et al. (2013) noted that faculty might experience instrumental or career costs of mentoring, which involves the mentor's reputation (e.g., supervising mentees displaying unethical behavior), productivity (e.g., devoting significant time to mentoring), and ethical risks (e.g., mentors failing to observe policies on confidentiality). As faculty scrutinize whether mentoring students will affect career development, the risks have to determine each faculty member's course of action. As denoted in the theoretical framework, traditional mentoring involves the transfer of skills (e.g.) or logistically supporting the mentee, which poses a lower career threat to the mentor than the transitional or transformative types of mentoring of collaboration is more interactive between mentor and mentee. Faculty invest in the mentor relationship and experience the cost associated with the mentor role.

Distance Learning and Mentoring

The global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 opened opportunities for innovation in many education areas; these opportunities included establishing or maintaining electronic mentoring relationships during the pandemic. Mentoring is a critical factor in fostering student engagement successfully in the learning environment (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic shut down universities worldwide in the spring semester of 2020, the universities engaged in the electronic delivery of classes were more adept at mentoring students enrolled in their programs (Barry & Kanematsu, 2020). The

universities involved in successful e-learning environments before the COVID-19 pandemic transitioned quickly into total online course delivery during the spring semester of 2020. Faculty were provided professional development to mentor students in addressing isolation and connectedness to the campus community, and these learning opportunities held significant implications for successful online teaching and mentoring students in online learning environments (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020; Wilcha, 2020). University models without online course delivery readily faced significant challenges when COVID-19 changed the learning environments abruptly. As this learning environment change occurred, faculty members were thrust into electronic teaching platforms and were more successful when resources were available for faculty to transition smoothly. In 2020, colleges and universities had to adjust traditional delivery models to make accommodations for COVID-19 and connect meaningfully with distance learning students.

Hypotheses

After a review of related literature, the following hypotheses were developed.

1. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

2. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

3. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

4. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Description of Terms

Ideal-Mentor-Scale. The Ideal-Mentor-Scale is a brief assessment tool Rose (2003) developed to clarify what a mentor is and does from the student's perspective. Ideal-Mentor-Scale has 34 items that reflect different aspects of the mentoring relationship, and the student rates each item on how vital the mentor attribute is at the current stage of development. These items are ranked on the Likert Scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is *Not at all Important* to 5 *Extremely Important*. The items are scored in three categories: integrity, guidance, relationship, and for a total score of overall importance.

Mentee. The mentee or protégé is a person who is advised, trained, or counseled by a mentor (Johnson, 2016). For this study, the mentee was a university undergraduate student.

Mentor. The mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor (Johnson, 2016). For this study, the mentor was a university faculty member.

University experience. University experience was defined as four levels of the college experience: the student's first year, second year, third year, and fourth or fifth

year of undergraduate experience to measure actual time in college. The *university experience* depicted time spent as an undergraduate student and not a simple measurement of college hours earned, which can be increased by high school concurrent college credit.

Significance

Higher education institutions face change with the many varied ways courses are presented to students. Online and virtual classrooms have replaced traditional, on-the-ground classroom experiences (Vedder, 2019). Some of this change has been an attempt to reduce costs due to higher education expenses. More recently, the changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused most American colleges and universities to temporarily close their campuses in the Spring 2020 semester to prevent the virus's spread. Vedder (2019) reported that online technology works best when blended with some human interaction, and students are more motivated to learn when their efforts are reinforced through a modest amount of human interaction. Some people might wonder how this shift from onsite to online changes the college experience where students once sat at the feet of scholars and learned more than just the coursework. Traditionally, undergraduate students learn content from an expert on making informed academic decisions and navigating life. With the changes to more virtual classrooms, universities need to understand and monitor faculty competencies in mentor relationships more effectively to keep students engaged in learning and ultimately progress toward degree completion.

Research Gaps

Although substantial research has been reported on graduate mentor-mentee relationships and less on undergraduate mentor-mentee relationships, little research has

focused on mentor-mentee relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential outcomes in these relationships' undergraduate higher education. As undergraduates develop expectations of mentor integrity, perceive the value of mentor guidance, and experiment with the merit in building mentor relationships based on gender and university experience, these outcomes could influence learning, overall school satisfaction, and degree completion. Research that provides insight into the different needs and expectations of gender and university experience can develop more effective mentors for the current university climate.

Possible Implications for Practice

Mentor relationships and positive outcomes have significant potential for universities' enrollment development and student retention businesses. Blumenstyk (2015) argued that meaningful contact between faculty and undergraduate students is crucial to student academic progress and degree completion. This study on the mentee perceptions of mentor-mentee relationships between faculty and undergraduate students provides insight into needed training and education for the faculty mentors. The results contributed to the literature on the perception of mentor-mentee relationships between faculty and undergraduate students. Once student perceptions are evaluated, university human resource or student support departments may encourage professional development in targeted areas for mentors. Exposing faculty to best mentoring practices can help them feel more connected to the campus community and develop more robust teaching and research skills (Johnson, 2016). They used the Ideal-Mentor-Scale to determine what the mentee perceived as the "ideal" mentor can be crucial in mentor training and development. The university's administration can invest time and resources in developing

strong faculty mentors to build camaraderie on the university campus, coalescing to strengthen enrollment.

Process to Accomplish

Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used in the study. For Hypotheses 1-4, the researcher used four 4 x 2 factorial between-groups designs. The independent variables were gender (males versus females) and university experience (first year versus second year versus third year versus fourth or fifth year). The dependent variables for Hypotheses 1-4 included perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity, perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance, perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors, and perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Sample

The study obtained perception scores from undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. For this study, 30 male and 30 female student results were desired in each year of the university experience, totaling 240 students' scores for each dependent variable. The actual sample in each year of university experience was larger. A Google form was used to collect the data, and the Google sheet generated was set to calculate the scores based on questions on integrity, guidance, relationship, and overall score. The university undergraduate student population consisted of White (81.80%), Black (5.34%), Hispanic-Latino (2.49%), Asian (1.34%), and American Indian (0.61%) students. The average age of undergraduate students was 20, ranging from ages17 to 24. The university has students from 50 states and 35 countries.

Instrumentation

The instrument used was the Ideal-Mentor-Scale. The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was developed by Rose (2003) as a brief self-reporting instrument assessing the importance of the various attributes to each student's concept of the ideal mentor and is grounded in Levinson et al. (1978) theory of adult development. The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was developed to clarify what a mentor is and does in graduate education from the student's perspective (Rose, 2003). The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was used with undergraduate students to elicit perceptions of what a mentor is and does in the context of undergraduate education. The instrument does not define mentoring for participants, but the scale measures self-reported attitudes, beliefs, or feelings about what a mentor means to the students (Rose, 2005). The Ideal-Mentor-Scale has 34 items that reflect different aspects of the mentoring relationship, and the student rates each item on how vital the mentor attribute is at the current stage of development (Rose, 2003). The items are scored in three categories: integrity, guidance, and relationship. The scale also provides a total score of overall importance. The integrity subscale embodies respectfulness for self and others and empowers mentees to make conscious choices about their lives. The mentor with integrity exhibits virtue and principled action and is thus worthy of emulation as a role model (Rose, 2003). According to Rose (2003), guidance represents the most straightforward word *mentor* in an academic setting, such as solving research problems and planning presentations of one's work. Rose developed the relationship subscale and connoted sharing the aspects of oneself viewed traditionally as private or somewhat more intimate than is typically the case in student-professor relationships: personal problems, social activities, and life vision or worldview. When mentors understand their mentees'

relationship perceptions, their focus will develop behaviors and attributes they might

engage in or mentor skills to build successful mentor-mentee relationships.

Data Analysis

A 4 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to address the

four hypotheses using university experience and gender as independent variables. The

four hypotheses' dependent variables included perceptions of the importance of mentors'

integrity, the importance of mentors' guidance, the importance of relationships with

mentors, and the overall importance of mentoring relationships. The alpha level was set

at a .05 significance level to reject or retain the four null hypotheses.

Summary

If mentoring relationships are increasingly perceived and valued as having a

positive effect on some mentees, more training for mentors and mentees should develop

to foster the mentor-mentee relationships. Johnson (2016) contented that few professional

activities would surpass a mentoring relationship. This assertion supports further

exploration of individual mentor relationship development strength. Since mentors can

develop mentees' confidence to navigate undergraduate programs and meet academic and

future career goals, more in-depth consideration of this value needs to be explored (Rose,

2003). Mentors' robust opportunities to develop the next generation of people in their

expertise are vast. The mentors' experiences with their mentees could coalesce into how

important the role is valued and pursued. Johnson (2016) argued that academic mentoring

was the transference of moral responsibility through values, ethical principles, and

cultural mores of diverse professions. Unfortunately, mentees left on their own may

develop undesirable traits and potentially fail to persist to degree completion. The overall

positive benefit for engaged mentees in a mentoring relationship can reap high perceived educational and career values.

Although highly valued, a low percentage of undergraduate students engage in mentoring relationships. A random sample of thousands of adults in the United States by Gallup (2014) revealed that of people with at least a bachelor's degree, only 14 % had college mentors who encouraged them to follow their goals and dreams, that cared about them, and that made them excited about learning. Johnson's (2016) evaluation of the inaugural Gallup-Purdue survey results concluded that higher engagement with a college mentor doubled their odds of being engaged at work and thriving in their well-being later in their careers. The naturally occurring relationships can develop among college professors and undergraduate students, and more intentional development should happen to increase mentoring relationships for mentees and their future career benefits. Seeking career satisfaction mentees are more likely to achieve career satisfaction than unmentored students. Decades ago, Levinson's et al. (1978) foundational academic mentoring supported similar results with low quality and limited mentoring relationships. Mentor relationship training for mentors and mentees could significantly increase perceptions of value for the mentor and mentee. Undergraduate students need opportunities to develop mentoring relationships for optimum educational and future career experiences, and prominent research will validate these essential claims.

The next chapter provides a review of the related literature detailing the theoretical framework, the connections to the Ideal-Mentor-Scale themes (integrity, guidance, and relationship), the comparisons to other mentor relationship studies with

graduate students, the obstacles faced in the university setting, and the value placed on

relationships through historical and career mentorships.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Successful people may attribute part or all of their lifetime achievements to deliberate and thoughtful mentoring relationships. Levinson et al. (1978), credited with validating the importance of mentorship as the most critical relationship of young adulthood, said that the mentor relationship is the developmentally most important relationship a person can have in adulthood. In extensive research over two decades, Johnson (2016) believed that good developmental mentoring relationships promote socialization, learning, career advancement, and leadership preparation. The simple knowledge that the mentor relationship is critical to career achievement does not influence people to develop mentoring relationships in academic settings. Training faculty and making young adults aware of mentoring benefits could be imperative to developing successful mentoring relationships. The Gallup (2014) survey of nearly 30,000 participants with at least a bachelor's degree noted that only 22% of participants reported having a mentor who encouraged them and supported their collegiate academic and career dreams. The participants' perceptions of mentoring relationships in the Gallup study represented all mentoring relationships but did not measure whether mentoring relationships were developed or underdeveloped in any formal way. The development of mentor relationships in graduate students has been studied, and the results have revealed positive outcomes; undergraduate mentoring relationship outcomes have not been

investigated thoroughly, even though mentor relationships are attributed to the mentees' achievements.

As co-learners, mentors and mentees develop the mentoring relationship for the mentees' academic and future professional growth opportunities. The theory that clarifies the mentor's precise role in promoting professional growth and a more in-depth understanding of the mentoring role is the three-tiered model called mentoring theory (Garza et al., 2019). Defining mentoring can be problematic and ambiguous in educational contexts, so by using standard language in a mentoring theory, mentors and mentees can synthesize the development of the mentoring relationship (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). Mentors and mentees could have more success in developing relationships when the path of developing relationships is defined. When clear standards are set, developing mentoring relationships could have goals and timelines to navigate mentor relationships. Personality is a significant variable that can explain the attraction and development of mentoring relationships, and Rose (2003) examined personality compatibility in the Ideal Mentor Scale, an instrument developed to measure perceptions of mentor relationships. Mentors and mentees could reap positive personal and career goals as compatible mentoring relationships develop. Fully developing the mentoring relationship can bring mentor and mentees innovative thinking in their academic and future professional growth opportunities.

This chapter provides a review of the prominent literature detailing the theoretical framework used in this study, the connections to themes (integrity, guidance, and relationship) in the Ideal Mentor Scale (Rose, 2003), the comparisons to other mentor relationship studies with graduate students, the obstacles faced in the university setting,

and value through historical and career mentorships. This chapter's rationale provides research on developing mentoring relationships in early adulthood.

Theoretical Framework: Mentoring Theory

The mentoring theory has three paradigms of development: traditional, transitional, and transformative. The interaction in the mentoring relationship reflects a specific type of mentor-mentee relationship and affects how much the mentoring relationship is a collegial and reciprocal partnership in the three mentoring models (Garza et al., 2019). The traditional, transitional, and transformative models incorporate the comprehensive scope of mentoring approaches from the authority approach, where mentors establish a hierarchical relationship (Brondyk & Searby, 2013) and maintain supervision over the mentee, to the much more complex transformative paradigm, where the mentor and mentee are equally involved in discovery, innovation, and organizational transformation (Garza et al., 2019; Rose, 2003). Mentoring relationships progress through these paradigms of mentoring with deliberate attention to development. At first, only the mentor may navigate the relationship, and as the mentee takes ownership in the mentoring relationship, the mentoring relationship can progress to more complex paradigms (Brondyk & Searby, 2013). The transitional mentoring paradigm is more cooperative than traditional mentoring, where the mentor advocates the mentee's growth through a culturally responsive lens (Garza et al., 2019). Mentors have the opportunity with each mentee to transform the mentoring relationship along the mentoring paradigm to enhance learning and professional growth. Developing mentoring relationships in each progressive paradigm requires cognitive action from the mentor and mentee.

Traditional Mentoring

The traditional mentor relationship is the most common level of mentoring approach. Mentors establishing authoritative, hierarchical relationships to impart knowledge and values to mentees and maintain oversight are considered traditional mentors (Brondyk & Searby, 2013; Garza et al., 2019). The purpose of traditional mentoring is to support the mentee emotionally and logically during the current educational or career phase (Ballantyne et al., 1995). As mentoring relationships develop, mentors bring their experiences and expectations to the relationship. Mentees take the relationship lead from the mentor, the expert, and extend as far as the mentor develops the relationship. Mentors that use the framework designed to guide and identify mentoring roles have more success progressing to higher-level mentor relationships with mentees (Garza et al., 2019). The mentoring framework guides mentors on mentor relationships and can influence the relationship with the mentee. Without clear standards and goals, mentoring practice will not develop past the traditional mentoring paradigm, the most common approach.

Developing mentoring relationships has predictable paradigms. Garza et al. (2019) concluded that when a mentor understands the mentoring continuum, the mentor can lead the mentee to the appropriate training model. In the traditional mentoring paradigm, the role of the mentor is to support the mentee to overcome obstacles, survive, and supervise the mentee to ensure success, guide by identifying weaknesses, and offer suggestions for improvement (Ballantyne et al., 1995; Blackwell, 1989; Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Garza et al., 2019). The mentor at the traditional level may or may not be effective in these essential developmental paradigms of mentoring without guidance and knowledge of the traditional mentoring purposes. Traditional mentoring roles have a significant positive outcome for the mentee, and the mentor must know this potential to fully develop the mentoring relationship (Johnson & Smith, 2019;

Ramos, 2019). Although viewed on the lower level of the continuum and without mentor development, traditional mentoring may not successfully achieve this mentoring level. The mentor's role is to actively move the mentee into the predictable paradigms to engage the mentee in growth and support actively.

Traditional mentoring relationships have better outcomes when cultural issues are considered. To create a traditional mentoring bond, mentors do not need to have the same cultural background as the mentee; however, they must be attentive to the implications of the differences (Kochan & Pascarelli, 2012). As described by Johnson (2014) and Schlosser, Lyons, Talleyrand, Kim, and Johnson (2011), the success of developing mentoring relationships was culturally conscious and deliberate. As traditional mentoring relationships develop, the mentor leads the relationship in cultural compatibility. The mentor's respect for differences positively influences the mentor's relationship development and success. Culture informs interpersonal communication, and the development of respect between the mentor and mentee differences is a critical building block to the development of traditional mentoring relationships (Johnson, 2016). When cultural differences are identified and addressed, the mentoring relationship can focus on the benefits of mentoring in the mentees' development paradigm. Mentors and mentees with mutual respect for culture have higher success rates in developing the traditional mentoring relationship.

Traditional mentoring in the American model, primarily mentor-directed, differs from the traditional European model with mutual participation roles. Brondyk and Searby (2013) described the European mentoring model as the nondirective approach. The American mentoring model approach was more directive, such as sponsoring mentees, developing networks with mentees, or setting career goals. Sontag, Vappie, and Wanberg (2007) noted that American

traditional mentoring has begun to emulate the European standard mentoring model in mutuality and reciprocity in the mentoring relationship. Although the mentoring models differ in the United States and European countries, the more rounded traditional mentoring models combine the directive and nondirective approaches to develop the mentee in a specific career development area. As the mentoring relationship matures over time, more opportunities for network development and planning for future career goals occur, allowing the mentoring relationship to develop mutual and reciprocate relationships. American mentoring is used for the mentee's development, whereas France views mentoring as mentee remediation (Sontag et al., 2007). The traditional mentoring benefit for mentees may have a powerful influence on the mentee's future career and life decisions and could be viewed positively for growth. American traditional mentoring roles have expanded into traditional European mentoring roles more recently.

Transitional Mentoring

Transitional mentoring has a more complex relationship than the traditional mentoring level. Brondyl and Searby (2013) noted that the mentor and mentee are partners and co-learners in transitional relationships, and in transitional mentoring, cultural gaps are bridged, and cultural differences are honored. The relationship's purpose is to develop strategies to learn how to achieve professional growth (Denyer, 1997; Lunsford et al., 2013). As mentors and mentees shift into the relationship's transitional paradigm, more collaborative learning occurs for the mentees and the mentors. The transitional mentoring paradigm moves beyond emotional support developed in traditional mentoring, and as mentees build self-confidence and understand the subject matter, the relationship becomes more collaborative. Transitional mentors and mentees plan together, analyze mentees' professional practices, and reflect on challenges and successes beyond the emotional support of traditional mentoring (Denyer, 1997; Schon, 1987). Planning

together can further develop the relationship and formulate expectations for mentor relationship goals. The transitional mentoring paradigm does not arbitrarily happen; the mentoring relationship achieves this relationship level by actively seeking to move the mentoring relationship to a more complex level.

The best practices in transitional mentoring can be challenging to identify due to the mentoring process's complexity and development paradigm. In recent literature, from the perspective of Athena and Greek mythology, the concept of building a network of mentor *constellations* or mentoring *mosaics* has emerged (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Mullen, 2005). Transitional mentoring aims to develop mentee reflective practices that analyze successes and challenges for future improvement and development (Schon, 1987). A mentee can build relationships with more than one respected expert to have multiple growth opportunities. Mentor relationships can be on different levels with each mentor in the mentee's network and successfully meet multiple career development needs. Johnson (2016) observed that successful mentoring requires a mutual time commitment from the mentor and mentee and a shared interest in moving into the transitional mentoring paradigm. Ultimately, the mentee has to be open to receiving mentoring advice and willing to participate in career development. Building best practices in transitional mentoring relationships prepare the mentoring relationship to move to the transformative paradigm.

Transformative Mentoring

As the highest mentoring paradigm, transformative mentoring relationships can bring the most innovation. The transformative mentoring purpose is a joint inquiry into the discipline's real issues (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The mentor and mentee engage in creating innovative new concepts and collective action to transform ideas and organizations (Brondyk & Searby, 2013).

In the transformative paradigm of the relationship, the mentor and mentee are considered co-learners. They have invested time in the relationship at the lower mentor paradigms. Mentors and mentees have seen their relationship development results to have a higher level of relationship interaction. Kochan and Pascarelli (2012) suggested in the transformative mentor relationship that the roles of mentor and mentee are more fluid in looking beyond what might be and become more intensified in questioning beliefs, patterns, and habits. Mentors and mentees simultaneously develop their core beliefs, analyze practice, learn from each other, and plan future goals. The transformative relationship provides transformation to mentors as well as the mentees.

Historical Overview of Mentoring

Relationships between professors and students have been integral to the educational process. This relationship between professor and student has been called a mentor relationship and originates in Greek mythology (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Johnson, 2002; Lim, 2005; O'Donnell, 2017). The term's first use can be traced to Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, and Odysseus's journey home after the Trojan War (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Johnson, 2002; O'Donnell, 2017). Disguised as Mentor, an old family friend named Athena appeared to Odysseus's son Telemachus to offer support and guidance in his father's absence. Athena's valuable interaction with Telemachus is the earliest recorded use of the term *mentor* (Lim, 2005). Athena's intention of appearing before the gods' council was to put *menos* into Telemachus (O'Donnell, 2017). Menos is a Greek word translated as *heroic strength* and what a mentor does for the mentee. The world's fascination with Odysseus' journey home since 3000 BC and the significance of the mentor's relationship is preeminent. The relationship reflects

the mentor's intention to empower the mentee with heroic strength to succeed in the mutual field of expertise.

Mentor Type

Literature can be examined through the lens of mentor relationships. Published in the mid-20th century, Campbell's (1949) work of comparative mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, characterized the archetypal hero's journey. With the mentor's help, the hero will cross the threshold into the call to adventure. The adventure, as in life, is better navigated with a trusted advisor that can give valuable insight to make decisions that can lead to future opportunities. Although the hero may not seem willing to embark on the adventure, having a developed mentor relationship can be the element that pushes the hero onto a road of an unexpected journey. Tolkien (1937, 1954a, 1954b, 1955) demonstrated in his epic trilogy *Lord of the Rings* and prequel *The Hobbit* that the heroes, Bilbo and Frodo, relied on the expertise of Gandalf to navigate tumultuous times during their adventures. Writings by Tolkien and Homer are examples of what has been seen throughout literature for centuries; the importance of the mentor role is vital in a successful adventure. Literature can be used to see value in developing strong mentor relationships.

A mentor assumes different roles in the educational setting. The mentor is a teacher, advisor, sponsor, and counselor (Bell-Ellison, & Dedrick, 2008; Levinson et al., 1978). Rose (2005) analyzed the connection between the professor and student into personalities (e.g., sense of humor), professional conduct (e.g., moral and ethical), and personal relationships (e.g., socializing outside of class). Over time, a mentor has become synonymous with other terms: trusted advisor, friend, teacher, and wise person (Lim, 2005). Regardless of the name and meaning used for a mentor, the relationship can occur organically or as part of a formal program

designed to empower the mentee to make deliberate, conscious decisions about their lives (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Rose, 2003). As the mentor relationship develops, time invested by both parties determines the success of the mentor-mentee relationship. A significant need for educational mentoring exists as the mentor can provide different qualities needed in the mentoring relationship.

Mentors have already experienced an undergraduate degree and have a career. A peer may have good advice, but true mentors can be invaluable guidance and direction because they have experienced what the mentee is experiencing (Lindsay, 2021). An undergraduate student can gain insight from the mentor relationship when the mentor-mentee relationship begins. Baier, Markham, and Pernice-Duca (2016) at Johns Hopkins University supported the value of mentor relationships on college persistence rates as one of the top two factors but are not highly sought after by undergraduates. The evidence of the importance of mentor relationships is robust; however, undergraduates are not always seeking to develop these relationships early in their college careers. A mentor in the college setting has been an undergraduate student and embarked on a career and may add extraordinary value to the mentee during this stage of life and this undergraduate career transition.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Finding the right mentor is a crucial part of development into adulthood. "The mentor relationship is one of the most complex and developmentally important a person can have in early adulthood," noted Levinson et al. (1978, p. 98). The vital mentor-mentee relationship must be initiated (Lindsay, 2021). Johnson (2016) reported that students must realize the potential value for academic success to seek a faculty mentor. If faculty are only rewarded for research and publishing, serving on committees, and teaching, faculty will rarely establish mentor

relationships independently (Jackson, 2007). Of nearly 30,000 adults with at least a bachelor's degree, Gallup (2014) reported that only 22% of the participants polled had a mentor that encouraged them to pursue their dreams and career goals. Mentors and mentees have significant benefits in mentoring relationships between faculty and students. However, Gallup (2014) revealed that less than 50% of undergraduate students reported a mentor relationship with a faculty member, and the process and procedure for developing mentor relationships are poorly designed and understudied. An undergraduate student should know about a mentor-mentee relationship's long-term value and seek to engage in a mentor relationship to optimize development into adulthood. Crucial for undergraduates' successful development into adulthood is finding the right mentor.

A mentor should be intentional in giving the mentee practical advice. Levinson et al. (1978) discovered six concepts that the traditional mentor should help the mentee understand: institutional politics, norms, and values of the institution; skills necessary for advancement; a path for advancement; appropriate ways to gain visibility; and common hurdles. This valuable counsel would help the mentee succeed in the undergraduate program and identify a need for mentors in their future careers. Without guidance from a mentor, the mentee could miss opportunities (e.g., not fully understanding the institution climate) and not gain the appropriate skills to take the best path for successful progression. A traditional mentor providing practical advice is critical to the mentee's professional development.

The mentor investing in the mentee could have positive outcomes for the mentor. As Ghosh and Reio (2013) indicated, mentors were more satisfied in their jobs and more committed to their organizations than individuals who have not mentored. Nottingham et al. (2017) supported similar findings that a mentor's job satisfaction and willingness to participate in the

mentoring led to higher job satisfaction and fulfillment in the mentoring experiences. The daily demands for university faculty members' time are significant; however, positive mentoring results can enhance the teaching career and make the extra time worthwhile. When faculty experience job satisfaction through mentoring students, they become more connected to the university and less likely to leave for a faculty position in another university (Nottingham et al., 2017). As traditional, transitional, and transformative mentor relationships develop, communication and goal achievement are enhanced (Nottingham et al., 2017). Ghosh and Reio (2013) revealed that when mentors model appropriate attitudes and behaviors for mentees, the mentors may also enhance these proper attitudes and behaviors in their performances. Mentors may see the mentees' positive development and may be influenced to experience personal growth, communicate more with mentees, and attain their own goals as mentors see them achieve goals. The positive results that mentors observe in mentees may positively affect the mentors.

Ethics and Mentoring

Mentor-mentee relationships at each of the mentoring theory paradigms involve personal feelings. As Johnson (2016) contended, mentoring is a professional activity with the highest satisfaction and fulfillment. The mentor influences the mentee and creates engagement space (Johnson, 2016; Ramos, 2019). When a mentor experiences high satisfaction and fulfillment, the mentor may lose sight of the professional relationship and blur the legal lines of mentor standards (Lunsford et al., 2013). The influence over a mentee can give the mentor a loss of objectivity and potential exploitation. Ethical risks can occur when the mentor's interests obscure the mentee's interests (Rosenberg & Heimberg, 2009). Mentors lead the mentor-mentee relationship at the beginning of each

of the paradigms. Therefore, the mentor is responsible for keeping the mentee's best

interests and the mentee's legal rights at the forefront of the relationship. Mentors are

responsible for upholding the mentee's legal rights and maintaining high moral standards

in the mentoring relationship.

Legal

Relationships between mentors and mentees are not viewed the same in university

settings. Since the 1950s, legal standards have been set by professional licensing organizations to

regulate behavior between the leaders in supervisory roles and the people in subordinate

positions (AAUP, 2015; American Medical Association, 2019; American Psychological

Association, 2017). The standards from the American Medical Association (2019) and American

Psychological Association (2017) specifically address relationships between the mentor and

mentee and are not explicitly stated in the standards of the AAUP. Faculty responsible for

evaluating students should not be involved in giving counsel (American Psychological

Association, 2017). Mentor relationships can become very personal and affect the mentor's

ability to be rational and unbiased in grading. The concept of what makes a good relationship

between supervisor and student roles is not explicitly addressed in the AAUP standards but is

open for individual interpretation of general guidelines. Although not viewed the same in

university settings, mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees require more

standardization in legal terms.

Professors should be prepared to follow the AAUP standards and their university's

standards concerning appropriate conduct with students. The AAUP (2015) has developed a

Policy on Professional Ethics for professors in higher education, and some individual

universities have standards for professors. Training in these relationship standards should be

clear and thorough to ensure faculty understanding and compliance. The language used in the AAUP professional ethics policy states that the faculty should "exercise critical self-discipline and judgment" (p. 92) and could be applied to relationships of any nature. Relationship standards could be at the forefront of colleges' and universities' continual training to maintain the standards set forth for appropriate conduct by the university and AAUP standards. Professors might aim to achieve higher personal standards than AAUP to be above reproach morally to address specific relationship conduct with students.

Moral Values

Mentors' moral values are evident in developing mentoring relationships. Rose and Rukstalis (2008) disclosed that mentors help mentees influence their moral character by identifying personal character strengths and establishing virtue goals that reflect their interests, emotions, and sense of self. Formal ethics training is a component of a college curriculum, as seen on university websites in the liberal arts setting (Eli & Bowen, 2002; Jackson, 2007; Johnson, 2003). Jackson (2007) believed that fostering moral responsibility was one of the four foundational components in ethics training. As emerging adults, mentees are often unsure of their moral compass and require training to conceptualize their moral responsibility. Training in ethics allows mentees to understand this development and clarify their moral responsibility. Johnson (2003) defined *moral values* as distinctly good or admirable human qualities that denote moral excellence and reflect internal revealing of character. Mentees that understand the importance of high moral values can seek mentors that hold moral ideals that the mentees deem essential. As the mentoring relationship develops, the mentee's awareness of the mentor's moral values is crucial in developing a moral compass**.**

Trust Building in Mentoring

A mentor relationship is built on trust. Plato described how the mentor modeled integrity, provided guidance, and developed the mentor-mentee relationship as the combined science of personal and professional relationship growth (Rose & Rukstalis, 2008). Mentees engaged in mentoring relationships described communication, approachability, and willingness to participate in mentoring as effective characteristics for building trust in the mentor relationship (Nottingham et al., 2017). As trust is developed with the mentor or a lack of confidence in the mentor is revealed, the mentee perceives the relationship based on their mentor's outlook, values, and having more contact with the mentor (Johnson, 2002, 2003; Schlosser et al., 2011). A mentor who communicates regularly with the mentee gives the mentee confidence in the relationship and strengthens trust. Gerzema and D'Antonio (2013) showed that the mentee's faith in the mentor was modeled after Athena demonstrated wisdom, courage, humaneness, a cooperative nature, and developed trust in the mentor relationship. The mentor that builds trust early in the mentor-mentee relationship can determine the length and strength of the mentoring relationship. The perception of integrity, guidance, and the mentee's relationship is based on how the mentor builds trust in the developing relationship.

Integrity

The mentor's respect for the mentee is how the mentee perceives the mentor's integrity and moral uprightness. Roberts (2020) believed that mentees learn about the mentors' attitudes by spending time with the mentors, and the mentees develop their sense of personal and professional integrity through that relationship. Limeri et al. (2019) characterized undergraduates' feelings of inferiority, intimidation, humiliation, embarrassment, and other

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forms of discomfort when the mentors' behaviors appeared to take advantage of their positions of power. The perception of mentor integrity is based on how the mentor interacts with individual mentees. A mentor could be viewed as high in personal and professional integrity by one mentee and low in personal and professional integrity by another mentee based on personal experiences. Limeri et al. (2019) concluded that mentors' practices reflect how mentees perceive behaviors as harmful or unhelpful. Because traditional and transitional mentoring styles involve engaging with mentees to guide, transfer skills, and reflect on work and values, how mentors were engaged with mentees is reflected in their perceptions of the mentors' integrity. Gaining respect for how the mentees perceive the mentors' integrity can be based on how they interact with each mentee.

The lack of investment in the mentoring relationship can be perceived as harmful to the mentee. Nottingham et al. (2017) noted that formal mentoring relationships were fostered when mentors and mentees communicated regularly with clear expectations and invested time in the relationship. Mentees perceive traditional, transitional, and transformative mentoring styles as more favorable when consistent communication occurs. However, when mentees observe other mentor relationships and perceive that more time was invested in these other mentoring relationships than their own, they reported unequal treatment and discrimination (Limeri et al., 2019). Whether or not favoritism occurs, the mentees measure the integrity of the mentors by this perception. Lack of communication and diminished time spent developing the mentor-mentee relationship could be detrimental to the overall success. Setting expectations in the mentoring relationship promoted involvement in collaboration on scholarly activities, which developed mutually satisfactory, successful mentor relationships (Limeri et al., 2019; Nottingham et al., 2017). Regular weekly or biweekly meetings with the mentee can build a

stronger relationship with the mentor. The positive influence of mentor-mentee relationship investment is the perception of the high integrity of the mentor.

The perceived integrity of the mentor plays an essential role in significant goal attainment by the mentee. Roberts (2020) revealed that the development of mentor integrity positively correlated with how high mentees perceived their mentor's integrity, mentee's graduation rate, and awards won by the mentee. Limeri et al. (2019) pointed out that mentors' perceived integrity was significantly lowered when mentees' mistakes were handled poorly by the mentors. Integrity training for mentors could be a powerful tool to help mentors develop appropriate strategies to manage mentees' behaviors, whether they deem praise or correction. When the mentee perceives the mentor as high in integrity, more positive mentor relationships can increase mentees' positive outcomes. Mentors' integrity is crucial in the mentor relationship's trust development, as Johnson (2002, 2016) contended. Mentees observe their mentors' lives as their relationships develop over time, and they spend increasing time together. Consistency in mentor behaviors compared to their advice to mentees builds the mentors' perceived integrity and positively correlates to trust and confidence in the relationship.

Integrity is an essential character standard that universities should screen for when hiring new faculty members. Faculty members that are people of integrity and are morally competent in the academic setting will protect the mentees and develop trust and confidence (Johnson, 2003). Self-disclosure and mutuality characterize the ideal mentorship (Johnson, 2003; Wilson & Johnson, 2001). Integrity development during the mentor relationship can also benefit the mentee in professional career development in this training period. Suppose mentors share personal experiences and handle situations where personal integrity is required. In that case, mentees will begin to develop a sense of how they would resolve similar situations in their lives.

Rose and Rukstalis (2008) observed that mentors helped mentees identify personal character strengths and establish virtue goals that reflected their interests, emotions, and sense of self; the mentees recognized the importance of these influences in moral character and their development of personal integrity. Mentors are more likely to focus on developing personal integrity when they exhibit high moral integrity levels and take opportunities to advise mentees in personal integrity development (Johnson, 2003). Although faculty mentors may not address integrity development, the mentees perceive their mentors' integrity by evidence observed in mentors' actions and words. Faculty mentors demonstrating high moral character are perceived as strong in moral integrity by their mentees.

Mentees completing undergraduate degrees and research goals are results of high mentor integrity perceptions. Baier et al. (2016) studied 237 first-time students and revealed that one of the top two influences on intended persistence in college was perceptions of mentorship. As colleges look for ways to grow enrollment, mentoring opportunities can benefit undergraduate students and maintain enrollment. Students involved in a mentoring relationship may not realize the benefit but will persist in college and achieve research goals through this guidance and model of integrity. Mentors build resilience, shape undergraduates' personal and professional development, promote awareness of mental health resources and available services, and provide a healthy balance of support and challenge, promoting high integrity and perceptions of mentor integrity (Ramos, 2019; Sng et al., 2017). Undergraduate students can develop personal integrity as they are involved with mentors and see modeled integrity as part of the relationship. Mentees' perceived mentor integrity is critical as they realize research opportunities and college completion goals.

Guidance

Mentees, over time, develop the trust in their mentors to recognize situations to guide the mentees. One component of outstanding mentoring involved mentors' guidance in deciphering organizational codes for the mentees (Johnson & Smith, 2016). Establishing goals for the mentor relationships provided structure to their mentees' formal plans with timelines and enabled mentors to have opportunities to give their mentees guidance (Nottingham et al., 2017). Mentees can recognize that they have far less experience than their mentors in career, education, and life and seek valuable advice from their mentors (Johnson & Smith, 2016). Mentees seek personal connections with their mentor, and as that mentor-mentee relationship develops, they begin to value their mentors' guidance with higher esteem. Rose's (2005) results manifested the most practical mentoring element as guidance and that mentees individually perceived guidance as to the broader role of long-term mentoring in their lives. Mentees often do not know what to ask for or seek in the mentors' advice but rely on their relationships and expertise to understand what guidance is needed. As mentees receive guidance and realize the value over time, higher trust levels are developed. Mutual trust built during mentoring relationships strengthens the value of guidance perceived by the mentee.

The way the mentor handles mentees' behaviors is crucial to developing the relationship. Limeri et al. (2019) attributed the mentors' unreasonably high expectations or the absence of positive reinforcement of mentees' behaviors as misaligned expectations. Positive outcomes from goal clarification and role expectations were substantial results (Johnson, 2016). Clear communication of expectations and an appropriate level of goal attainment is crucial to the mentor relationship and the mentee's perception of guidance. Mentors and mentees perform better in the mentoring relationship when both set specific, challenging, and achievable goals

(Garza et al., 2019; Johnson, 2016). As mentees and mentors enter the mentoring relationship, clear expectations are set to help avoid potential situations later (Johnson, 2002, 2003). Mentees have preconceived expectations of the mentors' role in the relationships and need to be discussed and clarified for the expectations to be positive and realistic. The mentor's response to the mentee's actions is essential to the developing relationship, even in correction.

As the mentor relationships develop, the mentors must prepare to challenge the mentees and provide guidance to develop the skills necessary to succeed. Johnson and Smith (2016) ascertained that excellent mentors dare, push, and confront mentees, challenging them to experience things that might otherwise be neglected or actively avoided. Psychologist Albert Bandura (1997) pioneered the self-efficacy concept that if mentees believe they can perform well, they are more likely to pursue complex tasks and persist longer at a task than mentees with lower self-efficacy. Well-mentored students will become more confident and optimistic regarding their work and embrace the image of potential in their profession and personal lives. Without a deliberate effort to challenge mentees, the mentee will be less prone to develop higher confidence and self-efficacy. Mentors who take frequent opportunities to build confidence and offer acceptance, confirmation, and emotional support see higher mentee self-confidence (Johnson, 2016). Mentees' self-confidence is bolstered by mentors' affirmations and challenges to achieve goals and is highly correlated to risks taken and success in the mentee's career. Time together is the ultimate key to the successful development of mentoring relationships where the mentor can effectively challenge and provide encouragement to build a strong self-efficacy in the mentee.

Mentors are invaluable to undergraduate mentees who are emerging into their future fields. When interviewing 550 people of the most influential people in the United States, Lindsay

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(2014) discovered that one critical relationship or mentorship is needed to capitalize on the connection to secure access and position in the top tier of their field. One relationship can have so much potential for an undergraduate's future. The valuable guidance benefits an undergraduate, and training should be part of first-year orientation for mentor development. Wharton School of Business (2007), a technology company, released data from more than 1,000 Sun employees over 5 years, concluding that mentoring positively influenced mentors and mentees, producing higher valued people. Mentoring observed in the educational settings, and the workplace correlates with success and should be considered when building successful undergraduate programs. Because effective mentor relationships demonstrate high achieving mentees, developing an effective mentor relationship is critical to undergraduates' future success.

Relationships

Mentees have high expectations of mentors' efforts in relationship development. Nottingham et al. (2017) described engagement on both sides of the mentoring relationship as positive and productive to the relationship. As Bailey et al. (2016) characterized, early mentor interest and availability were part of mentees' initial expectations for successful relationship development. At the beginning of the mentor relationship, if the mentee experiences a mentor that displays effort in relationship development, the mentee perceives value and reciprocates the relationship's engagement. Mentees also need to be willing to take the initiative to develop relationships with their mentors. Limeri et al. (2019) contended that mentors who were not invested in mentees' work, mentees as individuals, or in the mentoring relationship were perceived to lack psychosocial support and approachability. Undergraduates may have little experience in mentoring relationships and may not feel empowered to take the initiative in

building the mentoring relationship (Bailey et al., 2016; Johnson & Smith, 2016). This lack of mentor relationship experience or training in the mentor-mentee relationship can be a disadvantage (Johnson & Smith, 2016). The mentees put all expectations in relationship development in the mentors' lead and do not feel empowered to be assertive in the relationship. Mentees' expectations of mentor relationships are fulfilled when mentees take responsibility for relationship development.

The chemistry in the mentor-mentee relationship is significant to the relationship goals. Mentors and mentees perceive naturally occurring mentor relationships as more effective and meaningful (Johnson, 2002, 2003). Formalized mentoring programs can result in an interpersonal mismatch where mentors and mentees have different preferences, work styles, and communication preferences, resulting in lower goal achievement (Bailey et al., 2016; Burnett & Evans, 2016; Limeri et al., 2019). Mentees are drawn to potential mentors who exhibit similar attitudes, work styles, and communication styles and do not connect with potential mentors that are not aligned with perceived attitudes, work styles, and communication. All mentor relationships do not occur spontaneously, so formal mentoring programs are needed. The key to successful mentoring programs is to match styles between mentor and mentee as best as possible. Johnson (2002) concluded that mentees who enjoy mentorship during (graduate school) training are more "satisfied with the experience and more confident and successful as new professionals" (p. 94). Experts in mentoring research have agreed that the more personal connections between the mentor and mentee, the higher perceived satisfaction in the relationship. Organically developed mentor relationships have higher success rates for mentee results.

Obstacles in Mentoring

Mentoring has positive effects and negative consequences in the academic setting. The best outcomes for faculty mentoring students are faculty satisfaction, meaningful relationships, and continued learning related to a positive personal influence (Elliott, 2018). However, obstacles can deter mentors from seeking students as mentees (Lunsford et al., 2013). Faculty can face obstacles at the institutional, departmental, and individual levels (Chamely-Wilk, Cooney, & DeDonno, 2020; Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001; Johnson, 2002, 2016; Lunsford et al., 2013). As faculty work to achieve professorship, the institutional standards and departmentally are measured by the amount of research published, committee service, and not time invested in mentoring relationships. The unique obstacles for a faculty mentor can be related to personality conflicts with the mentee or having a mentee that has made decisions that do not align with the mentor's advice. For extended periods, the faculty engaged as mentors can affect job satisfaction and turnover rates (Hale, 2019). The outcomes for faculty involved positive mentor relationships were best when ample time was available to develop mentor relationships and time available to research and be involved with committees. The faculty mentor should weigh the positive and negative effects when considering entering a mentoring relationship.

Institutional

The standard university organizational model has made mentoring students difficult. A Gallup (2014) poll confirmed that only 22% of randomly selected college graduates strongly agreed that they had developed a relationship with a college mentor that encouraged them to pursue their academic and career dreams. Only 14% felt strongly

about being supported by a mentor. University professors serve as mentors for undergraduate students when time allows but are generally promoted and tenured for teaching, publishing research, and membership on committees (Chamely-Wilk et al., 2020; Johnson, 2016). Although college websites and catalogs portray their faculty as mentors and as very involved with students, these institutions do not reward faculty for mentoring; however, faculty focus their time on the factors that determine promotions—teaching, publishing research, and serving on committees (Lunsford et al., 2013). With the increasing daily job demands, faculty must prioritize tasks to achieve the most significant career success. Lunsford et al. (2013) revealed the disadvantages of mentoring as a reduced reputation, decreased production, and risk of ethical offenses. Faculty have more incentive to spend time teaching, researching, publishing, and serving on university committees and are not incentivized to risk mentoring students for the potential adverse outcomes. Universities publicly support faculty for mentoring students but, in reality, reward research, publishing, and serving on committees. Unless change occurs by valuing and rewarding mentorship, the modern university system will discourage mentoring students.

The employment of adjunct faculty has reduced the availability of mentors in the undergraduate college setting. Nationally, universities have reduced full-time faculty to part-time status by more than 50% to decrease overall university expenses (Bippus, Brooks, Plax, & Kearney, 2001). As this shift occurred, the benefit of having those with part-time faculty has been the real-life career experiences brought to the university setting. However, having part-time faculty has limited mentoring opportunities and engagement in university activities. Ridley (2010) concluded that because part-time

faculty were hired primarily to teach courses to relieve full-time faculty teaching loads and lower overall budgetary spending, these part-time faculty often have full-time responsibilities elsewhere. Therefore, mentoring undergraduate students is not a priority or required in the part-time teaching agreement. Bippus et al. (2001) argued that no significant difference exists between part-time and tenured faculty and the perceived ability to provide career mentoring in undergraduate students' perceptions. These students are generally unaware of faculty rank and do not show preference when seeking a career mentor with a part-time faculty or tenured faculty. Although students did not report the differentiation of choice in faculty rank and mentoring taste, the faculty's availability can help develop these mentoring opportunities. Mentoring relationships have become less developed because of the increased number of part-time faculty members on university campuses.

Diverse faculty mentors are not well represented among the faculty population on university campuses. Chamely-Wilk et al. (2020) contended that 70.6% of undergraduate research faculty mentors held tenured positions, and nontenured positions displayed the lowest percentage value and were predominantly male, White, and approximately 50 years of age. The faculty advancement committee in the university setting does not seriously consider faculty effectiveness in student mentoring relationships for tenure or advancement (Johnson, 2016). Amaury & Crisp (2007) reported that the overall efficacy of undergraduate retention is an essential factor for university advancement and sustenance; willing faculty mentors should be recognized and advanced for significant institutional contributions to their mentoring achievement. Among the challenges in the university setting, the faculty that spend time mentoring students will potentially spend

less time on their research productivity, have less availability for advising, and decrease the time for committee responsibilities. Activities are appropriate for career advancement and tenure (Chamely-Wilk et al., 2020). Universities can increase faculty diversity in mentors as the importance of developmental mentoring relationships is valued and recognized through tenure and promotion. Faculty representation as mentors needs to reflect the population of faculty diversity.

Departmental

Competitive departments can unintentionally or deliberately discourage mentor relationships between faculty and undergraduate students. Johnson (2016) observed that programs that foster competitive environments often left students to speculate if they would succeed in the department, leaving faculty to ignore students until they proved themselves. Mentoring is more than being paired with a faculty member for course advising, and as Johnson (2002, 2016) delineated, department heads frequently assume that mentor relationships will organically develop because of course advising. Highly competitive departments often leave students to navigate the waters alone. When students finally gain support and develop the mentoring relationship with faculty, they often miss opportunities because of a lack of awareness (Johnson, 2002; Lunsford et al., 2013). Developing department standards for faculty to encourage mentoring relationships beyond the course advising level would increase departmental requirements and help increase completion rates. Competitive university departments discourage mentor relationships between faculty and students in direct ways.

Diversity in faculty is integral to mentors' availability for the increasingly diverse student population. Ensher and Murphy (1997) concluded that mentees who perceived

themselves as similar to the mentors in outlook, perspective, and values reported liking their mentors, being satisfied with their mentors, and having more contact with their mentors. Student populations have become more heterogeneous on university campuses, while 54% of tenured professors are White males (Johnson, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). As university student populations have diversified, the faculty composition has not shifted equally. The faculty availability for mentor relationships does not align with the overall diversity of the U.S. undergraduate student population, as 54.9% of the undergraduates are female, and 54.7% are non-White undergraduate students (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). When academic departments fail to represent the university population in race, ethnicity, and gender, when these departments do not actively recruit talented faculty representing the student population, all students suffer from underrepresented groups (Johnson, 2016). Universities may recruit and retain more diverse faculty so that mentors are available to align with the diverse population. When students connect with available faculty members in outlook, perspective, and values, the potential for a successful mentorship opportunity occurs. Academic departments on university campuses increase students' successful mentoring opportunities by building and maintaining a diverse faculty that matches the student diversity population.

Individual

Mentoring students is a personal, relational decision for faculty members. The interactions involved in mentoring students comprise various forms and motivations, which affect the relationship process and outcomes for faculty and students (Lunsford et al., 2013). Relationships have some tangible or intangible costs (Emerson, 1981); faculty

and students make individual choices to engage in relationships based on perceived costs and the relationships' benefits (Ensher et al., 2001**).** Faculty with difficulty in mentoring relationships and no extrinsic motivation from the university will likely not pursue mentoring relationships when their insights and guidance would be critical to students' education and career development. Personal decisions to mentor are made by faculty as they determine what investment they are willing to make.

Distance Learning and Mentoring

Since March 2020, the mentor-mentee relationship has developed a broader meaning. At the onset of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many faculty members who emphasized face-to-face interactions perceived electronic classroom platforms as a short-term necessity to manage and foster student engagement (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020). As the pandemic continued for two years, longer than the 30-60 days initially predicted, mentors had to provide instruction and foster engagement for these virtual interactions (Wilcha, 2020). Some mentors had to adjust to the unknown length of distance learning platforms. Perrotta and Bohan (2020) revealed that some mentors were debilitated by the technology of online platforms and had limited online platform experience before the pandemic. Perrotta and Bohan (2020) and Wilcha (2020) concluded that confidentiality issues, reduced student engagement, and loss of assessments were concerns of electronic delivery methods. Mentors that were quick to convert to electronic delivery were better able to assess and support the continued progress of the mentees. Mentors with experience in online platforms and mentors with only face-to-face mentoring experience had to adapt during the pandemic.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Mentors must be prepared to explore different mentoring platforms with mentees. Thompson, Jefferies, and Topping (2010) concluded that mentoring needed to be in context for the mentees with an exact role and defined functions; purely electronic contact was ineffective unless the mentor had adequate training to understand better the challenges in this delivery method. Platforms like Zoom, developed in 2011, create video opportunities to interact face-to-face with mentees when social distancing is part of state health department directives or when other reasons arise that make the in-person meeting an impossible option. Ardley and Aldemir (2016) revealed that videoconferencing as a method of electronic mentoring was significant when the mentoring experience was established face-to-face before the first electronic interaction. Mentors had a short window in the spring of 2020 to learn new ways to maintain mentoring relationships or initiate new mentoring relationships through videotelephony. Mentors had no option but to act when universities moved from on-ground class delivery to electronic delivery in the middle of the semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Universities have developed an entirely online undergraduate and graduate curriculum and have integrated mentoring relationships into the online platform. Wilcha (2020) suggested that virtual teaching was more effective when resources were available to improve student engagement and interactivity. Engagement in the mentor relationship may be problematic in electronic platforms without established relationship goals and clarity of time planned together (Thompson et al., 2010). The mentor must establish the mentor-mentee meeting for successful mentor relationship development, face-to-face or on an electronic platform. The personal connection was more comfortable when mentor

relationships were established face-to-face before attempting electronic platforms. Especially aware during COVID-19, mentors scheduling consistent interactions with mentees were able to guide them while mentees navigated new and unexpected territory on online platforms (Rodoni, Eyrich, & Fessell, 2020; Wilcha, 2020). Mentors who took the responsibility of managing the multiple relationships with different mentees and managing the changing demands on their time with challenges were successful. Long-range planning for universities to successfully develop mentoring relationships was imperative to a thriving online educational platform.

Distance learning mentoring is a vehicle to continue the student academic development process that face-to-face mentoring provides. Necessary video conferencing technology skills are required to facilitate online mentoring relationships (Ardley & Aldemir, 2016). Whether formal or informal, mentoring relationships advance the concept of individual and university empowerment (Ardley & Aldemir, 2016; Wilcha, 2020). Mentors need to stay current on the technical skills required to facilitate online platforms for mentoring opportunities (Wilcha, 2020). Empowering the mentees to continue to develop academically through online connections nurtures growth in the mentors' and mentees' relationships (Zibold et al., 2021). Wilcha (2020) disclosed weaknesses of virtual mentoring that need to be addressed in future planning, including technical challenges, confidentiality issues, and reduced student engagement. Mentoring relationships can be problematic, and adding the challenges related to online platforms for communications complicates the relationship development. As distance learning continues to be a platform for higher education, best practices in mentoring for academic success must continue to be developed.

Distance learning platforms are continually developing. Mentoring relationships were challenged as faculty plans for synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. As faculty develop distance learning strategies and competencies, more time with mentees will develop and maintain stronger mentoring relations. Mentoring face-to-face has the highest success; however, Johnson (2016) observed increasing evidence that quality communication through video conferencing was as effective as in-person communication. Mentors equipped with this evidence can be proactive during the pandemic to develop and initiate new mentoring relationships. COVID-19 was one reason distance learning development has continued to improve, adjusted to future growth, and prepared learning platforms for future needs.

The path from the COVID-19 pandemic for leaders was unclear, and prudent leaders developed strategic teams to help navigate uncertain times. President Joe Biden proclaimed January 2022 National Mentoring Month (U.S. Office of the President, 2021). His team claimed that developing mentoring relationships was a crucial responsibility of every adult to help children develop their skills and expand opportunities. Although adults may not know what to do with the presidential proclamation, those adults that have established mentor relationships were affirmed of the timely importance of the mentor-mentee relationships. The unprecedented COVID-19 times were difficult to navigate, but mentor relationships were a significant way to build mentee confidence after the pandemic. As part of Biden's Proclamation, Marian Wright Edelman pointed out that being a mentor was the responsibility of every adult—especially parents, educators, and religious leaders—to share life lessons learned and that in these challenging times, these mentees are not alone (U.S. Office of the President, 2021). A relationship with a mentor

to help develop integrity, guide, and build relationships are tools for successful living. Leadership in government and educational settings made strategic moves to strengthen mentor-mentee relationship value.

Summary

The mentoring theory outlined the developmental paradigms of mentorship. From traditional to transitional to transformative mentoring, Garza et al. (2019) refined the mentor's approach to a deeper understanding of the roles to promote guidance and support for mentees. Mentor examples of Athena from Greek Mythology (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Johnson, 2002; Lim, 2005; O'Donnell, 2017) to modern-day emphasis in work by Johnson (2002, 2003, 2016) and Johnson and Smith (2016) gave a broad spectrum of the developmental paradigms of mentoring. Some reviewed literature supported the importance of developing the mentoring relationship (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Johnson, 2002, 2003, 2016; Johnson & Smith, 2016; Lim, 2005; Lindsay, 2016, 2021; O'Donnell, 2017). The idea that mentoring was not crucial to education or could be an obstacle to career advancement for a mentor was warned in some of the literature reviewed (Eli & Bowen, 2002; Jackson, 2007; Rose & Rukstalis, 2008). The relationship between the mentor and mentee brought positive outcomes and potentially negative consequences for both mentor and mentee.

The mentor-mentee development is a complex relationship. Maintaining ethical standards between mentors and mentees is the mentor's responsibility (Johnson, 2016; Ramos, 2019). Knowing and following the mentee's legal rights and sustaining the university's moral standards is also the mentor's responsibility (AAUP, 2015). Rose

(2005) described the mentor-mentee relationship based on the mentee's perception of the mentor's integrity, guidance provided, and the relationship development in graduate students. To build a successful mentor-mentee relationship, the mentor must balance ethical responsibilities with understanding the mentee's academic and personal development needs. Mentors have to face obstacles institutionally that discourage building mentoring relationships with mentees (Lunsford et al., 2013). Other challenges of developing mentor relationships on electronic platforms are due to distance learning (Perrotta & Bohan, 2020; Wilcha, 2020). As complicated as these findings are, mentors have significant reasons not to enter into a mentor-mentee relationship; however, successful mentoring relationships continue to exist. The complex mentor-mentee relationship research noted the gap in measuring the perceptions of the developed mentor relationships with undergraduate students.

Successful people have attributed part or all of their career achievements to deliberate and thoughtful mentoring relationships. The focus of this chapter was to provide a review of the prominent literature detailing the theoretical framework used in this study, the connections to themes (integrity, guidance, and relationship) in the Ideal Mentor Scale (Rose, 2003), the comparisons to other mentor relationship studies with graduate students, the obstacles faced in the university setting, and value through historical and career mentorships. This chapter's rationale provided prominent literature on the benefits and potential consequences of developing mentoring relationships as an undergraduate student in early adulthood. Chapter III included differences in gender and university experiences in the research design, sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, analytical methods, and this study's limitations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The literature review suggested the need to examine the perceptions of undergraduate students and the potential value of developing mentoring relationships in early adulthood. Formal preparation mentoring programs exist but are not as widely used in undergraduate higher education settings as in a workplace setting (Rose & Rukstalis, 2008). The literature review revealed that undergraduate students' perceptions of value in mentoring relationships were based on previous experiences in mentoring relationships, whether positive or negative. The purposes of this quantitative non-experimental study were four-fold, and four hypotheses were created.

1. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

2. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

3. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of

relationships with mentors as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

4. No significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Research Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used for this study. The researcher used a 4 x 2 factorial between-groups design for each hypothesis. For all four hypotheses, the independent variables were gender (females versus males) and university experience (first year versus the second year versus the third year versus the fourth or fifth year). A factorial design allowed the examination of interaction and main effects of eight groups (Year 1 female students, Year 1 male students, Year 2 female students, Year 2 male students, Year 3 female students, Year 3 male students, Year 4 or 5 female students, and Year 4 or 5 male students). The dependent variables for Hypotheses 1-4 were perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity, mentors' guidance, the importance of relationships with mentors, and the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale.

Sample

The data for this study consisted of perception scores obtained from 500 students from one private liberal arts university in Arkansas in Spring 2021. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the students from which sample data were obtained.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Students

UnivExp	Year 1 *n* (%)	Year 2 *n* (%)	Year 3 *n* (%)	Year 4/5 *n* (%)	Total *N* (%)
Gender					
Female	67 (55.4)	62 (63.9)	80 (59.7)	79 (53.4)	288 (57.6)
Male	54 (44.6)	35 (36.1)	54 (40.3)	69 (46.6)	212 (42.4)
Total	121	97	134	148	500
Race					
AmerInd	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.7)	3 (0.6)
Asian	3 (2.5)	2 (2.1)	6 (4.5)	5 (3.4)	16 (3.2)
Black	4 (3.3)	6 (6.3)	5 (3.8)	6 (4.1)	20 (4.0)
White	109 (90.1)	84 (87.5)	111 (83.5)	126 (86.3)	430 (86.7)
Other	1 (0.8)	1 (1.0)	6 (4.5)	7 (4.8)	15 (3.0)
Total	121	96	133	146	496
Age					
Under 22	117 (96.7)	95 (97.9)	123 (93.2)	100 (66.0)	435 (87.8)
23-25	2 (1.7)	1 (1.0)	6 (4.5)	37 (25.2)	46 (9.3)
26-30	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.7)	5 (1.0)
31-39	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.0)	4 (0.8)
40-49	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	2 (1.5)	1 (0.7)	4 (0.8)
50+	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.4)	3 (0.6)
Total	121	97	132	147	497

Note. UnivExp = University Experience; AmerInd = American Indian.

The data were stratified by gender and university experience, yielding a sample consisting of 121 (24.2%) Year 1 students, 97 (19.4%) Year 2 students, 134 (26.8%) Year 3 students, and 148 (29.6%) Year 4 and 5 students. Of the total, 288 (57.6%) were females, and 212 (42.4%) were males. The self-identified ethnicity of students was 3 (0.6%) American Indian, 16 (3.2%) Asian, 12 (2.4%) Black, 20 (4.0%) Hispanic-Latino, 430 (86.7%) White, and 15 (3.0%) Other. Further examination revealed that 82 (16.6%) self-identified as first-generation students, 30 (6.1%) as transfer students, and 23 (4.6%) as nontraditional students. The sample included 435 (87.5%) students under 22 years of age, 46 (9.3%) between 23-25, 5 (1.0%) between 26-30, 4 (0.08%) between 31-39, 4 (0.08%) between 40-49, and 3 (0.06%) 50 years and over. The sample further revealed how the students perceived their current mentor relationships. The tabulated sample included 49 (30.3%) students who identified as "Have a mentor that meets my current needs," 17 (3.5%) students who identified as "Have a mentor that does not meet my current needs," 214 (43.6%) students who identified as "Do not have a mentor, and would like a mentor," and 111 (22.6%) students who identified as " Do not have a mentor, and would not like a mentor."

Instrumentation

The instrument used was the Ideal-Mentor-Scale. The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was developed by Rose (2003) as a brief self-reporting instrument assessing the importance of the various attributes to each student's concept of the hypothetical *ideal mentor* and is grounded in Levinson et al.'s (1978) theory of adult development. The content validity of the original Ideal-Mentor-Scale 50 items found by Rose (2003) was evaluated by

volunteers with expert knowledge in graduate education and mentoring and was classified each item based on the five functions of mentoring: teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending (Anderson & Shannon, 1998). The instrument was vetted in construction phases: content validation (50 items), focus group (135 items), pilot sample 1 (111 items), sample 2 (103 items), sample 3 (76 items), and final (34 items). After the construction phases of the Ideal-Mentor-Scale and three samples of 712 doctoral students, the tool was revised to reflect the 34 items used in this study based on an iterative rational-statistical process.

The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was refined and produced stable and consistent results. The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was developed to clarify what a mentor is and does in graduate education from the student's perspective (Rose, 2003). The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was used with undergraduate students to elicit perceptions of what a mentor is and does in the context of undergraduate education. The instrument does not define mentoring for participants, but the scale measures self-reported attitudes, beliefs, or feelings about what a mentor means to the students (Rose, 2005). The Ideal-Mentor-Scale has 34 items that reflect different aspects of the mentoring relationship, and the student rates each item on how vital the mentor attribute is at the current stage of development (Rose, 2003). The items are scored on a Likert scale from 1 (*Not at all important*) to 5 (*Extremely important*). The Ideal-Mentor Scale has 14 items on integrity for Hypothesis 1, scores ranging from 14 to 70. The 10-item guidance subsection for Hypothesis 2 has a score of 10 to 50 range. For Hypothesis 3, the relationship subsection has 10 items, with scores ranging from 10 to 50. The overall importance of mentoring relationships total score includes all 34 items for Hypothesis 4, ranging from 34 to 170.

The integrity subscale embodies respectfulness for self and others and empowers mentees to make conscious choices about their lives. The mentor with integrity exhibits virtue and principled action and is thus worthy of emulation as a role model (Rose, 2003). According to Rose (2003), guidance represents the most straightforward word mentor in an academic setting, such as solving research problems and planning presentations of one's work. Rose developed the relationship subscale and connoted sharing the aspects of oneself viewed traditionally as private or somewhat more intimate than is typically the case in student-professor relationships: personal problems, social activities, and life vision or worldview. When mentors understand their mentees' relationship perceptions, their focus will develop behaviors and attributes they might engage in or mentor skills to build successful mentor-mentee relationships.

Data Collection Procedures

After approval by the Institutional Review Board, the dean of students in the private liberal arts university in Arkansas sent an email to all undergraduate students to participate in the Ideal Mentor Scale. In the email (document id) sent by the dean of students, participation in the research was each participant's informed consent, and the undergraduate participants would not be incentivized to participate or have consequences for lack of participation. The dean of students sent two follow-up emails as reminders to participate after the initial request. The Ideal Mentor Scale was a link included in the email from the dean of students as a Google Form that collects data and analyzes responses in real-time. The survey was open for 7 days. The Google forms email address collection feature was disabled to maintain the anonymity of the participants. The data

were stored securely on a password-protected laptop computer with the researcher or in the researcher's university private office.

Analytical Methods

The data analysis was conducted using the *IBM Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25*. Data collected were coded according to gender and university experience. The following codes were used for each group: gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female), university experience (1 = Year 1, 2 = Year 2, 3 = Year 3, 4 = Year 4 or 5). To address each hypothesis, a 4 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted using gender (male versus female) and university classification (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 or 5) as the independent variables. Integrity, guidance, relationship, and overall relationship measured by scale score on the Ideal Mentor Scale were the four dependent variables. The results were analyzed by first examining the interaction effect. If no significant interaction was detected, then the main effect for each independent variable was analyzed. Each null hypothesis was tested using a two-tailed test with a .05 level of significance.

Limitations

Limitations are expected that could affect the quality of the study. Therefore, communicating the limitations was essential to understanding the data analyses in Chapter IV and recommendations in Chapter V. First, the study only used student data collected from one liberal arts university in Arkansas. Additional data from other liberal art universities and a broader range of students could allow more comprehensive generalizations. Furthermore, stronger or weaker mentor relationships in this particular university may not be reflected in similar universities.

Second, no concise research directly correlates females and males with university classification and mentor relationship perceptions or development. Females and males with different university experiences often have different needs and expectations that could influence learning, overall school satisfaction, and degree completion and be reflected by the integrity, guidance, relationship, and overall scores from the Ideal-Mentor-Scale. Examining the perceptions of integrity, guidance, relationship, and overall scores with female and male responses and respective university experience allows a more thorough analysis of the perceived mentor relationships.

Third, the research design for this study was causal-comparative, which constitutes a limitation. The independent variables and randomly assigned participants could not be manipulated. This design alone is a limitation that produces less conclusive results. However, this limitation did not seem to exceed the typical circumstances encountered by researchers when schools are used for research studies.

Finally, the researcher was an administrator for the university when the study was conducted but did not directly contact participants or have any identifying name attached to the survey. All contact was through email with students and was made by the dean of students so the researcher could remain anonymous. The survey was also administered electronically for data collection using the Ideal Mentor Scale to avoid direct contact with students by the dean of students. Therefore, procedures were established to avoid bias. Student identification numbers were used to keep the participants from being recognizable. In addition, the researcher did not work directly with students in the study as a mentor. The Google forms' email address collection feature was disabled to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Summary

The data were stratified by gender and university experience to determine the effects on perceptions of the importance of integrity, perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance, perceptions of the importance of relationships, and perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships. The 500 scores collected were used in this study. A 4 x 2 factorial between-groups design to analyze the four hypotheses and the results of each hypothesis is discussed in Chapter IV.

The importance of mentoring relationships has been a subject of study in many professional occupations and graduate school. Lindsay (2014, 2021) reflected that a mentoring relationship is a vital part of one's future ability to capitalize on the connection for access and a position in the top tier of his or her field. A significant amount of existing research focused value on professional and graduate mentoring relationships; however, the value of undergraduate mentoring relationships and students' perceptions of the mentoring value has significantly been understudied. Included in Chapter III were the research methodology and design, the procedures used for data collection and analysis, and the limitations. Chapter IV contains the results of the data analysis for the four hypotheses.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was first to determine the effects by university classification on male students versus female students on the perceptions of Integrity as measured on the Ideal Mentor Scale for students at a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The second purpose of this study was to determine the effects by university classification on male students versus female students on the perceptions of Guidance as measured on the Ideal Mentor Scale for students at a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The third purpose of this study was to determine the effects by university classification on male students versus female students on the perceptions of the importance of Relationships as measured on the Ideal Mentor Scale for students at a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The final purpose of this study is to determine the effects by university classification on male students versus female students on the perceptions of the Overall Importance of mentoring relationships as measured on the Ideal Mentor Scale for students at a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that no significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. To test this hypothesis, a 4 x 2 factorial

ANOVA was conducted. Prior to carrying out the statistical analysis for the factorial

ANOVA, data were screened for entry errors and missing values, with none found. The

data were also checked for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations,

assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and

inferential results were also reviewed. Table 2 illustrates the group means, standard

deviations, and n values of the perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as a

function of university experience and gender.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors'

Integrity as a Function of University Experience and Gender

	Gender								
	Male			Female			Total		
UExp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Year 1	59.33	5.77	54	62.91	5.84	67	61.31	6.05	121
Year 2	61.09	6.07	34	64.05	4.94	62	63.00	5.52	96
Year 3	60.98	5.75	54	64.11	5.62	80	62.85	5.86	134
Yr 4/5	60.91	5.88	69	63.81	6.09	78	62.45	6.14	147
Total	60.55	5.85	211	63.74	5.66	287			

Note. UExp = University Experience.

To test the assumptions of normality, outliers were checked, and two extreme

outliers were deleted. The pre-analysis was rerun, and Shapiro-Wilk statistics and

histograms were examined for each group. The skewness and kurtosis values were

outside the 1.0 and -1.0 range for six of the eight groups. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to test for normality for the eight groups: Male Year 1, $W(54) = 0.97$, $p = .160$; Male Year 2, $W(34) = 0.94$, $p = .059$; Male Year 3, $W(54) = 0.88$, $p = < .001$; Male Year 4/5, $W(69) = 0.93$, $p = < .001$; Female Year 1, $W(67) = 0.93$, $p = < .001$; Female Year 2, $W(62) = 0.88$, $p = < .001$; Female Year 3, $W(80) = 0.87$, $p = < .001$; Female Year 4/5, $W(78) = 0.86$, $p = < .001$. All the groups had a negative skew, and six of the eight violated normality. Despite this violation, ANOVA was deemed appropriate as it is considered robust to violations of the assumption of normality (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2015). Levene's test of equality of variances was conducted within the ANOVA, and the test indicated that homogeneity of variances across the groups could be assumed, $F(7, 490) = 0.69$, $p = .681$; therefore, this assumption was not violated. A 4 x 2 factorial between-groups ANOVA was performed to test the interaction effect between university experience and gender on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Factorial ANOVA Results of Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors' Integrity on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale as a Function of University Experience and Gender

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	ES
Gender	1149.37	1	1149.37	34.83	< .001	0.066
UnivExp	168.56	3	56.19	1.70	.170	0.010
Gender*UnivExp	8.63	3	2.88	0.09	.970	0.001
Error	16167.62	490	33.00			

Note. UnivExp = University Experience.

The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis indicated no significant interaction effect between university experience and gender, $F(3, 490) = 0.09$, $p = .970$, $ES = 0.001$, which is a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Because no interaction effect existed, the main effect variables were analyzed separately. The main effect for university experience was also not significant, $F(3, 490) = 1.70$, $p = .170$, $ES = 0.010$, which was a small effect size. In contrast, the main effect for gender was significant, $F(1, 490) = 34.83$, $p = <$ .001, $ES = 0.066$, which was a medium effect size. Figure 5 displays the means for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as a function of the university experience and gender.
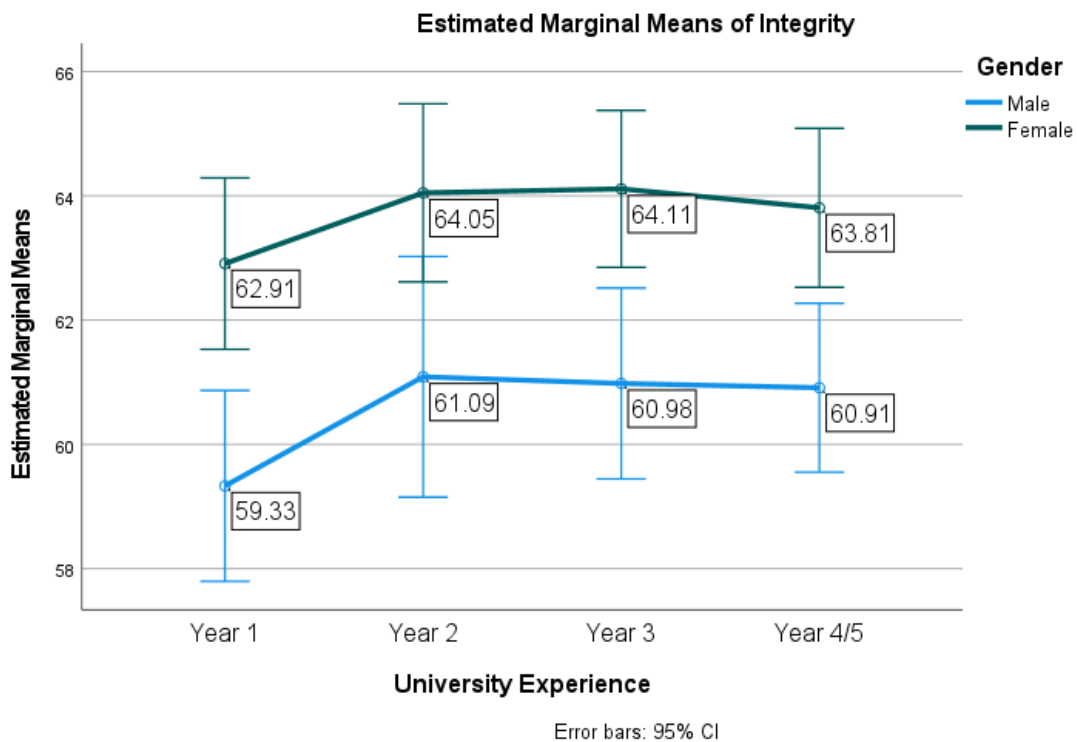

Figure 2. Means for perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as a function of university experience and gender.

Regarding university experience, the Year 2 students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity ($M = 63.00$, $SD = 5.52$), the highest mean of the four groups, was not significantly different compared to the Year 1 students' mean ($M = 61.31$, $SD = 6.05$), the lowest mean of the groups. Therefore, although 1.69 points separated the highest and lowest groups, the difference was not statistically significant. However, regarding gender, the male students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity ($M = 60.55$, $SD = 5.85$) was significantly lower compared to the female students' mean ($M = 63.74$, $SD = 5.66$). Females scored, on average, higher than their male counterparts on the integrity construct. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the main effect for university experience were retained. The null hypothesis for the main effect for gender was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that no significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. To test this hypothesis, a 4 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted. Prior to carrying out the statistical analysis for the factorial ANOVA, data were screened for entry errors and missing values, with none found. The data were also checked for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 4 illustrates the group means, standard deviations, and n values of the perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as a function of university experience and gender.

Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors'

Guidance as a Function of University Experience and Gender

| | Gender | | | | | | Total | | |
| | Male | | | Female | | | | | |
UExp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Year 1	37.85	4.95	54	39.37	6.54	67	38.69	5.91	121
Year 2	40.31	5.82	35	39.48	7.00	62	39.78	6.58	97
Year 3	39.31	5.62	54	40.46	6.06	80	40.00	5.90	134
Yr 4/5	38.70	7.24	69	38.72	7.96	79	38.71	7.61	148
Total	38.91	6.10	212	39.52	6.93	288			

Note. UExp = University Experience.

To test the assumptions of normality, outliers were checked, and no extreme outliers were found. In the pre-analysis, Shapiro-Wilk statistics and histograms were examined for each group. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range for seven of the eight groups. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to test for normality for the eight groups: Male Year 1, $W(54) = 0.96$, $p = .099$; Male Year 2, $W(35) = 0.96$, $p = .228$; Male Year 3, $W(54) = 0.96$, $p = .090$; Male Year 4/5, $W(69) = 0.92$, $p = < .001$; Female Year 1, $W(67) = 0.95$, $p = .014$; Female Year 2, $W(62) = 0.94$, $p = .005$; Female Year 3, $W(80) = 0.96$, $p = .012$; Female Year 4/5, $W(79) = 0.94$, $p = .002$. All the groups had a negative skew except for the Male Year 1 group, and five of the eight violated normality. Despite this violation, ANOVA was deemed appropriate as it is considered robust to violations of the assumption of normality (Leech et al., 2015). Levene's test of

equality of variances was conducted within the ANOVA, and the test indicated that homogeneity of variances across the groups could be assumed, $F(7, 492) = 2.66$, $p = .011$; therefore, this assumption was violated. A 4 x 2 factorial between-groups ANOVA was performed to test the interaction effect between university experience and gender on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Factorial ANOVA Results of Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors' Guidance on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale as a Function of University Experience and Gender

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	ES
Gender	25.50	1	25.50	0.59	.444	0.001
UnivExp	181.59	3	60.53	1.39	.244	0.008
Gender*UnivExp	92.44	3	30.81	0.71	.546	0.004
Error	21355.53	492	43.41			

Note. UnivExp = University Experience.

The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis indicated no significant interaction effect between university experience and gender, $F(3, 492) = 0.71$, $p = .546$, $ES = 0.004$, which is a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Because no interaction effect existed, the main effect variables were analyzed separately. The main effect for university experience was also not significant, $F(3, 492) = 1.39$, $p = .244$, $ES = 0.008$, which was a small effect size. Similarly, the main effect for gender was not significant, $F(1, 492) = 0.59$, $p = .444$,

ES = 0.001, which is a small effect size. Figure 3 displays the means for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as a function of university experience and gender.

Estimated Marginal Means of Guidance
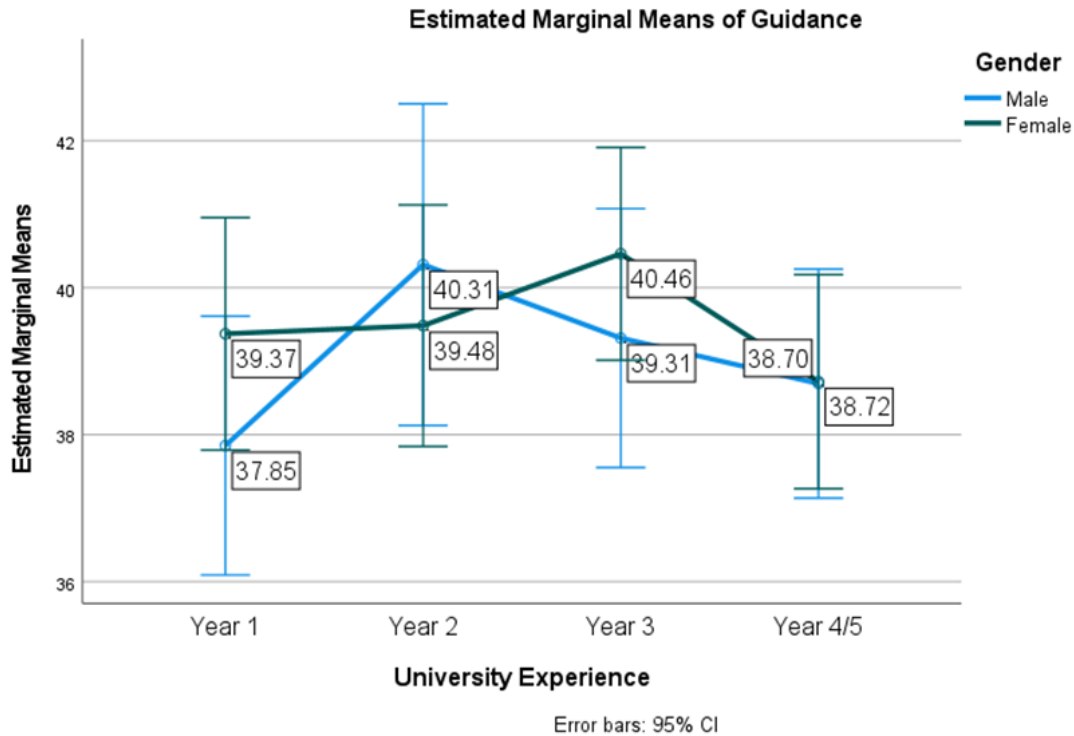
Figure 3. Means for perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as a function of university experience and gender.

Regarding university experience, the Year 3 students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance (*M* = 40.00, *SD* = 5.90), the highest mean of the four groups, was not significantly different compared to the Year 1 students' mean (*M* = 38.69, *SD* = 5.91), the lowest mean of the groups. Therefore, although 1.31 points separated the highest and lowest groups, the difference was not statistically significant. However, regarding gender, the male students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance (*M* = 38.91, *SD* = 6.10) was not significantly different

compared to the female students' mean ($M = 39.52$, $SD = 6.93$). On average, males scored similarly to their female counterparts on the guidance construct. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects for university experience and gender were retained.

<div align="center">**Hypothesis 3**</div>

Hypothesis 3 stated that no significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. To test this hypothesis, a 4 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted. Prior to carrying out the statistical analysis for the factorial ANOVA, data were screened for entry errors and missing values, with none found. The data were also checked for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 6 illustrates the group means, standard deviations, and n values of the perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as a function of university experience and gender.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors'

Relationships as a Function of University Experience and Gender

	Gender								
	Male			Female			Total		
UExp	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Year 1	34.50	6.72	54	35.48	5.72	67	35.04	6.18	121
Year 2	34.60	7.59	35	35.03	6.06	62	34.88	6.62	97
Year 3	34.46	6.32	54	34.69	6.12	80	34.60	6.18	134
Yr 4/5	32.55	7.13	69	34.97	7.58	79	33.84	7.45	148
Total	33.87	6.92	212	35.02	6.43	288			

Note. UExp = University Experience.

To test the assumptions of normality, outliers were checked, and no extreme outliers were found. In the pre-analysis, Shapiro-Wilk statistics and histograms were examined for each group. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the 1.0 and -1.0 range for seven of the eight groups. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to test for normality for the eight groups: Male Year 1, $W(54) = 0.95$, $p = .019$; Male Year 2, $W(35) = 0.97$, $p = .487$; Male Year 3, $W(54) = 0.98$, $p = .330$; Male Year 4/5, $W(69) = 0.99$, $p = .703$; Female Year 1, $W(67) = 0.98$, $p = .523$; Female Year 2, $W(62) = 0.99$, $p = .869$; Female Year 3, $W(80) = 0.97$, $p = .035$; Female Year 4/5, $W(79) = 0.98$, $p = .252$. All the groups had a negative skew except for the Male Year 1 and 4/5 groups, and two of the eight violated normality. Despite this violation, ANOVA was deemed appropriate as it is considered robust to violations of the assumption of normality (Leech et al., 2015).

Levene's test of equality of variances was conducted within the ANOVA, and the test

indicated that homogeneity of variances across the groups could be assumed, $F(7, 492) =$

3.39, $p = .114$; therefore, this assumption was violated. A 4 x 2 factorial between-groups

ANOVA was performed to test the interaction effect between university experience and

gender on perceptions of the importance of mentors' relationships. The results of the

ANOVA are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Factorial ANOVA Results of Perceptions of the Importance of Mentors' Relationships on

the Ideal-Mentor-Scale as a Function of University Experience and Gender

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	ES
Gender	120.83	1	120.83	2.73	.099	0.006
UnivExp	118.03	3	39.34	0.89	.447	0.005
Gender*UnivExp	99.66	3	33.22	0.75	.522	0.005
Error	21774.19	492	44.26			

Note. UnivExp = University Experience.

The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis indicated no significant interaction

effect between university experience and gender, $F(3, 492) = 0.75$, $p = .522$, $ES = 0.005$,

which is a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Because no interaction effect existed, the

main effect variables were analyzed separately. The main effect for university experience

was also not significant, $F(3, 492) = 0.89$, $p = .447$, $ES= 0.005$, which was a small effect

size. Similarly, the main effect for gender was not significant, $F(1, 492) = 2.73$, $p = .099$,

$ES = 0.006$, which is a small effect size. Figure 4 displays the means for the perceptions

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of the importance of mentors' relationships as a function of university experience and gender.
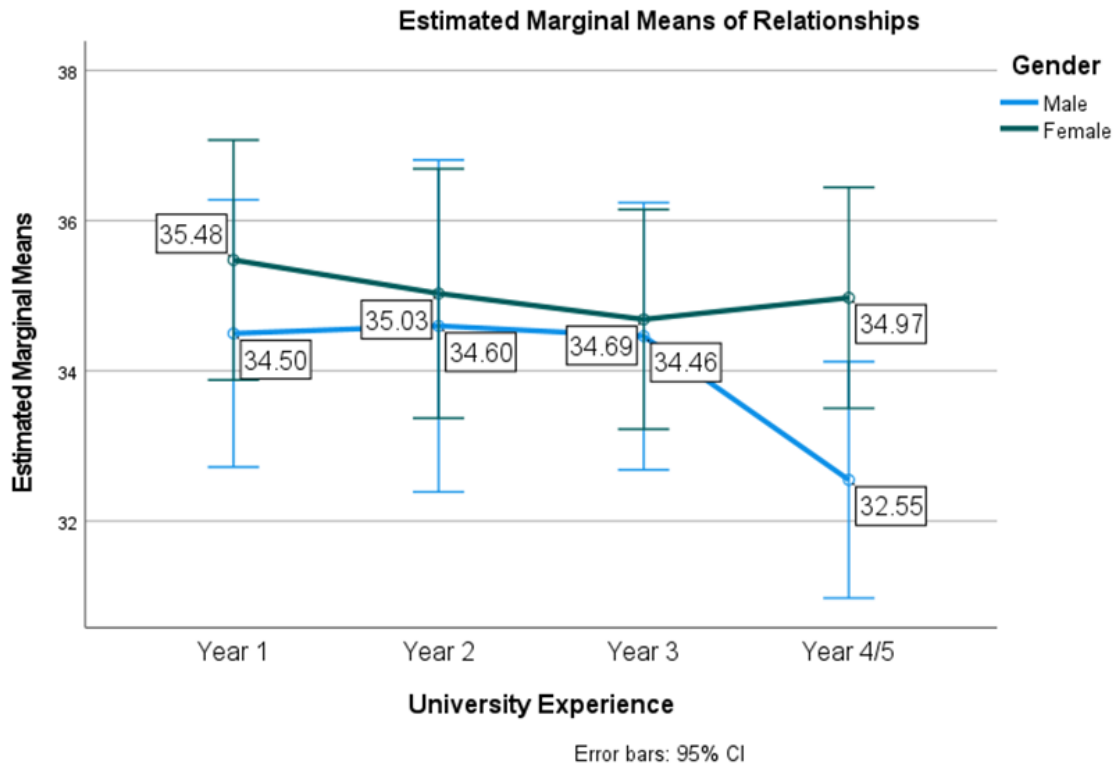
Figure 4. Means for perceptions of the importance of mentors' relationships as a function of university experience and gender.

Regarding university experience, the Year 1 students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' relationships ($M = 35.04$, $SD = 6.18$), the highest mean of the four groups, was not significantly different compared to the Year 4/5 students' mean ($M = 33.84$, $SD = 7.45$), the lowest mean of the groups. Therefore, although 1.2 points separated the highest and lowest groups, the difference was not statistically significant. Regarding gender, the male students' mean for the perceptions of the importance of mentors' relationships ($M = 33.87$, $SD = 6.92$) was not significantly different compared to

the female students' mean ($M = 35.02$, $SD = 6.43$). Males scored, on average, similarly compared to their female counterparts on the relationship construct. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the two main effects for university experience and gender were retained.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that no significant difference will exist by university experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. To test this hypothesis, a 4 x 2 factorial ANOVA was conducted. Prior to carrying out the statistical analysis for the factorial ANOVA, data were screened for entry errors and missing values, with none found. The data were also checked for outliers and the assumptions of independence of observations, assumptions of normality, and homogeneity of variances. Descriptive statistics and inferential results were also reviewed. Table 8 illustrates the group means, standard deviations, and n values of the perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as a function of university experience and gender.

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and n for Perceptions of the Overall Importance of

Mentoring Relationships as a Function of University Experience and Gender

	Gender								
	Male			Female			Total		
UExp	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Year 1	131.69	13.78	54	137.76	15.28	67	135.05	14.88	121
Year 2	135.23	18.91	35	138.56	14.47	62	137.36	16.20	97
Year 3	134.76	13.89	54	139.26	14.26	80	137.45	14.23	134
Yr 4/5	132.16	16.71	69	137.14	18.30	79	134.82	17.70	148
Total	133.21	15.68	212	138.18	15.68	288			

Note. UExp = University Experience.

To test the assumptions of normality, outliers were checked, and no outliers were
detected. The Shapiro-Wilk statistics and histograms were examined for each group. The
skewness and kurtosis values were outside the 1.0 and -1.0 range for three of the eight
groups. The Shapiro-Wilks test was used to test for normality for the eight groups: Male
Year 1, $W(54) = 0.98$, $p = .508$; Male Year 2, $W(35) = 0.97$, $p = .545$; Male Year 3, $W(54)$
$= 0.95$, $p = .030$; Male Year 4/5, $W(69) = 0.96$, $p = .018$; Female Year 1, $W(67) = 0.97$, p
$= .071$; Female Year 2, $W(62) = 0.97$, $p = .140$; Female Year 3, $W(80) = 0.97$, $p = .048$;
Female Year 4/5, $W(79) = 0.97$, $p = .079$. All the groups had a negative skew, and three
of the eight violated normality. Despite this violation, ANOVA was deemed appropriate
as it is considered robust to violations of the assumption of normality (Leech et al., 2015).
Levene's test of equality of variances was conducted within the ANOVA, and the test

indicated that homogeneity of variances across the groups could be assumed, $F(7, 492) =$ 1.68, $p = .111$; therefore, this assumption was not violated. A 4 x 2 factorial between-groups ANOVA was performed to test the interaction effect between university experience and gender on perceptions of the mentors' overall importance of mentoring. The results of the ANOVA are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Factorial ANOVA Results of Perceptions of the Overall Importance of Mentoring Relationships on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale as a Function of University Experience and Gender

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	*ES*
Gender	2619.11	1	2619.11	10.58	.001	0.021
UnivExp	626.43	3	208.81	0.84	.471	0.005
Gender*UnivExp	100.62	3	33.54	0.14	.939	0.001
Error	121815.31	492	247.59			

Note. UnivExp = University Experience.

The results of the factorial ANOVA analysis indicated no significant interaction effect between university experience and gender, $F(3, 492) = 0.14$, $p = .939$, $ES = 0.001$, which is a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Because no interaction effect existed, the main effect variables were analyzed separately. The main effect for university experience was also not significant, $F(3, 492) = 0.84$, $p = .471$, $ES = 0.005$, which was a small effect size. In contrast, the main effect for gender was significant, $F(1, 492) = 10.58$, $p = .001$, $ES = 0.021$, which was a small effect size. Figure 5 displays the means for the

perceptions of the mentors' overall importance of mentoring as a function of university experience and gender.
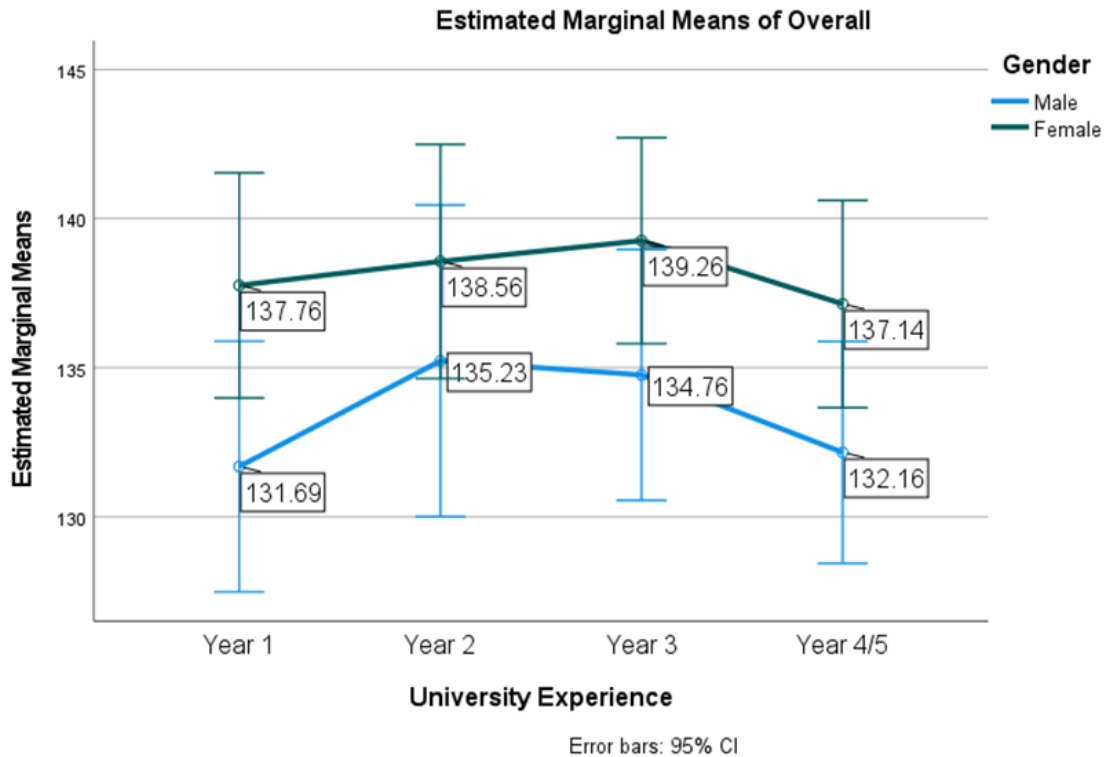

Figure 5. Means for perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as a function of university experience and gender.

Regarding university experience, the Year 3 students' mean for the perceptions of the mentors' overall importance of mentoring ($M = 137.45$, $SD = 14.23$), the highest mean of the four groups, was not significantly different compared to the Year 4/5 students' mean ($M = 134.82$, $SD = 17.70$), the lowest mean of the groups. Therefore, although 2.63 points separated the highest and lowest groups, the difference was not statistically significant. However, regarding gender, the male students' mean for the perceptions of

the mentors' overall importance of mentoring ($M = 133.21$, $SD = 15.68$) was significantly lower compared to the female students' mean ($M = 138.18$, $SD = 15.68$). Females scored, on average, significantly higher than their male counterparts on the overall importance of mentoring construct. Therefore, the null hypotheses for the interaction effect and the main effect for university experience were retained. The null hypothesis for the main effect for gender was rejected.

Summary

This study aimed to determine the effects of university classification and gender on the perceptions of integrity, guidance, the importance of relationships, and the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured on the Ideal Mentor Scale for students at a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The results of the interactions and main effects of the four hypotheses are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of Statistical Significance of University Experience and Gender on Perceptions of the Mentoring Relationships on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale by Hypothesis

Variables	H1	H2	H3	H4
Gender	< .001	.444	.099	.001
UnivExp	.170	.244	.447	.471
Gender*UnivExp	.970	.546	.522	.939

Note. UnivExp = University Experience.

Overall, university classification and gender did not interact to significantly affect the perceptions of integrity, guidance, the importance of relationships, or the overall importance of mentoring relationships for the four hypotheses. Further, the main effect of university classification did not significantly affect the perceptions of the four constructs. In contrast, the main effect of gender significantly affected the perceptions of integrity and the overall importance of mentoring relationships. The mean of the females was significantly higher than the mean of the males in both hypotheses. Gender did not significantly affect the perceptions of guidance and the importance of relationships. Chapter V discusses the findings, implications, recommendations, potential for practices, and future research considerations.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Mentor relationships have a positively perceived value in educational and career platforms. However, Gallup (2014) revealed that only 34% of undergraduate students engage in mentoring relationships. Gallup also reported that only 14% of undergraduate students had college mentors who encouraged them to follow their goals and dreams, cared about them, and excited them about learning. The overall positive benefit for mentees engaged in a mentoring relationship can reap highly perceived value in academic and career success. An analysis of the possible rationale that may exist in undergraduate students that do not invest in mentoring relationships is imperative to understand the results of this study.

The purposes of this study were fourfold. First, the purpose was to determine by university years of experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Second, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Third, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as

measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. Fourth, the purpose was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas.

Findings and Implications

Mentor relationships and positive outcomes have significant potential for universities' enrollment development and student retention businesses. Blumenstyk (2015) argued that meaningful contact between faculty and undergraduate students is crucial to student academic progress and degree completion. This study on the mentee perceptions of mentor-mentee relationships between faculty and undergraduate students provides insight into needed training and education for the faculty mentors.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that no significant difference would exist by university years of experience of the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' integrity as measured by the Ideal-Mentor-Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. When examining university experience and gender, the results indicated no statistical significance. The null hypothesis could not be rejected due to the lack of statistical significance. When examining university experience as the main effect, no statistical significance was found, and the null hypothesis was retained. Year 2 students (highest) scored slightly higher than Year 1 (lowest); however, the result was not statistically significant. Statistical significance was found when examining gender as the main effect, and the null

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hypothesis was rejected. The mean of the females was significantly higher than the mean of the males on average.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of mentors' guidance as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The results when examining university experience and gender indicated no statistical significance. When examining university experience as the main effect, no statistical significance was found, and the null hypothesis was retained. Year 3 students scored slightly higher than Year 1, Year 2, and Year 4/5; however, the result was not statistically significant. The main effect for gender was also not statistically significant. Females scored slightly higher, but the difference was not significant.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of relationships with mentors as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. The results when examining university experience and gender indicated no statistical significance. When examining university experience as the main effect, no statistical significance was found, and the null hypothesis was retained. Year 1 students scored slightly higher than Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4/5; however, the result was not statistically significant. The main effect for gender was also not statistically significant. Females scored slightly higher, but the difference was not significant.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 was to determine by university experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. When examining university experience and gender, the results indicated no statistical significance. The null hypothesis was retained. When examining university experience as the main effect, no statistical significance was found, and the null hypothesis was retained. Year 3 students (highest) scored slightly higher than Year 4/5 (lowest); however, the result was not statistically significant. Statistical significance was found when examining gender as the main effect, and the null hypothesis was rejected. The mean of the females was higher than the mean of the males.

University Experience

The Ideal Mentor Scale, the instrument used in this study to measure perceptions of mentoring relationships, had at least two limitations that readers must consider to interpret the findings. First, the survey did not define a mentor relationship. Therefore, confusion over what mentoring is could have negatively affected the results. Second, the survey provided no paradigm continuum (traditional, transitional, or transformative) to compare or differentiate students' current mentoring relationships (Garza et al., 2019). However, the statements in the Ideal Mentor Scale are posed so that the participants respond to whether they consider the activities essential for a solid mentoring relationship and not whether they participate in these activities with a mentor. Therefore, the wording of the statements helped to mitigate any adverse effects.

The value of mentoring relationships, recorded in the early 7th century B.C. in Greek mythology by Homer in *The Odyssey*, has been studied for many years. More

recently, what distinguished this study from others in the review of the literature was that undergraduates were the participants instead of graduate students (Bell-Ellison & Dedrick, 2008; Roberts, 2020; Rose, 2005; Schlosser et at., 2011; Sng et al., 2017) or workplace mentors (Anderson & Shannon, 1988; Ensher et al., 2001; Hale, 2019; Kochan & Pascarelli; 2012; Kram, 1983; Ramos, 2019; Scandura & Pelligrini, 2007). This study's significant implication was to examine what effect university classification and gender had on how undergraduates viewed the value of mentor relationships. Because the overall scores were very high in each year of the university experience, one implication is that undergraduates, no matter their university experience, benefit from and perceive the importance of mentor/mentee relationships. Considering these results allows further research and decisions to inform better and more strategically designed preparation pathways for mentors and mentees to build mentoring relationships on the mentoring paradigm.

Another implication given the high scores from each year of university experience dealt with the importance of needed professional development in mentor-mentee relationships. Blumenstyk (2015) argued that meaningful contact between faculty and undergraduate students is crucial to student academic progress and degree completion. This study on the mentee perceptions of mentor-mentee relationships between faculty and undergraduate students provides insight into needed training and education for the faculty mentors for students to be successful. Once student perceptions are evaluated, university human resource or student support departments may encourage professional development in targeted areas for mentors. Exposing faculty to best mentoring practices can help them feel more connected to the campus community and develop more robust teaching and

research skills (Johnson, 2016). The Ideal-Mentor-Scale was used to determine what the mentee perceived as the "ideal" mentor can be crucial in mentor training and development. The university's administration can invest time and resources in developing strong faculty mentors to build camaraderie on the university campus, coalescing to strengthen enrollment.

A literature review noted that successful people attributed part or all of their lifetime achievements to deliberate and thoughtful mentoring relationships. Levinson et al. (1978) reported that the mentor relationship is developmentally the most important relationship a person can have in adulthood. Training faculty and informing undergraduates about mentoring benefits could be imperative to developing and maintaining successful mentoring relationships. Finding ways to build the mentoring relationship fully can bring mentor and mentees innovative thinking in their academe and provide future professional growth opportunities (Denyer, 1997; Lunsford et al., 2013; Schon, 1987). Garza et al. (2019) concluded that the mentor could lead each mentee to the appropriate training model when a mentor understands the mentoring continuum. This desire to build mentor relationships on the mentoring continuum comes after understanding the mentoring theory and should be a central focus of mentor training. Mentor relationships and positive outcomes have significant potential for universities' enrollment development and student retention businesses.

Each of the three mentoring theory paradigms reflects the specific mentor-mentee relationship between the faculty and the student. Traditional mentoring is supervisory to training and teaching the mentee and is most developed in undergraduate mentor-mentee relationships (Garza et al., 2019). In the contemporary transformative paradigm, Garza et

al. (2019) described the mentor and mentee relationship as engaged in discovery and innovation and extended beyond a supervisory relationship after the mentee has matured in the traditional mentor-mentee relationship. The transitional mentoring paradigm is more collaborative, where the mentor and mentee are co-learners, and the exchange of ideas is reciprocal and may continue to develop after the mentee is postgraduate and is developing a career (Garza et al., 2019). Moving the mentoring relationship through the mentoring theory continuum is an active process and more successful with the purpose and knowledge of the mentor. At the highest mentoring level developed by Garza et al. (2019), in the transformative paradigm, the mentor and mentee collaborate and engage in collective action to transform the organization. Mentoring relationships can be blended and transition from some or all of the three paradigms over time as relationships develop. While the literature was clear regarding the importance of mentoring relationships, a coherent understanding of the mentoring theory would strengthen undergraduate mentoring relationships and allow for even more beneficial results institutionally.

Gender

The positive results from mentor relationships were evident in the literature review. The reason females have a higher perceived value of integrity in mentoring relationships than men should be understood through mentoring theory and should have implications for developing various types of training for mentoring relationships (Johnson & Smith, 2016). Roberts (2020) characterized mentees' attitudes toward mentors' integrity by spending time with mentors and developing a sense of their personal and professional integrity through observation in that relationship. After training, mentors can strengthen the mentoring relationship and build relationships with the mentor theory

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continuum with female and male mentees. Motivation to seek mentoring relationships may highly correlate with life experiences. Johnson and Smith (2016) investigated gender in mentoring roles and have developed training for men in leadership roles to champion women in lower-ranking positions. Understanding the importance of gender in mentoring relationships can be used to strengthen the relationship and build on similarities and differences. Thus, one must understand the motivation to establish and maintain mentoring relationships through the mentoring theory lens.

A significant main effect was found when examining gender with perceptions of integrity, with females scoring higher on questions in integrity on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale than males. Roberts (2020) noted that mentees learn about the mentors' attitudes by spending time with them, and the mentees develop their sense of personal and professional integrity through that relationship. Johnson (2016) argued that academic mentoring was the transference of moral responsibility through values, ethical principles, and cultural mores of diverse professions. Mentees' perceptions of mentor integrity are based on their interactions with their mentors. Because the traditional and transitional stages of the mentoring theory involve engaging with mentees to guide decisions, transfer skills, and reflect on work and values, how mentors were engaged with mentees is reflected in their perceptions of their integrity (Garza et al., 2019; Rose, 2005). For this study, females had significant mean scores higher than males in perceptions of integrity. Implications can be made that females in the study had a higher perceived value of mentor integrity because these females were more involved in mentor relationships to measure mentors' integrity levels. Because females demonstrated higher value in

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mentors' integrity, mentor training has to adjust their training strategy accordingly to male and female mentees.

Another significant main effect was examining gender and perceptions of an overall mentor relationship, and again females scored higher on questions on the overall importance of relationships on the Ideal-Mentor-Scale than males. Johnson (2002) concluded that mentees who enjoy mentorship during (graduate school) training are more "satisfied with the experience and more confident and successful as new professionals" (p. 94). The effects of the overall importance of relationships, where female mean scores showed significance when compared to male mean scores, can be surmised that in integrity, guidance, and relationship perception value, males need the training to understand better the personal importance of mentor relationships for academic and professional careers. Although two hypotheses, perceptions of guidance and relationship, were insignificant, the lack of statistical significance represents high means for females and males. Even the nonsignificant results bolstered the need for mentor-mentee training using mentoring theory to develop the relationship.

The literature review supported the importance of developing mentoring relationships. Garza et al. (2019) understood the mentor-mentee relationship continuum and the benefits to both mentor and mentee when relationships develop fully. Johnson and Smith (2016) championed training in mentor-mentee relationships as a successful way to create strong and productive relationships. Understanding differences in perceptions of females and males in mentoring relationships will be beneficial to planning training for mentee-mentor relationships. This training could also establish how female-female, female-male, and male-male mentor relationships develop.

Recommendations

Potential for Practice/Policy

As university leaders strategically plan, the need for student retention and retaining a robust faculty population is paramount. Johnson (2016) and Lindsay (2014) supported the mentoring role's importance and indicated the need for mentor training and development to ensure mentors are prepared to support and facilitate professional and personal growth for the mentee and themselves. Further examination of the role of mentor relationships in the undergraduate setting aligned with mentoring theory should be studied to analyze the importance of moving relationships in the mentoring paradigm and guide future strategies for developing mentor training (Garza et al., 2019). Understanding mentoring benefits provides validation to engaging and supporting the mentor development. Academic university leadership should focus on mentoring theory to shape training for faculty. Therefore, a vital implication of this study should be a more robust understanding of mentoring theory to personalize training for both faculty mentors and undergraduate mentees, better preparing undergraduates for success in their college careers and then professional careers.

This study examined the perceptions of undergraduate students and the potential value of developing mentoring relationships in early adulthood. The work by Elliott (2018), Garza et al. (2019), Johnson and Smith (2016), and Lindsay (2014, 2021) significantly supports the value of mentor relationships and positive outcomes for the mentor and mentee from investing in mentoring relationships in graduate school and professional settings. This study's results led to recommendations that could shape the future related to the value of mentor training development for mentors and mentees for

successful growth on the mentoring theory continuum. First, although the study focused on undergraduates, consideration for mentor training development for mentors and mentees in all academic and professional settings should be considered. The university's administration can invest time and resources in developing strong faculty mentors to build camaraderie on the university campus, coalescing to strengthen enrollment.

Second, mentor relationship training for mentors and mentees could significantly increase perceptions of value for the mentor and mentee. Exposing faculty to best mentoring practices can help them feel more connected to the campus community and create more robust teaching and research skills (Johnson, 2016). Thus, mentor training should prepare mentors and mentees fully for success in academic and professional arenas (Johnson, 2002, 2016; Lindsay, 2021). The review of literature aligned with the value outcomes from mentor-mentee solid relationships, and the higher mentor relationship on the mentor theory continuum yielded higher results for both mentor and mentee (Garza et al., 2019). By implementing mentor training on university campuses, mentors and mentees can significantly influence the perceptions of the value of mentoring relationships for undergraduate students and, in turn, gain the benefits from developing mentoring relationships on the mentoring theory continuum. Then, the benefits of mentoring would be more widespread on university campuses and in professional areas.

Third, as university leadership explores options regarding mentor training development, creating standards for faculty to encourage mentoring relationships beyond the course level advising would increase departmental requirements and help increase completion rates. The vital mentor-mentee relationship must be initiated (Lindsay, 2021).

Johnson (2016) reported that students must realize the potential value for academic success to seek a faculty mentor. Suppose undergraduate students had opportunities to explore the importance of mentoring relationships early in their academic careers. In that case, more undergraduates might seek to develop mentor relationships to move along the mentoring theory continuum and achieve mentoring success. A course of action may include a first-year experience level course, including mentor-mentee training with roles and expectations for mentor and mentee. Also, implementing a review of the mentor training in upper-level courses would remind and renew undergraduate students' perceptions of the importance of mentor relationships. The university's administration can invest time and resources in developing strong faculty mentors to build camaraderie on the university campus, coalescing to strengthen enrollment.

Fourth, as universities recruit and hire new faculty members, considering the university population in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender should guide recruitment to align with campus makeup. Gender significantly affected perceptions of mentoring integrity and overall mentor relationship. Johnson (2016) supported the practice that universities should recruit and retain diverse faculty so that mentors are available to align with the diverse population of undergraduate students. When academic departments fail to represent the university population in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, while these departments do not actively recruit talented faculty representing the student population, all students suffer from underrepresented groups (Johnson, 2016). This ideology would include active recruitment to match the underrepresented populations in the university. The mentor relationships that match the mentee's race, ethnicity, or gender could provide more significant opportunities for deeper engagement in mentor-mentee relationships.

Fifth, the development of mentor relationships in the undergraduate setting can be crucial in virtual mentoring, whether temporary (as in COVID-19) or permanent online class platforms. Wilcha (2020) disclosed liabilities of virtual mentoring that need to be addressed in future planning, including technical challenges, confidentiality issues, and reduced student engagement. Including attention to mentor training development in online platforms could benefit every mentor and mentee, whether regularly participating in online learning platforms or unexpectantly in a temporary online learning platform. The university leadership could encourage faculty, whether face-to-face or virtual, to implement mentor/mentee relationships through faculty compensation, whether monetarily or by other valued incentives.

Future Research Considerations

This research study did not provide sufficient evidence that university experience significantly influenced mentoring relationships' perceptions of integrity, guidance, and overall relationships. The following recommendations were offered for future research considerations:

1. This study used only data from one liberal arts university. Additional data from other liberal art universities and a broader range of students would allow more comprehensive generalizations. Future research could focus on a more general capacity to build on these findings.

2. Future research could measure professors' perceptions of the value of mentoring relationships.

3. Future research could measure where existing mentor-mentee relationships are on the mentoring continuum aligned with the mentoring theory.

4. Studies could measure whether different genders or races differ within mentoring relationships. Culture informs interpersonal communication, and the development of respect between the mentor and mentee differences is a critical building block to the development of traditional mentoring relationships (Johnson, 2016).

5. Future research could compare college majors to determine if differences exist in mentors/mentees' skills, perceptions, and how mentoring relationships develop.

6. Studies could examine the Ideal-Mentor-Scale in the qualitative response method to focus future research on a broader capacity to build on these findings. Interview questions could help identify why mentor/mentee relationships are established with an in-depth inquiry. The higher and lower means of 34 items in the Ideal-Mentor-Scale could be used to develop these questions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine by university years of experience the effects between males versus females on perceptions of the importance of a mentor's integrity, the extent of mentors' guidance, the importance of relationships with mentors, and the overall importance of mentoring relationships as measured by the Ideal Mentor Scale for undergraduate students in a private liberal arts university in Arkansas. No significant interaction between university experience and gender was found. Also, no significant main effect of university experience on perceptions of integrity, guidance, relationships, and overall relationships was revealed. However, a significant main effect

of gender was found on perceptions of integrity and overall mentoring relationships. Women scored significantly higher than men in perceptions of integrity and overall relationships. Overall, the findings from this study contribute to the evidence that mentor relationships have a positively perceived value in educational and career success. Principles of the mentoring theory (Garza et al., 2019) continuum implemented in training for mentors and mentees (Johnson, 2003, 2016) could positively and meaningfully increase perceptions of the value of the mentor and the mentee and fundamentally contribute to higher levels of mentor-mentee relationships as measured by the mentoring theory.

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