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Why Do Mentors Stay? Exploring Mentor Experiences, Perceptions and Motivations within Mentorship Programs

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Youth mentorship has captured the attention of policymakers as a method of addressing

societal issues. A review of the literature highlighted challenges that mentorship

programs face regarding mentor sustainability. The purpose of this study was to explore

and differentiate the experiences, perceptions, and motivations among paid and volunteer

mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. This phenomenological study informs

public policymakers how funding should be allocated within the nonprofit sector in order

to optimize mentor retention. Structural functionalism and Kingdon's multiple streams

approach composed the conceptual framework for this study. Data were collected

utilizing 14 semistructured interview questions. An analysis of the described experiences,

perceptions, and motivations of 12 participants was conducted. The study's findings led

to the creation of 10 themes: role awareness, community patriotism, collaboration,

collectiveness, awareness, professionalization, support factors, perceived success,

motivational factors, and psychological resilience. The results of this study identified that

initial motivations between paid and volunteer mentors may differ. However, as mentors

become tenured, there becomes greater alignment among the motivations of paid and

volunteer mentors to continue in their role. Policy implications from this study indicate

that financial compensation may not be a primary component to mentor sustainability,

but rather mentors undergo a maturation process that leads them toward altruistic

motives. Recommendations from this study are that mentors should be classified as

public servants and be subject to similar policies that focus on psychological resilience

and commitment to a public service career.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to one of the strongest women I have known, Frances Marie Neimeyer-Murphy. As my hero, you always reminded me that I was strong and that my stubbornness growing up was a sign of resilience that would push me through to new heights in life. As my mother, you encouraged me during times of stress and never let me lose faith or hope in what I want to do. As I watched you fight pancreatic cancer for nine years, your fearlessness brought me hope and your love for life inspired me to seek more in whatever I was doing. You never let me stay discouraged and, even now, I still hear your words "you are what I am leaving behind to this world to make it a better place." I also dedicate this work to my father, Patrick Murphy, who has also been an unwavering support system for me during this process and I hope I can be as strong as he is one day. I dedicate this dissertation to my boyfriend, who has been patient, supportive, and listened to me vent as I coped with every revision process and stood by my side as I grieved my mother's death. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my Jaguars kids that I love like my own sons and daughters. You have stuck by my side through thick and thin, celebration and failure, and I can't wait to see how we forward on your grandmother's (my mother's) legacy and change the world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

This study explored the distinct experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. The purpose of this study was to explore how the experiences of these two types of mentors, their perceptions of effectiveness, and their expressed motivations correspond to those of the organization in which they serve. The study served to fill a gap in the literature regarding mentor sustainability within formal youth mentorship organizations. By obtaining a phenomenological understanding of the experiences and perceptions of youth mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations, the study revealed the motivations, challenges, experiences, and views of each type of mentor. In turn, this then provided guidance regarding informed decisions regarding policy and funding allocations among youth mentorship practices that enhance mentor sustainability.

The findings of this study contributed to a "best practices" approach to formal youth mentorship programs that enhances mentor sustainability. Between September 2014 and September 2015, an estimated 62.6 million people in the United States reported to have volunteered at least once for an organization (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). This population is often challenged with balancing the demands of life and financial burdens while simultaneously balancing demands of volunteering and committing toward the causes of organizations (Haski-Leventhal & Meijs, 2011; Miller, Adair, Nicols, & Smart, 2014; Phillips & Phillips, 2010). These challenges often lead to participant dropout and decreased mentor retention rates due to a lack of support to mentors in

crucial areas by the organization (Haski-Leventhal & Meijs, 2011; Miller, Adair, Nicols, & Smart, 2014; Phillips & Phillips, 2010). With the large workforce provided through volunteer labor, a lack of support for these workers leads to the instability of the nonprofit sector. As the nonprofit sector continues to expand, there is a need for policymakers to understand how to sustain volunteer labor in order to ensure the stability of the nonprofit sector.

Over time, nonprofit organizations have evolved into large entities that are funded through government grants and charitable sources of income. Many of these organizations have become nationally recognized and depend on both paid and volunteer employees to meet their mission effectively. The expansion and professionalization of nonprofit organizations are well-documented (Haski-Leventhal & Meijis, 2011; Lee & Brudney, 2012; Miller, 2010; Pennerstorfer & Trukeschitz, 2012). Non-profit organizations have emerged as the "third sector," and this sector is now acknowledged alongside the public and private sectors operating around the world (Taysir, Pazarcik, & Taysir, 2013). According to several authors, developing policy that supports program sustainability through effective resource allocation within the third sector is imperative in order to encourage the continuance of professionalization of these organizations (Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010; Phillips & Phillips, 2010; Taysir, Pazarcik, & Taysir, 2013).

For example, in efforts to provide asylum to families victimized by war, there has been an inundation of immigrant and refugee families into large metropolitan areas of the United States (Central Intelligence Agency, 2001; Hiskey, Cordova, Orces, & Malone, 2016). As a result of this humanitarian crisis intervention effort, the impending increase in youths living in poverty and high crime urban communities is certain. In response to

this increase, there is a need for funding to effectively be allocated to allow the franchising of a "best practices" approach to formal youth mentorship programs so to promote longer terms of mentor sustainability (Miller, 2010). As formal youth mentorship programs continue to surface among the third sector in response to the growing demands of youths being placed into high crime communities, mentor sustainability is a central issue.

As formal youth mentorship programs continue to emerge among the third sector providers in developed countries, there will be a greater need to understand how to effectively allocate funding to sustain mentors within these programs. (Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010). With the increase of poverty-stricken youth within the United States (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014), several authors predicted that there will continue to be an insufficient number of mentors available to serve these youth (Blinn-Pike, 2010; Butts, Durley, & Eby, 2010; Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010). Policy that enables and empowers mentors within these organizations to continue their efforts toward mentoring youth may promote greater mentor retention and responsiveness to youth needs.

Background

Youth mentorship is recognized by policy makers at the federal level as a promising and appropriate way to address juvenile delinquency. With an approximately 5,000 youth mentorship programs within the United States (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011) and an estimated $90 million dollars in federal funding allocated through federal grant programs toward mentoring (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015), youth mentorship has become a focus for policymakers, yet little research influences how funding should be allocated within a "best practices" approach. Fernandes-Alcantara

(2015) assessed federal funding in 2015 and revealed emerging social policy issues involving youth mentorship, including the federal government becoming timid about providing funding due to the lack of evidence-based outcomes, the lack of long-term sustainability of these organizations, and the need for additional mentors. Fernandes-Alcantara called for additional research into the sustainability of mentorship outcomes within individuals, as they transition into adulthood, in the interest of public policy and the continued role of the federal government in mentorship practices.

Youth delinquency issues, such as gang involvement, are greater issues than just public safety and violence within communities. These issues hold a multitude of negative consequences, such as continued fear for personal safety, increased dropout rates in schools, decreased employment opportunities, decreased economic prosperity and property values, and increased medical care costs and poverty (Rhodes & Schechter, 2012; Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). Additionally, Rhodes and Schechter (2012) highlighted the connection between self-worth in an individual and these societal factors, noting the importance of having a sense of self in order to find resilience later in life. Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, and Grossman (2013) followed Rhodes and Schechter by emphasizing the importance of developing mentorship programs that have lasting effects after the program has ceased.

As a result of the growth in the contemporary youth mentorship industry developed in the 1990s, paid and volunteer mentors have emerged within formal youth mentorship programs (DuBois et al., 2011). There is a gap in knowledge on the understanding of how these mentors differ in regard to their perceptions and experiences of effectiveness and commitment. Gaining this deeper understanding of what drives

mentors' commitments to mentoring is important for policymakers, as they seek to optimize funding allocations toward programs that create enduring and meaningful mentorship experiences for youth in at-risk environments to provide the greatest likelihood that they will become contributing members of society.

Problem Statement

There is a problem with the sustainability of mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations. Specifically, the fragmentation of mentorship approaches among these organizations has raised policy concerns regarding the reallocation of funding from volunteer mentors toward paid mentors. Despite the efforts made by these organizations to serve at-risk youths and promote resiliency among youth living in high crime and gang affiliated communities. For example, in Kansas City, Missouri, juvenile crime is very prevalent (Egley, Howell, & Harris, 2014). According to one report, 362,000 juvenile arrests were reported in 2012 within the state of Missouri (Puzzanchera & Kang, 2014). While it is more difficult to retain volunteer mentors due to outside obligations, paid mentors have shown to have higher retention rates because the task of maintaining regular contact with children is the fundamental aspect of their job (DuBois et al., 2011).

As a result of research indicating that paid mentors have a higher success rate of retention, there has been a steady push for paid mentors (Afolabi, 2011; Southwick, Morgan, Vythilingam, & Charney, 2007; Tolan et al., 2014). An assessment of federal funding for 2015 showed that $90 million dollars were allocated to the Department of Justice for formal youth mentorship programs, yet little is known regarding how to disburse funding in an effective manner within these programs (Fernandes-Alcantara,

2015). There is a need to better understand the complexities between paid and volunteer mentors in order to augment a "best practices" approach toward sustainability. If more funding is to be allocated toward paying mentors, it is critical to ensure that payment of individuals does not dilute the genuineness of their relationships with mentees, which could negatively affect mentees' lasting resilience and foster a shallow clientele environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to investigate and differentiate the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors from formal youth mentorship programs and the level of effectiveness they have on their mentees. Previous research has generated knowledge regarding the various dimensions of youth mentorship and the multitude of approaches concerning program effectiveness. However, some previous research has failed to communicate the perceptions of mentors through the lens of structural functionalism. As political pressure is increasing as a result of escalating humanitarian concerns, a sense of urgency has emerged to understand how to more effectively allocate and sustain resources within formal youth mentorship programs in the United States. To gain this understanding, there is a need to examine the function of mentors within the current institutionalized settings of these organizations and explore how mentors' perceptions of effectiveness, experiences, and motivations influence mentor sustainability.

This study will address how policy directed toward the reallocation of funding to provide for the compensation of mentors within formal youth mentorship programs will affect resource sustainability within these institutions. Gaining an understanding of the

motivations of both paid and volunteer mentors will lead to insight into the levels of egoism and altruism within each type of mentor. Studying the experiences of each type of mentor provides a context for each mentor's perceptions and motivations. Exploring each mentor's perceptions and motivations exposes the lenses from which he or she is viewing his or her experiences. By purposefully considering these distinct components of human capital within formal youth mentorship programs, policymakers can better understand how the act of paying mentors within organizations, which are primarily dependent upon a culture of volunteerism, also affects social policy approaches to the problem of volunteer sustainability within the non-profit sector.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this qualitative study of phenomenological design expands the understanding of paid and volunteer mentors' perceptions and motivations by highlighting the perceived meaning and importance of their experiences. This phenomenological design was used to explore how mentors perceive their responsibilities to the mentee, community, and organization; the supportive factors that enable them to fulfill their perceived duties; and what further support factors are needed to encourage increased mentor retention within these organizations. Additionally, this study provides policymakers and administrators access to the perceptions and experiences of important internal stakeholders within these organizations and provides the opportunity to construct policy that will contribute toward a "best practices" approach that supports mentor sustainability. This study is based on semi-structured interviews with six paid and six volunteer mentors from formal youth mentorship programs. My chosen location is the urban, high crime community of Kansas City, Missouri. This study provides insight into

whether there are differences among the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors.

The participants were selected from local nonprofit formal youth mentorship organizations in the Kansas City community that are registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in good standing with the federal government. Additionally, participants must have served for a minimum of one year in a mentor role with at-risk youth living in a high crime Kansas City, Missouri, community and must have maintained a relationship with at least one mentee for a minimum of one year. Participants who met the above criteria were either paid or volunteer mentors within these organizations. Lastly, selected participants possessed the ability to speak and understand English.

The data were collected through 12 in-depth interviews and saturation was reached. With the intent to increase the understanding of the experiences and perceptual motivations of these mentors, the interview questions consisted of open-ended and non-leading questions based on my research question. The responses of the mentors were captured and transcribed for analysis. Chapter 3 provides further in-depth details regarding the methodology of the study.

Research Question

The primary research question is What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? My interview questions were targeted toward mentors' motivations as influenced by organizational differences among policies, goals, and support factors.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study provided a structure for understanding the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations. Research on youth mentorship serves an inherent role within the development of policy by highlighting problems pertaining to program development, best practices, and mentor effectiveness; however, too often past researchers have relied on program evaluations and meta-analytical reviews (Adams, 2016; Brezina, Kuperminc, & Tekin, 2016; Collar & Kuo, 2013; DuBois et al, 2002; DuBois et al, 2011; Miller, 2010; Sahay, Rempel, & Lodge, 2014). A meta-analytical review is a comprehensive assessment of findings from multiple relevant studies and supposedly increases the reliability and impact of research findings (DuBois et al, 2011). Yet, examining the dynamics between organizational and societal values may provide greater insight when viewing the issue of mentor sustainability through a structural functionalist lens. By providing ideas on how policymakers can aid in mentor sustainability, the framework component of structural functionalism can assist in policy development by focusing on resource allocations that improve mentor experiences and perceptions. Structural functionalism allows policymakers to understand organizational problems associated with mentor sustainability and allows them to adopt a policy approach that aligns organizational values with the values of individuals within the community.

Structural functionalist Talcott Parsons (1956) presented the notion of a social systems theory, later formalized by Barber (1995), which relates that individuals put forth a conscious effort to achieve their goals. Organizations serve to facilitate these efforts to

further enforce societal norms (Wearne, 2002). Organizations that identify and help define community values can then lead individuals to embrace and personify those values. This enables individuals and organizations to align their efforts toward a common goal, leading to desired outcomes (Barber, 1995). Social systems theory, also known as structural functionalism or systems theory, posits that organizations serve a functional role in society by clarifying individuals' goals, defining collective values, and providing structure within a dynamic environment (Barber, 1995). Yuldashev and Sahin (2015) emphasized the importance of youth policy when they claimed that without applying effective policy focused on youth development, this social group will arise into a destabilizing and destructive force in communities where opportunities for education, socialization, and employment are absent. Using social systems theory may explain how mentors' motivations, experiences, and perceptions can influence the social context of non-profit organizations within society.

The multiple streams approach (MSA) complements a structural functionalist perspective by focusing on how policy shifts affect outcomes (Zahariadis, 2014). Since policy agendas are influenced by stakeholders' needs in organizations, a high level of ambiguity is created (Zahariadis, 2014). This ambiguity within organizations running formal youth mentorship programs may lead to incongruent societal and organizational outcomes. A clearer understanding of the motivations and perceived duties of mentors, especially an understanding of the fragmentation in mentorship practices, was a goal of this study. A clearer understanding of the perceptions of volunteer and paid mentors and the reasons for the current fragmentation of mentorship practices is necessary for

policymakers to set their policy agendas. Yet, policymakers often react to discordant parts of their policy agendas.

The MSA serves as a contrasting theory in the conceptual framework that guides the study. The MSA, as refined by Kingdon (1995), views the creation of policy as a fluid process that relies on a strategy involving the purposeful targeting of opportunity. Throughout the policy process, Kingdon (1995) suggested that three policy streams exist: political, policy, and problem. Kingdon (1995) further suggested that when two or more of these streams interconnect at one point in time, a unique window of opportunity opens for the development of new policy. Youth mentorship has surfaced within various policy streams to include criminal justice, youth delinquency, school violence, education initiatives, social services, and public health. As youth mentorship programs continue to emerge within an array of policy initiatives, there is a sense of urgency for policymakers to best understand how to support, empower, and retain paid and volunteer youth mentors within organizations tasked with increasing social capital. This study's conceptual framework is covered with greater details in Chapter 2.

<div align="center">Definitions</div>

The following are key constructs and words that were used throughout the development of this study:

At-Risk Youth: Population of youth living within high crime, dense, urban, and low income communities, or who display individual stressors such as poor academic performance and behavioral problems that lead to delinquency or hinder opportunities for development (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes & Schechter, 2014).

Youth Mentorship Organization: Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that manages and provides structured formal mentorship programs to youth, outside of educational institutions and has various socially based outcomes that targets specific populations or areas of a community (Miller, 2010).

Mentee: A child under 17 years of age who receives guidance and support from a non-parental adult throughout adolescence (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015).

Paid Mentor: Adult serving as a mentor to youth within a formal youth mentorship program, who is considered an employee and paid for his or her time spent with that child.

Volunteer Mentor: An adult serving as a mentor to a youth within a formal youth mentorship program who is classified as a volunteer and does not receive financial contributions for time spent with that child.

Youth Mentorship: A non-parental relationship between a mentor (age 18 or older) and a child (17 years or younger) where the mentor guides the child through adolescence (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015).

Assumptions of the Study

There are several assumptions that were made throughout this study. For instance, the assumption was made that mentors were able to effectively articulate their opinions, experiences, and perceptions during their interviews for the purpose of policy development and that these articulations were made in understandable English. Additionally, it was assumed that participants provided accurate and honest descriptions of their experiences, both positive and negative. Furthermore, every effort was made to

construct clear and concise interview questions so that participants fully understood the questions being asked for complete responses.

<div align="center">

Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations

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The study was aimed toward addressing the substantial federal funding apportioned toward formal youth mentorship programs utilizing diverse approaches and the lack of universal mentorship practices among multiple organizations. The scope of the study focused on the opinions, experiences, and perspectives of both paid and volunteer mentors, regarding how they perceive effectiveness.

Delimitations

The study utilized a phenomenological approach with participants from youth mentorship organizations based out of a large Missouri town that strive toward gang prevention and interventions. After reviewing a study that highlighted the negative effects that short-lived mentorship relationships can have on youth (Southwick, Morgan, Vythilingam, & Charney, 2007), I decided that my participants would be required to have served as an active youth mentor for a minimum of one year within their organization.

Limitations

The study was limited to a purposeful sampling strategy and focused on a large city in Missouri. Therefore, the study was limited to the expressed experiences and perspectives of participants involved in metropolitan urban-based programs. Additionally, since I currently serve as an administrator for a nonprofit youth mentorship organization, my biases toward constructing effective policy to focus on mentor sustainability while also optimizing organizational resources and funding opportunities

served as limitations. My biases also served as a strength in understanding and relating to participant experiences but was controlled by bracketing in the phenomenological sense.

Significance of the Study

There is a need to better understand the differences among the perceptions and experiences of paid and volunteer mentors regarding the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship in order to shape policy that promotes mentor retention and justifies the allocation of funding to foster a more universal approach to youth mentorship. This study added to the understanding of the challenges faced by both paid and volunteer mentors and the importance of understanding the perceptions of each type of mentor so that organizational leaders and policymakers can develop practices that support their specific needs in order to maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. This study contributed to the literature by providing insight into the perceptions that mentors have concerning the lasting levels of influence they have on their mentees, highlighting motivational factors shared by each type of mentor, and identifying how these motivations held by each type of mentor relate to their organization's goals, mission, and vision.

Social Change Implications

The implications for positive social change were to provide policymakers a better understanding of the mentorship phenomenon from mentors' perspectives. It is hoped that policies can be better directed toward the retention of effective mentors. In addition, this study provides evidence-based support for policy decisions on the allocation of resources regarding youth mentoring organizations. Finally, there is a call for additional research to examine other dimensions of mentorship. As a "best practices" approach

continues to develop as result of evidence-based research focused on formal youth mentorship practices, the need to sustain effective mentors within programs is vital to program developments and achievements. By gaining a better understanding of both paid and volunteer mentors' experiences, perceptions, and motivations, policymakers and administrators within these organizations can ensure that available resources are able to be allocated so to support mentors appropriately and facilitate the development of meaningful and lasting relationships between mentees and mentors within formal programs.

Mentorship is a dyadic relationship that can influence not only the mentee but have also can have a transformational effect on the mentor, yet handbooks on mentoring show that little research focuses on mentor experiences and a mentor's perspective (Blinn-Pike, 2010). The phenomenon of youth mentorship is that while the focus is to positively influence the youth, at the same time, a mentor can have a positive experience that satisfies or, perhaps amplifies, her or his altruistic drives and self-concept (Blinn-Pike, 2010; Miller, Adair, Nicols, & Smart, 2014; Taysir, Pazarcik, & Taysir, 2013). By understanding the differences among the perspectives, motivations, and experiences of both paid and volunteer mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations, these organizations are able to support both types of mentors effectively.

If mentors are retained within a particular organization, the ability for that organization to establish more lasting and meaningful mentor relationships will increase, leading to an increase in the opportunity to provide a positive relationship and role model for more youths within the community served. If an organization has the ability to expand its outreach efforts and establish more lasting and effective mentorship relationships with

youths without placing too high of a burden on the mentor that leads to "burnout," more youths will have opportunities to confront problems and obstacles throughout their adolescence with a positive support system that can facilitate hope, a positive outlook on life, social belonging, academic performance, leadership opportunities, and structured lives. These factors are influential in reducing school dropout rates, reducing gang affiliation, and reducing the likelihood for delinquency. As the number of volunteers in the third sector continue to decrease within the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016) and as the numbers of youths living in poverty and in low-socio economic urban communities continues to increase (Central Intelligence Agency, 2001; Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014), the opportunity of policymakers to gain a better understanding of both paid and volunteer mentors' realities and motivations can contribute toward the continuous development of a "best practices" approach to formal youth mentoring programs. Policy agendas should actively address mentor sustainability and effective resource allocation.

Summary

Youth mentorship is a growing industry among nonprofit and government funded organizations. These organizations are charged with accomplishing their missions while addressing challenges, such as mentor recruitment and retention. Since the development of today's youth is imperative to the future of society, there is a need to understand mentorship and how mentors perceive their own effectiveness. This understanding provides an expansion of knowledge to better address policy and practical issues at the organizational level, such as mentor retention, morale, and motivations. Understanding by organizational leaders and policymakers leads to mentors providing effective and

longer lasting service to their mentees. Service is the primary goal of mentoring and mentorship organizations. This study allows for an evolution of the historically-rigid and statistical classification of effectiveness that has burdened organizations seeking to qualify for government and organizational funding. This study complements the cold statistical classifications of what constitutes effectiveness and by adding effectiveness as defined from the mentors' perspectives.

Chapter 2 follows with a literature review to enrich the reader with an understanding of youth mentorship practices, policy agendas, and Kingdon's three streams. Throughout Chapter 2, the problem within youth mentorship programs, the overlap of a second problematic stream concerning societal trends, and the surfacing political stream will be analyzed and discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Youth mentors are important toward fostering positive environments and role models for youths. Some youth research authors identified that the longevity of commitment from mentors is directly correlated to the impact they have on a mentee (DuBois et al., 2002; Miller, 2010). Therefore, the importance for youth mentorship organizations to sustain mentors long-term is vital to mentorship effectiveness. The sustainability of youth mentors within community-based nonprofit formal youth mentorship programs continues to challenge program administrators and policymakers. This emerging problem has led to the evolution of two types of mentors: paid and volunteer. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs in Kansas City, Missouri. This foundational understanding provided insight into the differences between paid and volunteer mentors and provides supporting evidence toward the improvement of policy that enhances mentor sustainability within these programs. The themes supported by the findings of each mentor's experiences, perceptions, and motivations provide a basis of understanding to inform policymakers how they can best implement policies within this segment of the mentorship workforce to best support those serving youths.

As noted by many authors, over the past two decades, mentorship has evolved into a viable solution across multiple policy realms to address societal problems, such as juvenile crime, criminal justice, education, behavioral development, and public health (Adams, 2016; DuBois et al., 2011; Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015; Jones & Deutsch, 2013;

Liang & Rhodes, 2007; Rhodes & Lowe, 2008). Over time, economic development has

led to the evolution of a new emerging sector in society that intertwines with the public

and private sectors that are essential to the functioning of society. This third sector is

known as the nonprofit sector and embraces a different value system that does not

necessarily align with the economical values of the private and public sectors. Constructs

such as philanthropy, altruism, and volunteerism challenge the cultural components that

social actors within society use to find meaning in notions such as success or satisfaction

(Taysir et al. 2013). The continuous development of the nonprofit sector has influence

over the public and private sectors which can then impact the functionalism of society.

Youth outreach is an area of focus for the nonprofit sector, as many youth

mentorship organizations are community-based nonprofits (Miller, 2010). In a

quantitative study that examined the relationship between volunteers and victim

responsibility, Allred, King, and Valentin found that volunteers are more engaged when

the persons they serve do not have control over their circumstances (2014). These

researchers also focused on the influence that a volunteer's perception has on their choice

of engagement. The findings from these researchers are relevant to my study because,

while they highlight a relationship between volunteer motivation and perception of those

being served, the findings also highlight a gap in the literature regarding whether this

motivation is consistent for paid workers serving others in need. As the nonprofit sector

continues to grow, it continues to evolve into an established entity of the economy. As

this new economic sector becomes more established, its' impact on the economy

increases. There is a need to gain an understanding of the motivations of committed

youth mentors serving as part of this nonprofit workforce. With an understanding of the

experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors within these nonprofit organizations, policymakers may be better informed in policy decisions related to ensuring the stability of the third sector and sustainability of each type of mentor within nonprofit organizations.

While youth mentorship has gained momentum over the last several decades, the sustainability of mentors within programs is directly correlated with program effectiveness (DuBois et al. 2002; Miller, 2010). The lack of commitment from a mentor during a dyadic relationship with a mentee in a program can negatively impact a youth, leading to feelings of abandonment (DuBois et al, 2002). There is a need for youth mentors as organizations are continuously challenged with sustaining these volunteers (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015; Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010). Cornelis, Hiel, and Cremer (2013) posited that understanding the motivations of a volunteer is one key area that affects sustainability and program effectiveness.

There is a lack of understanding regarding the perceptions of mentors and the need for additional research to explore mentorship from a mentor's point of view (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015; Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010). For instance, Fernandes-Alcantara (2015) identified the trend of organizations allocating funding to employ youth mentors to overcome the challenge of sustainability and highlighted two types of mentors: paid and volunteer. There is a gap in the research on how each of these mentors differ and how their experiences, perceptions, and motivations may vary. For policymakers to make informed decisions as to how to effectively allocate resources to support and sustain these types of mentors within nonprofit formal youth mentorship

programs, an understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of both paid and volunteer mentors is needed.

Structure of the Review

This chapter begins by describing the approach in which the literature was searched and reviewed. This is followed by support for the conceptual framework selected for the study. A synopsis of the literature includes a comprehensive review of the constructs of youth mentorship, the emergence of youth mentorship in response to perceptions of juvenile crime, policy agenda and trends involving the development of youth mentorship, and the franchising of mentorship within the United States. Additionally, volunteerism and the emergence of the third sector is discussed. This is followed by concerns leading to the need for the continuation of effective mentorship practices to include urbanization and the impact of global crisis humanitarian efforts and the power that policy has over program sustainability. This chapter concludes with a summary and transition into Chapter 3.

Literature Search Strategy

The following databases were used during a review of the literature: Academic Search Complete, EBSCOHost, Google Scholar, SAGE Premier, Thoreau, and ProQuest. Key search terms and combinations thereof used include youth mentorship, youth policy, mentorship, volunteerism, public policy on professional mentors, formal mentorship, at-risk youth, juvenile justice, structural functionalism, social systems theory, social action theory, multiple streams approach, youth poverty, crisis humanitarian policy, etc. These terms were used in each database in order to identify and extract a composite of sources to effectively review the literature.

The search terms allowed for a scholarly review for the study. The utilization of government publications and statistics provided current insight on evolving issues related to the research topic and helped drive the study from a functionalist perspective. Social change implications were able to be effectively addressed by ensuring that the temporal focus of the literature review was maintained.

My experiences as a tenured police officer within Kansas City, Missouri, in serving as an Executive Director and founder of a nonprofit organization within this city, and in mentoring over 100 youths over the last 7 years provided direction during the literature search. Through these social roles, I possess unique insight into current emerging issues and concerns pertaining to public sector organizations, providing a foundational starting point for the study. These various roles have exposed me to the phenomenon of mentor sustainability within youth mentorship programs. My firsthand exposure to the various challenges within youth mentorship programs provides an opportunity to explore the foundational principles of this complex problem rather than examining program effectiveness.

Support for the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was informed by two theoretical perspectives: multiple streams approach (MSA) and structural functionalism. Structural functionalism is grounded among an array of theoretical frameworks by numerous sociologists, including Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. This theory adopts a macro-level approach to sociological analysis and posits that the errors in understanding are a product of the over-simplicity of sociological theories that aim to explain social action from the level of the individual (Sciulli, 1994). Structural functionalism suggests that the

explanations of social action exist within the interdependent and overlapping

relationships among numerous social systems that form and comprise societies (Parsons,

1951). Similar to structural functionalism, MSA theorists also emphasized the importance

of interdependent relationships. MSA identifies the interdependence between three

predominate streams: policy, political, and problem (Kingdon, 1984). Public policy is

only able to be effectively developed as these streams intersect and, thus, emphasizing

the importance of timing in policy entrepreneurship (Kingdon, 1984). These two theories

form a conceptual framework that will explain how paid and volunteer youth mentors

choose to dedicate their time within a complex social system. This framework also

informs how various dimensions of support for this choice of continued time dedication

defines societal values and influences the remaining dimensions of the nonprofit sector at

a macro level.

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism is used to explain how social phenomena arise from

social action, socialization, and cultural impact. For instance, Parsons (1951) posited that

a social system is a product of interactions among social actors. Each social system acts

similarly to an organism in which four basic needs are required for its survival (Parsons,

1951). Social systems that are able to adapt and meet these four needs within its

environment, culture, and among its actors are able to survive. As these social systems

develop, they evolve and are able to co-exist independently (Parsons, 1951). Parsons

theorized that although these systems exist independently, they are distantly

interdependent through social actions that comprise the constructs of society and culture.

Parsons (1951) deconstructed the components of social action to the point of "cultural determinism." Parsons accepted the notion of "free will" for an individual actor; however, he challenged the extent to which rational choice is influenced only at the individual level. Parsons emphasized that a social system could manipulate the rationalization variables of actors within a system in order to maintain its own needs to survive. This emphasizes that individuals' perceptions, experiences, and motivations are influenced through their social system. The perceptions, experiences, and motivations of an individual then influences how they rationalize a choice of action. This theory suggests that the interdependence of an actor's action within a social system is preceded by the constructs of rational choice, highlighting that rational choice can only be theorized under the predisposition of the constructs within a social system.

Robert Merton, a student of Parsons, furthered structural functionalism through exploring the concept of the unanticipated consequences of social action (Merton, 1936). Merton focused upon the inadvertent areas of interdependence across social systems that are often unrecognized until the enactment of a decision in one social system impacts another component of society (Merton, 1936). Accentuating the importance of evaluating expected, as well as realized, consequences of social action, Merton (1936) cautioned social actors to consider the unanticipated consequences within a larger social system when contemplating rational choices in future decisions.

Merton's and Parsons' contributions in structural functionalism are still influential in society today. The overlapping spheres among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors provide a basis for consideration of the constructs of societal needs at the macro level and the unanticipated consequences of policy decisions among societal institutions.

For instance, utilizing a social network analysis approach, Cornwell and Laumann (2016) compared the dynamic components of Parsons and Merton's contributions to structural functionalism and how they relate to modern society. Through a structural functionalism framework, the authors suggested that integrating components from both founding theorists can provide significance to a macro level understanding of our social systems. Additionally, Barber (1995) discussed the structural functionalist concept of embeddedness and its relation to the market paradigm. Barber (1995) directed Parsons' work through a lens of economics, discussing how altruistic change challenges the market paradigm, leading to social change. Considering organizations as social entities, Parsons suggested that the paramount set of decisions of an organization will be within the framework of legitimization toward attaining a goal. These sets of decisions are policy-based and allocative. For nonprofit organizations that are dependent on outside funding, these decisions are directed through public policy. The versatility in the application of structural functionalism provides for an effective conceptual framework within the public policy realm.

Within the ascribed study, structural functionalism serves to explain how paid and volunteer mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations influence a complex social system and are interconnected within a larger system of political and economic dimensions. Through their own social systems, youth mentors choose how their roles are defined. Volunteer and paid youth mentors are social actors who perform act based on the meaning they derive from those roles. Meaningfulness of roles is defined through one's social system and further empowers social actors through various means, such as finance, emotional rewards, access to resources, benefits, kinship, ease of access, and recognition.

The role of a volunteer is often empowered by different variables than that of a paid employee (Taysir, Pazaric, & Taysir, 2013). This assumes that the motivations between these social actors and their ascribed roles are different, leading to different actions, levels of commitment, and anticipated consequences. These outcomes influence perceptions and experiences in manners that will be meaningful to the sustainability efforts of organizations.

The experiences and perceived effectiveness of a mentoring relationship may also vary among each type of social actor. For instance, in a one-year ethnographic study involving 48 male prisoners released from prison after completing an 18-month faith-based pre-release program, Armstrong (2014) explored and analyzed the nature of trust involved in mentoring ex-prisoners. Upon analyzing field notes and nine purposely selected interviews of the volunteer mentors both within the prison and as mentors for prisoners participating in the study, Armstrong (2014) found that the factor that was most influential for mentors to be successful was not the formal training they all received prior to being activated as mentors within the program, but the sense of servitude from purely altruistic motivations and the focus that the choice to volunteer as a mentor was not focused on "helping them, but about being us" (Armstrong, 2014, p. 304). In Armstrong's work, one mentee returned to prison after relapsing a short while after being released. The mentor continued his commitment to his mentee, even when that mentee was serving an additional prison sentence (Armstrong, 2014). Upon interviewing the mentor, Armstrong found that it was not the outcome that motivated the mentor, but rather the act of servitude. Armstrong highlighted the need for scholars to separate themselves from the overemphasis on "effectiveness" of programs and outcomes. Armstrong's work

highlights the gap in the literature in regard to exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of mentors and how this can aid in gaining a better understanding of the phenomena of why mentors choose to, or to not, stay.

While turnover rates among mentors tend to be high within the nonprofit sector (Miller, 2010), the motivations of each mentor may differ due to the perceptions shaped through meanings within the system in which they are living. Armstrong (2014) emphasized the need for policymakers to empower organizations to employ or place individuals within these positions who have pure altruistic desires and are called to serve for reasons beyond their own needs. Armstrong also emphasized a need for policymakers to focus on more than program effectiveness. Additionally, the importance of sustainability is evident in Armstrong (2014), as ex-prisoners explained that trust was a relational process that formed over time. If mentors are not sustainable over time, trust cannot be developed, and effectiveness deteriorates. Public policy has the ability to mold the meaning of these roles within our society and can purposefully enable organizations to overcome barriers to sustainability. Sustaining mentors can be achieved through organizational policy regarding resource allocation intended to meet the needs of each type of mentor.

The motivations behind the choice of mentoring as a career, financial means, or through volunteerism can change for an individual due to institutionalization and policy shifts. McGill, Adler-Baeder, Sollie, and Kerpelman (2015) explored the elements of mentor experiences for female mentors in a long-term program. Through semi-structured in-person interviews with 14 volunteer mentors in a program entitled, "Young Women Leaders Program (YWLP)," these authors found challenges related to time commitment

and a lack of empowerment by administrators for mentors such as establishing reliable means of communication between the mentee and mentor, or aiding with social service costs (e.g., phone bills, emergency money) (McGill et al., 2015). McGill et al. also found that many of the mentors were unprepared for the financial responsibility of being a volunteer mentor, failing to account for the costs of activities and out of pocket expenses due to lack of program support. These economic stressors may impact one's perception of a willingness and availability to volunteer. This shift in perception increases the need for paid mentors which then influences the overall resource allocation for organizations. The political mood, policy regarding youth outreach, perception of juvenile delinquency, emergence of delinquent subcultures, and efforts toward world crisis humanitarianism are all components that may stabilize or destabilize social systems and influence public policy. Policymakers are a part of the support system that organizations rely on to sustain programs utilizing paid and volunteer youth mentors.

There is a need to obtain a foundational understanding of how policy decisions can empower or de-motivate mentors, strain adjoining systems, and influence social action. By exploring the lived experiences of youth mentors, this study will empower youth mentors by sharing their perspectives and giving policymakers a greater understanding of how mentors expressed and perceived needs affect the sustainability of their roles within nonprofit institutions. This will enable policymakers to further anticipate the impact of policy decisions. The concept of unanticipated consequences and the failure for policymakers to recognize the value in understanding the essence of each type of mentor prior to employing what is believed to be a "best practices" approach could be perceived as a premature solution to the long-term problem of sustainability.

Studies Applying Structural Functionalism

Many of the features and assumptions of structural functionalism are found in sociological research. Serving as a component of the conceptual framework, proponents of structural functionalism provide the systematic, macro level perspective adopted within the ascribed study. For instance, Parsons (1956) suggested that structural functionalism provides explanations of social action through interdependent and overlapping relationships among numerous social systems that form and comprise societies. By viewing organizations as subsystems within a larger system, organizational agendas, missions, and practices emerge as potential influencing factors of policy decisions. Conversely, these factors are reactive to policy decisions and agendas set by other entities throughout the larger social system which leads to a consequential sequence of events.

Krichewsky (2017) illustrated the application of social systems theory within the realm of public policy. In a comparative study examining two major Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies within India, Krichewsky sought provide new insights on the ambiguity of CSR public policies and intentions of these policies to support political agendas or empower business interests. Krichewsky applied social systems theory and analyzed the effects of CSR public policy both at a functionalist level and an operational level and found that volunteerism through CSR public policy surfaced as a component of regulatory power that shifted between the public and private sectors to influence business trajectory and goals. Demonstrating the universal applicability of social systems theory to a variety of social action and sociopolitical constructs, Krichewsky emphasized how social systems are interdependent and organic. Krichewsky found that while the general

parameters of CSR policies were government based, the actual decisions pertaining to the

activities in which businesses chose to participate were not directly managed through the

public sector, allowing a sense of freedom for business to direct their energy toward

improving a broad range of societal problems. The principles of social systems theory are

derived from structural functionalism and focus upon social action, the power of

institutionalization, and unanticipated consequences of social action from a macro level

perspective. These principles are the foundation for how social actors define meaning

through individual decisions and how social action influences the functionality of social

systems. These aspects are important for policymakers to understand in order to

effectively develop policy that supports social institutions and furthers the agenda of the

larger social system or governing institution.

Multiple Streams Approach (MSA)

The MSA was introduced by Kingdon and established as a universal theory to

explain agenda setting within public policy (Kingdon, 1995). While other theories

revolved around a systematic approach to policy creation and agenda setting, Kingdon

posited that the process of policy formulation is better conceptualized as "organized

anarchy." By this, Kingdon emphasized that the policy process is more complex than a

single simplistic procedure and involves various components existing on separate axes

that must align in order to effectively create a policy agenda and implementation. Often

flowing simultaneously, these developmental streams are aligned through an

understanding of the temporal component that generates opportunity. Social actors,

known as policy entrepreneurs, must strategically arrange policy proposals and initiatives

in order to gain the attention of key stakeholders within the policymaking process

(Kingdon, 1995). The multiple streams approach identifies three separate components of the policymaking process: problem recognition, formation and refining of policy proposals, and politics (Kingdon, 1995). This theory contains the assumptions that each stream operates simultaneously and is of multiple fragments, participation is fluid, and they can best be understood by patterned events that are not dominated by one set of actors at any phase of the agenda-setting process (Kingdon, 1995). Kingdon furthered that an issue is most likely to achieve public agenda status when public problems, policy alternatives, and political opportunities intersect.

Not Just Chance

While some may view the policy process as chaos coupled with "chance," Kingdon (1984) emphasized that this concept of the policy agenda-setting process is not due to chance; rather, many of the variables can be anticipated. For instance, times of elections are temporally aligned and, therefore, provide policy entrepreneurs the strategic ability to anticipate when to advocate for their specific desired agenda. Policy entrepreneurs typically are aware of pressing problems; however, they must be strategic in how, when, and to whom they advocate their policy alternatives so that these streams align. Kingdon posited that the most effective time to get a policy proposal set within the government's agenda is when all three streams align.

The MSA is critical to the ascribed study as it narrows the focal point of the lens to a functional perspective for public policymakers. While structural functionalism justifies the need to understand the actors within the social system of the "third sector" or nonprofit sector, how those components differ from others, and how they are regulated through the market economy, the multiple streams approach directs this insight toward

the policymaker. This ignites a sense of urgency to examine various policy alternatives in order to effectively consider the unanticipated consequences of social action of policy within the nonprofit realm. In Kingdon's book (1995), a study of 247 in-depth interviews was conducted to identify, test, and gain a better understanding of the policymaking and agenda setting process. Within this study, Kingdon explored the healthcare policy agenda during Jimmy Carter's Presidency. Kingdon found that while policy entrepreneurs were aware of several issues pertaining to health care and transportation, they identified that specific political actors and approaches had to be targeted in order for their policy alternatives to garner attention from policymakers. Likewise, the method in which youth mentorship and mentor sustainability are presented to policymakers is imperative for gaining their attention and competing among other issues. This calls for the identification of past unanticipated consequences from across overlapping social systems and the identification of the differences between paid and volunteer mentors with regard to how they influence organizational values, as well as the extent to which organizational values influence these mentors. With a better understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors within formal youth mentorship organizations, policymakers are able to better identify and anticipate the structural links between the public, private, and emerging nonprofit sector within the United States. In addition, policymakers can better consider policy alternatives that are expected to have the most effective results with the least negative impact on the other forces within the economy.

MSA Applied Within Research

Over the past several decades, Kingdon's (1995) MSA has emerged as one of the leading public policy theories to explain public policy agenda setting, as well as the

development of policy alternatives, decisions, and implementations. Identifying various key stakeholders within each step of the process, Kingdon provided a foundational understanding of the policy process, the actors that dictate the trajectory of each stream, and how they integrate to invoke social change. Kingdon's multiple streams approach has been utilized across a realm of academia research and continues to provide an organized approach to what may appear as disorder to actors outside of the public policymaking process.

The multiple streams approach is used across a wide variety of public policy related research. For instance, Cairney and Jones (2016) conducted an in-depth analysis of 41 articles representative of utilizing Kingdon's MSA. Cairney and Jones found that while the multiple streams approach has been used among a wide variety of public policy research and related disciplines, it has been primarily used in in-depth interview and lacks empirical quantitative testing. Additionally, using a content analysis of recent MSA research to determine the scope of MSA applications, examining the consistency and coherence with which concepts of MSA are applied, Cairney and Jones (2016) examined 311 peer reviewed articles applying MSA testing concepts between the years of 2000 and 2013. Cairney and Jones (2016) found that while MSA is applied across a wide array of disciplines, consistency across its application is needed to facilitate a more theoretical developmental approach. Within public policy research, MSA has expanded from agenda setting to an explanation of the policymaking process. Additionally, MSA continues to be substantially viewed as a founding public policy theory to guide policy research. The theory has emphasized the importance of various actors and influential factors. Evolving from Cohen, March, and Olsen's garbage can model posited in 1972, MSA theory has

developed into an influential and widely applied theory purposefully focused on public policy and governance (Kingdon, 1995).

Constructs of Mentorship

Constructs of Paid and Volunteer Mentors

The main constructs explored within this study were the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. In 2016, the BLS (2016) reported that 62.6 million people, over the age of 16 years, volunteered for nonprofit organizations in the United States in 2015. Since volunteer mentors within formal youth mentorship programs are typically the primary means for reaching and connecting with youth, the professionalization of mentorship within youth programs has grown in popularity (Keller, 2010).

Mentors inherent to children's lives can develop from various sources within the community. A mentor can be in the form of a teacher, neighbor, distant relative, or caring adult within the community who takes the time to invest in a child's life and help them maneuver life choices to better themselves. While mentoring is a pre-existing concept dating back to the 8th century B.C.E., youth mentorship began to grow in popularity within the public policy realm in response to the public perception of juvenile crime within the United States in the 19th century (Allen & Eby, 2010). Once youth mentorship was introduced and accepted as a component of public policy, there became a greater emphasis on performance measures in regard to effectiveness as a matter of concern which provided landmark indicators guiding the creation of new programs. These indicators and rates of effectiveness have developed into the key focal point of how the government decides whether a program is suitable to receive ongoing funding.

As mentorship programs continue to emerge throughout the nonprofit sector, volunteer youth mentors continue to be the primary source of manpower. As a component of the National Mentoring Partnership, Bruce and Bridgeland (2014) provided a comprehensive report pertaining to the state of mentorship for youth in the United States. Bruce and Bridgeland provided future considerations toward further developing effective means toward purposeful mentoring relationships and opportunities. Emphasizing the importance of the sustainability of relationships, Bruce and Bridgeland asserted the necessity for caring adults to be inserted within a child's life. Identifying that volunteers serve as a major component of nonprofit organizations that provide mentorship services, researchers can begin to see the importance of the nonprofit sector within a larger social system. The impact of volunteer-based programs, when empowered through adequate and effective public policy, appeared to be significant.

Even while program evaluation studies involving volunteers have continually shown challenges pertaining to sustainability, the practice across this realm within the nonprofit sector continues to be comprised of volunteers. This practice is continued for a variety of reasons. For instance, after surveying 119 executives from nonprofit organizations who chose to volunteer, a quantitative study by Taysir, Pazaric, and Taysir (2013) emphasized the need for human resource departments of nonprofit organizations to understand what motivates volunteers to work for a nonprofit and design organizational policies in accordance with this understanding. Taysir et al. (2013) found that helping the community was the main motivation of government volunteers. While clear altruistic motives are evident in Taysir et al.'s (2013) findings, egotistical needs were also evident as reasons for joining a nonprofit. Taysir et al. (2013) found that

volunteers sought a sense of individual and social growth and an enhancement of self-worth. This found that those attracted to work within the nonprofit sector are not necessarily there for purposes of egoism, such as financial and personal gain, but rather, they are searching for a greater purpose. Additionally, in a review of nonprofit sector activities and volunteer rates, the Urban Institute reported that 25.3% of Americans over the age of 18 volunteered in 2014 accounting for approximately 8.7 billion hours of labor (McKeever, 2015). This shows that volunteers serve as a vital component of the nonprofit sector, and it is through volunteerism that allows finances to be allocated to other areas of need within the organization, community, and among those they intend to serve. Furthermore, mentors come from a variety of differing backgrounds. While mentors may be a stranger simply wanting to help a youth, they also may be individuals that already have an established connection to a child, such as a distant relative, educator, coach, or neighbor. The power of the volunteer adds to the credibility of altruism and servitude that nonprofit organizations aspire toward.

While many formal youth mentorship organizations still depend on volunteers to fulfill the obligations of their workforce needs, researchers challenged whether the reliance on volunteers contributes to the problem of the sustainability of youth mentorship programs within these organizations. Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, and Grossman (2013) highlighted additional concerns involving mentor sustainability in a program evaluation study for a "Youth Initiated Mentorship" approach sponsored by the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program (NGYCP). Within this program, instead of a youth being paired with a mentor by program staff, children identified a caring adult in their personal lives to be a mentor to them during the program (Schwartz et al., 2013).

This typically required an agreement from a mentor who already had a personal investment in that specific mentee. While these mentors volunteered their time, the program was not always sustainable due to the need for each youth to have an adult with a prior connection who was willing to dedicate and invest time with the child as they overcame challenges of delinquency (Schwartz et al., 2013). While these studies utilized volunteers for effective youth mentorship programs, experts found that, mentors were not sustainable long term within a formalized program setting due to various time constraints, family demands, and a consistent lack of resources for the mentor and mentee to connect (Schwartz et al., 2013). This led to the recommendation that organizations should employ individuals to serve as youth mentors within these programs in order to eliminate conflicts related to time commitment, work obligations, or financial strain when serving as a mentor.

Job Duties of Youth Mentors

In the past, volunteer mentors have formed from various roles within youth mentorship programs. They have been chosen by a child from within the specific program, educators within the school system, sports directors and coaches, or volunteers from various socioeconomic backgrounds within the community (Allen & Eby, 2010; Frelin & Grannas, 2015; Nathan et al., 2013). These different types of mentors often receive a limited level of training if any at all. In a mixed-methods study that examined an Intensive Supervision Probation approach that incorporated "street mentors," Weinrath, Donatelli and Murchison (2016) found positive effects in the therapeutic characteristics introduced by program mentors, calling for the use of this approach in probationary programs with at-risk youth. Weinrath et al. (2016) proposed the use of

paid, professional mentors as a concept to be implemented into post release programs to reduce youth delinquency. Paid mentors within formal youth mentorship programs who are held to specific job requirements receive a salary for the time committed and receive formalized training to facilitate success in their duties would provide a consistent approach to ensuring a youths' needs are met in times of rehabilitation and need. The differences that have emerged within the realm of youth mentorship between these two types of mentors have led to various perceptions of effectiveness based on the mentor, mentee, organization, funding agent, and society.

While both volunteer and paid mentors have the capacity to serve within formal youth mentorship organizations, each role is governed by significantly different factors. For instance, a paid mentor's role often involves a fixed work schedule, a standard reporting location, and follows specific policies and planned activities that have been shaped by organizational leaders designed to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. Contrastingly, a volunteer mentor's role may involve more freedom in choosing when and how to connect with the mentee. While formal youth mentorship programs and nonprofit organizations in general should possess a set of organizational bylaws and policies that direct a sense of integrity and ethics to uphold the child's safety with best practices and background checks, a volunteer mentor within a community-based program may not internalize the organizational objectives as strongly as a paid mentor. A volunteer mentor's conditions of employment are much different than those of a paid mentor and, therefore, their loyalty and drive are likely to the mentee and greater cause, more than the organization itself. A paid mentor's actions and choices may be more dictated by organizational goals and objectives because those roles as a mentor not

only serve to better youths' lives and provides fulfillment to the mentors, but also serve

as means to earning a living. These factors place burdens on paid mentors to maintain

their jobs and avoid hardships. This leads to greater loyalty and interest in the

organization and, in turn, the organization can then better dictate mentors' actions,

choices, and motivations based on the desired outcomes. Volunteer mentors have a

greater amount of influence on organizational goals because their roles can be more cost

effective to their organizations than paid mentors. Volunteer mentors may carry greater

senses of service and altruism which may help guide organizations toward more ethical

servitude.

Mentors as Social Actors within a Social System

Parsons explored various components related to individual actors within a social

system. From a structural functionalist perspective, the roles between paid and volunteer

mentors offer different network dynamics. Cornwell and Laumann (2016) identified

specific components related to structural functionalism that appear across multiple

influential agents within this framework. For instance, they identified commonalities

between the works of Merton and Parsons. The commonalities identified are the

connections between social actors and how these connections cause social systems to

emerge; the level of influence social roles have in shaping individual's actions toward

one another; the temporal component of social action and meaning; and the patterns and

frequency of social actions that occur within social systems (Cornwell & Laumann,

2016). The extent to which each youth mentor embraces their social role within a system

can dictate whether they are an influencing factor on the system or the extent to which the

system and other social actors influence the mentor. For instance, a paid mentor is

influenced by organizational policy, discipline, the need for employment, and financial motivations. While both mentors serve within the nonprofit sector, the private sector is a competing stakeholder to nonprofit organizations and creates the need to provide a fair market value of financial compensation and benefits to its members in order to sustain quality employees.

Contrastingly, volunteers in the nonprofit sector may be influenced by other motives, such as personal fulfillment, a sense of duty or servitude, and a desire to make a difference. In addition, these volunteers may be more apt to experience conditions of anomie, or helplessness, if other resources, such as transportation, program activities, and support staff when facing a crisis, are not adequately provided by the organization. While both paid and volunteer mentors operate within the nonprofit sector, volunteer mentors have additional social roles, such as their professional employment within the private sector. Organizations with volunteer mentors are not competing with private sector organizations but, rather, are interconnected through varying roles. In turn, these organizations within different sectors can empower one another by providing individual needs that neither organization is able to provide in solitude. The overlapping of participation by individuals serving as youth mentors in the nonprofit sector and as employees in the private sector is important to consider as the level of motivation may vary based upon one's values. By exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of both paid and volunteer mentors, the essence of each of these social actors and the influence they may have on the social system, as well as the interconnected systems, provides insight into the impact and empowerment that public policy may have across society.

Emergence of Youth Mentorship in Response to the Perception of Crime

Youth mentorship first gained the attention of policymakers within the United States in the 19th century upon the societal movement toward industrialization (Keller, 2010). As immigrant families migrated to the United States for factory jobs and generational family farming declined, the number of alienated youths began to grow within communities (Keller, 2010). As these youth became more alienated, juvenile delinquency became a growing concern for communities.

Immigrant youth continue to be a marginalized population within our communities. As urbanization continues to increase, youth mentorship will continue to be used as a deterrence approach for addressing youth delinquency. Youth mentorship will continue to be utilized to address youths' feelings of alienation and marginalized populations. For instance, after conducting 112 interviews with undocumented young adults, Patler (2018) explored youth experiences and decisions to reveal their legal status to others within educational environments. Patler found that the decisions and management of one's legal status for youth was dependent upon one's level of fear often dictated by political mood, prior experiences, familial attitudes and mindset, and the level of diversity and tolerance within their institutions. Providing a voice for undocumented youth and immigrants to policymakers and administrators, Patler illustrated the influence that political mood and policy formulation can have on feelings of isolation. This feeling of isolation could be considered an igniting factor to the development of delinquent youth subcultures and an unanticipated consequence of social policy action.

The attention of policymakers on alienated youth from marginalized populations within society is warranted as it is continuously related to the emergence of delinquent

subcultures. Delinquent subcultures, such as youth gangs, emerge throughout

communities around the world and have captured the attention of social scientists while

being recognized as a global concern. For instance, Cohen (2018) conducted a 24-month

ethnographic study that explored the role of violence among northern Thai youth gangs.

Cohen found that youth gangs were most prevalent in the urban areas. Cohen highlighted

that within the Thai culture, gangs followed a social structure similar to class; however,

this structure is not based on economic stratification but rather by geographic location.

This article highlighted that while gangs were delinquent subcultures of the larger

society, these gangs held codes that did not always encourage violence (Cohen, 2018).

They were essentially a new emergent subsystem within the social system. For instance,

the largest gang in northern Thailand was influenced by a female who accepted that the

subculture was going to exist. Providing a place for these youth to call their "home", she

set subcultural standards to prohibit drug use and violence. While masculinity and

bravery were constructs valued in gang leadership, gang members did not seek to destroy

social norms and values, but rather embrace subcultural standards as their own to achieve

a sense of status and belonging.

Urbanization is a societal trend that has led to displaced youth in communities

throughout the world. As urbanization continues to expand and the number of displaced

youth increases, reviewing literature from an international context provides broader

insight into the impact of urbanization on society. There is a need for policymakers to

establish an environment for organizations that effectively facilitate lasting positive

relationships among youth and caring adults. By providing a place where alienated youth

are accepted and feel a sense of belonging, organizations are able to reinforce social

norms of the larger society and decrease the propensity of delinquency. According to UNhabitat, by the year 2030, there will be 41 megacities populated with 10 million people or more, and the world will be 60 percent urbanized (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2016). With these expansive trends of urbanization, youth will continue to be a marginalized population within our communities. If policymakers are not able to allocate funding effectively to sustain youth mentors and cater to youth needs that empower them within the larger society, delinquent subcultures will continue to form.

As time progresses, the concept of mentorship continues to be molded to meet the trending needs of policymakers. For instance, initially youth mentorship programs were geared toward developing positive social bonds among youth to disrupt delinquent behavior under the premise that youth felt alienated which led to the prevalence of delinquent subcultures in communities that were not accustomed to the presence of gangs and youth truancy. The rapid emergence and perception of youth delinquency has escalated through events such as 282 mass public shootings between 1970 and 2014 (Silva & Capella, 2018), 105 incidents of educational based school shooting incidents between the years of 2000 and 2017 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.), and a 13 percent increase of gang related homicide between 2009 to 2012 (National Gang Center, n.d.). Events captured by the media escalated into an unknown territory for society and fear among the public which, for policy entrepreneurs, opened a window of opportunity to convince policymakers that youth delinquency was a problem exposed through the practices of the criminal justice system. In a comparative analysis of the agenda setting function of media coverage focused on mass shootings, Silva and Capella (2018) posited that a disproportionate amount of media focused on school shootings and lone-wolf

terrorist shootings over time is indicative of motives related to efforts in public policy

agenda setting and using media coverage to influence public perceptions of risk, profiling

toward future perpetrators, and security events. The strategically focused broadcasting of

these events has not only raised cause to various policy approaches in regard to

addressing alienated youth and juvenile delinquency, but it continues to keep the problem

stream alive in which youth mentorship policy agenda can couple with policy and

political streams for the enactment on policy toward programs. This concern has

expanded into realms of other policy agendas, including public health and education. The

solution to these public issues constantly presented to policymakers is to allocate

government funding toward youth mentorship programs.

Public Health Policy Concerns

Although mentorship programs have already been in existence, fiscal resources

continue to be a concern for program administrators affecting the allocation toward the

development, formalization, and sustainment of these programs (Miller, 2010). As

delinquency and subcultures continued to emerge, public outcry focused on gang

violence gained the attention of policy entrepreneurs. Overtime, policy entrepreneurs

have found ways to frame these problems in contexts that placed them onto the agenda of

policymakers. For instance, Bond and Gebo (2014) declared that youth gangs and

violence were indeed a public health policy concern. This framed the problem of juvenile

delinquency in a context that policymakers could understand and declare that they are

addressing in the name of public health. Resembling Kingdon's (1984) emphasis on

proper problem categorization to garner the attention of policymakers, the framing of

problem solutions among a variety of arenas to best fit onto the agenda is a product of art

created by policy entrepreneurs that must be made clear and acknowledged. This helps in understanding the climate in which policymakers have either accepted and embraced or rejected mentorship research and shaped policy in the past. This evolutionary process of policy development and its impact across a multitude of arenas is one important notion to understanding the power of social action in the nonprofit sector as it develops into an integral component of the larger economic system.

When framing the problem of youth delinquency as a public health concern, the concept of youth mentorship emerges as a solution that provides a strong support system to encourage positive development during adolescence. As youth mentorship began to gain the attention of policymakers as a viable solution to the public health concern of juvenile delinquency, program evaluations began to prompt examining the effectiveness of various mentorship programs. As program evaluations became more prevalent, scholars began to conduct exploratory studies. For instance, as Rhodes and Lowe (2008) emphasized, statistical significance does not always mean practical significance and highlighted the importance of acknowledging the natural negative trajectory of adolescents. Rhodes and Lowe further emphasized the importance of policymakers and program directors to take into account that adolescents naturally have a negative trajectory in regard to following social norms as they cultivate their personalities and mature into adulthood. This indicates that the meaningfulness and positive impact of a mentorship relationship cannot be solely measured through growth indicators or quantitative variables, but rather, the significance of the relationship is also weighted by the qualitative components, such as internalized values, social awareness, self-confidence, and happiness within difficult environments.

While Rhodes and Lowe (2008) defended mentorship programs and emphasized the need for more qualitative programs to understand the essence of these meaningful relationships, Medina, Ralphs, and Aldridge (2012) conducted a qualitative program evaluation focused on youth at risk of becoming gang members due to their affiliations in an England City highlighting whether mentorship is cost effective approach to reaching at-risk youth. Duwe and Johnson (2016) analyzed and evaluated a program consisting of volunteer mentors and the effects it had on recidivism rates of offenders. Duwe and Johnson (2016) found that utilizing volunteers can reduce recidivism and is valuable to programs if they do not require additional costs. The funding component is a continuous challenge for policymakers making decisions and justifying where to allocate limited fiscal resources. There is a constant need for policymakers to know how to optimize organizational resources for the end results of effectiveness. Researchers have weighed the importance of the financial component when evaluating program effectiveness amongst youth mentorship programs.

Highlighting the importance of problem presentation in health policy and exposing the problem stream when advocating for policy initiatives, Bacchi (2016) cautioned health policymakers to consider the assumptions of positivism within this community of practitioners when analyzing a "problem." Bacchi challenged policymakers to reconsider the common assumption that a problem is a starting point and instead posits that problems are created, defined, interpreted, assumed, and framed within the development process of policy itself. Advocating for a poststructuralist approach, Bacchi focused on the practice of problemization and calls for the need for deep evaluation in order to overcome assumptions and political manipulations of problem

formations within the problem stream. Bacchi's notion challenges scholars to not only examine policy initiatives and how their problems were framed and defined, but also one's own products in which they formulate. Bacchi's work is significant in the fact that she calls for the need to explore the essence of a problem and ensure it is truly a problem, prior to exposing it to the policy development process. The emphasis on the shaping of problems in policy development practices is related to the notion of Kingdon's work in 1984 on the MSA and the notion of policy entrepreneurs. Since health policy is of constant concern, and the constant positivist approach to medical research in relation to testing hypothesis, building off findings, and using quantitative measures to find solutions, scholars should remain cognizant that the underlying cause to the lack of uniformity in the youth mentorship realm may be the lack of investment in qualitative components that enable policymakers to understand a mentor's experiences, perceptions and motivations. By understanding why mentors stay, evaluative practices to further a best practices approach for youth mentorship programs can be directed toward specific measures that are understood to produce sustainable environments for mentors in the long term.

School Safety Policy Concerns

In addition to public health, youth mentorship gained the attention of policymakers and earned its way on the agenda as a legitimate solution in the realm of school safety. The National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) published a report in 2013 proclaiming that the concern for youth gangs within educational institutions is increasing. This leads to a sense of urgency to address safety within schools and caters to political agendas involving education and student wellbeing. Additionally, as youth with street

gang affiliations carry their criminal activities into schools, it was found that underage gang members pose serious issues for educators, law enforcement officers, and youth service professionals (NGIC, 2013). With 88 percent of gangs reported as street gangs, the NGIC (2013) found that neighborhood-based street gangs pose the greatest threat and violence to communities, emphasizing that this should be of a national concern. The publications of these findings urge policymakers to address concerns related to school safety and gangs within our educational institutions. These findings also highlighted the need for policymakers to find a solution to juvenile delinquency at the national level.

The National Gang Intelligence Center (2013) found that approximately 80 percent of survey respondents indicated that gangs are present in the public-school system within their jurisdiction. Fifty-four percent of respondents reported that gangs in the school system pose a moderate to serious threat. By providing these reports from survey respondents at the national level, policymakers not only read about what their constituents concerns may be focused upon, but also anticipate what consequences may emerge if a solution to the problem of youth delinquency and gang involvement is not addressed. By stressing that drugs and gun involvement are among the highest crimes within our schools, associated events, such as Columbine, could be considered the ongoing consequences if policymakers fail to address this public concern. The NGIC continuing to examine the associations among gang presence and crime levels within schools, on school yards, or within an immediate proximity to school grounds, caters to the emotional ties that policymakers may have in regard to school safety, education, public health, and criminal justice. By integrating school and educational components within the findings, the NGIC gains the attention of a multitude of actors within public

policy who hold specific political agendas in order to further ensure that a solution is

being sought and, therefore, the problem gains enough power to be placed and remain on

the agenda.

As youth mentorship programs expand, large program evaluations continue to

emerge. For instance, Dubois, Nelsons, Rhodes, Naida, and Valentine (2011) conducted a

large program evaluation study and found that youth mentorship can be an effective

intervention approach for cognitive development, identification, and social-emotional

development. This furthers the importance of these programs to be considered on agendas

involving public health and youth development. Eby et al. (2013) asserted that youth

delinquency is often due to a lack of resources in communities and schools, furthering

that mentorship fills the void of alienation for youth within these communities. These

findings suggest that as communities continue to become more divers, the practice of

mentorship for youth is a viable solution to reduce the effects of anticipated urbanization.

Youth Mentorship as a Policy Alternative to Reduce Recidivism

When exploring policy through the Criminal Justice System, a wide array of

concerns can surface involving large funding requirements from various levels and

governing agencies. While youth development is of social importance, due to the quantity

of pressing issues, the concern may lack in immediacy for policymakers charged with

Criminal Justice policy. Youth delinquency will remain a concern for the Criminal

Justice System; however, since Criminal Justice policy tends to develop retroactively, by

framing it as a public health crisis, policymakers are able to place this issue on the agenda

more proactively. This proactive approach to policy development presents an

environment where youth feel less alienated and deters tragic events such as school shootings or other acts of violence by, or to, our youth.

Kelly (2012) explored the role of sports-based intervention (SBIs) within broader strategies for governing youth crime and anti-social behavior with reference to the English policy context and an empirical study of a nationally funded program. This study highlighted the gap in a lack of empirical evidence to support SBI and impact on troubled youth, regardless of policy practices and funding across nations, in the form of a crime reduction model. This article was extrapolated from a qualitative research project funded by UK Economist Social Research Council where 88 semi-structured interviews at three main sites took place. The study found that socially bonding networks were of priority and prominent across programs. The study also revealed a change in program participants and environment, which could contribute toward crime reduction.

Sykes, Gioviano, and Piquero (2014) gained the attention of policymakers by framing youth mentorship as a criminal justice concern by categorizing it as a result of unanticipated consequences of mass incarceration. Within this quantitative study, Sykes et al. (2014) highlighted a gap in past literature identifying the need to examine whether mentorship of youth who have experienced parental incarceration influences self-control and academic engagement during adolescence. This study framed mentorship as a possible solution to not only a problem that is a product of the criminal justice system, but also a solution related to child development and education. Sykes et al. (2014) found that informal mentoring is associated with the increase of self-control for "non-white children" who have never had a parent incarcerated, however, not for Latino youth who have had a parent behind bars. Informal mentoring has no measurable effect on the

academic engagement of adolescents both exposed and unexposed to parental

incarceration. Additionally, Bartlett and Domene (2015) conducted a qualitative study

using semi-structured interviews of 16 youth with a criminal history and identified that

all participants had relatively low-prestige career and educational goals. The authors

found that the family system was the most influential factor for participants, both positive

and negatively, and impacted the child's educational and occupational goals. Establishing

a meaningful and lasting social bond between a mentor and mentee can serve to

supplement and support the family bonds within a child's life. Bartlett and Domene

(2015) emphasized the disconnect in the system of services available to youth and

revealed the inability for children to access these services that would otherwise be

beneficial. When a child's family bonds are weak, lasting youth mentoring relationships

can mimic family bonds and advocate for the needs of the child within the social system.

   The lack of access to services by special populations of youth is exemplified

when paired with a multitude of factors that influence one's status in society. For

instance, studying 191 Hispanic students, Cox, Yang, and Dicke-Bohmann (2014) delved

into the cultural issues and differences for minority students within mentorship programs,

finding that the sustainability of these programs long term is of concern. Cox et al. found

that while role-modeling was only effective if the mentee desires that specific behavior

from their mentor, psychosocial support for mentees was influential regardless of the

initial desires of the mentee. This emphasizes the importance of psychosocial support

within mentorship programs, regardless of cultural diversity and mentor fit. Cox et al.

emphasized a need for additional research in cross-cultural mentorship practices across a

multitude of settings. These findings suggest that mentor fit may be an important factor

for policymakers when funding mentorship programs; however, if psychosocial support is an influential component regardless of mentor fit, policymakers should initially allocate their attention on empowering mentors and understanding what motivates these individuals to stay. This can contribute to the long-term sustainment of effective programs and further mentor recruitment efforts for nonprofit organizations.

Education and Youth Mentorship

From educational performance, truancy, antisocial behavior, to bullying, youth mentorship has been framed to address agendas within the realm of education. For instance, Zimmerman et al. (2018) conducted a program evaluation using a quasi-experimental design by surveying 267 youth from 13 middle schools within Genesee County, Michigan who participated in the Youth Empowerment Solutions (YES) program. Employing teachers to work as facilitators in the after-school program, Zimmerman et al. found that youth programs that empower youth can have positive effects on decreasing anti-social behaviors and correct negative behaviors. By framing youth mentorship as an educational agenda item and combining it with behavioral health concerns, policymakers are encouraged to focus on the implementation and support for programs sponsored by continuously funded social institutions that have foundational program components such as a concrete location, transportation, and an established timeline for meetings.

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Marginalized Populations

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Even after overcoming barriers related to location, transportation, and other conditional needs, many after school programs are still only serving distinct populations of youth that may not be at as high of a risk for delinquency as others. While

policymakers have used legislation in an attempt to de-alienate youth living in situations

exacerbated by poverty, these youth continue to be underserved within after-school

programs. For instance, Ausikaitis et al. (2015) explored the perspectives of participants

from three focus groups comprised of homeless youth who were trying to remain in high

school. They highlighted the continuous concern of the McKinney-Vento Act for

Homeless Youth not providing the needs it was intended for homeless youth to succeed

in society. The study discussed emerging themes from the case studies that surfaced and

should be of concern for policymakers. These concerns include: the inability to obtain the

required number of school credits once a homeless youth gets into a stable environment;

school dropout; the student being focused on survival instead of educational needs;

educational staff' willingness to adapt to the student's schedule for assistance in

homework during after school hours; the student's lack in knowledge of legal rights; and

the student's fear of judgement during disclosure of their situation (Ausikaitis et al.,

2015). The results of this study should be of concern to policymakers as they continue to

contemplate approaches to helping homeless youth. Ausikaitis et al. highlighted the

importance of supporting others who are willing to help these youth. With an estimated

1.7 million unaccompanied youth below the age of 18 (Woods, 2018), nonprofit

organizations and youth mentorship programs need to be empowered by policymakers to

find those working with these populations to have the means and availability to flex their

schedules to help these children without judgement. Individuals who possess flexibility

and adaptability in their schedules are ideal for youth mentorship as this level of

flexibility enables them to be most effective and influential. Ausikaitis et al. (2015)

furthered the importance of advocacy for homeless youth who lack parental or caregiver

support and how this contributes to situations where they are faced with difficult decisions. This is the role that a nonprofit youth mentorship organization and mentors should strive toward filling any missing integral components of socialization in a child's life.

According to the National Center for Homeless Education (2018), there were 1,364,369 homeless youth reported in the United States by Local Educational Agencies. With over one million displaced youth, publicly funded educational institutions are constantly faced with challenges to meet this population of students' needs for success. There is a need for policymakers to instill support mechanisms to mentors and mentorship programs that grant them a greater capacity to serve marginalized youth living in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods and who may be minority to the larger population for a longer extension of time. Empowering these programs to achieve long term retention of committed mentors can serve as an intervention strategy for increasing issues of poverty. For instance, exploring the issue of forced eviction from homes through a content analysis, Islam and Mundai (2016) highlighted that forced eviction is not only a consequence of poverty but also a contributing factor toward further poverty. Declaring forced eviction as a violation of one's human rights, the authors explored the social implications of these acts against individuals and how these acts encourage social violence, such as ethnic cleansing, continuous homelessness and displacement, and the exploitation of vulnerable groups such as the elderly and children. In addition, using the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Childhood Development, Mazza et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study consisting of 1,759 participants to explore whether the association between poverty and child behavioral problems was impacted by family and parent

dysfunction and/or maternal depression. The results of the study revealed that aggression and hyperactivity were more prevalent in children raised in poverty-stricken conditions (Mazza et al., 2017). They posited that overprotection and maternal depression exemplified these problems within children. They highlighted the cyclical effect that poverty has on family and individual health. Maternal depression effects a child's behavioral health which is exacerbated through the conditions of poverty. This emphasizes the need for policymakers to consider youth living in poverty as a legitimate escalating public health issue and explore the most effective ways to intervene in this cycle.

The importance of nonprofit youth mentorship organizations to sustain mentors becomes apparent once the effects of poverty on youth is highlighted. There is a sense of urgency for policymakers to foster social constructs and institutions that empower youth mentors serving youth facing challenging circumstances for organizations to establish supportive environments for long term mentor commitment. Islam and Mungai (2016) concluded that the social work interventions within their ascribed study were effective in three stages to include: precautionary, pre-crisis, and crisis point interventions. The significance of social support during times of forced eviction throughout these intervention stages was evident. This shows that the role of nonprofit organizations extends toward serving youth who are faced with forced eviction situations. With a continuously increasing number of youths growing up in urban areas, the concern for policymakers to empower youth mentorship organizations to adopt best practices and achieve sustainability is important. This notion is also forwarded by Galaskiewicz, Mayorova, and Duckles' (2013) study that examined the difference between households

and venues used by youth in the community. Surveying 1,036 parents, guardians, and caretakers for youth, the authors found that lower socio-economic Hispanic youth were more likely to use government and tribal venues than that of business and charities, highlighting the way policymakers should think when allocating funding to support specific communities.

The concern for marginalized populations expands beyond one's socioeconomic status. Controversial political agenda setting and a continuous concern for immigration has led to a lack of assistance, support, and opportunities for alienated youth. Reporting hesitations in asking for help, these youth lack opportunities to develop trusting relationships and environments where they can feel safe to pursue support (Bartlett & Domene, 2015). The lack of lasting relationships and citizenship can influence a child's perception of access to professional services. Nonprofit organizations that utilize mentors for youth in special populations can help bridge the gap between other structured social services. The importance in the sustainability of these programs is imperative for marginalized youth to establish trusting relationships and advocacy that enables them to acquire additional services needed for them to succeed.

Franchising of Youth Mentorship

Upon the emergence of the third sector within the world's economic system, nonprofit work and volunteerism began to establish a foundation for the franchising of youth mentorship programs. Originally comprised wholly of caring individuals who chose to volunteer to help youth develop life skills, researchers found that these programs slowly evolved into an industrialized approach to address delinquent or at-risk youth across a wide variety of disciplines, including education, teen smoking, drug abuse, youth

gangs, truancy, behavioral issues, diabetes, mental illness, etc. (Barnetz & Feigin, 2012; Duwe & Johnson, 2016; Keller, 2010; Miller, 2010). With each of these programs focused upon a specific component of behavior deemed delinquent within our society, they provide a focal point for policy entrepreneurs to direct their energy toward a specific problem. This allows policymakers to interject in order to enact policy when streams begin to merge. For instance, Barnetz and Feigin (2012) conducted a program evaluation for adolescents with juvenile diabetes in an effort to understand the nature of the relationship between the mentee and mentor from a mentee's perspective. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the findings of their study revealed a dynamic myriad of components integral to the mentor that were recognized by the mentee to include role modeling, resourcefulness, recreational partner, and friendship. While the relationships originated from simple recreational partners, the relationships transformed over time into a deeper relationship that became more influential. The authors identified that the factors related to the formulation of these relationships was partially dependent on the mentor's commitment and time allotted for development (Barnetz & Feigin, 2012). The findings of Barnetz and Feigin's study highlighted a gap in the literature that calls for additional insight into the perspective of mentors within these youth mentorship programs from a public health concern toward supporting youth battling with diabetes.

Additionally, in the evaluation of a program entitled, "Spotlight Serious Offender Services Unit" that was specifically catered to gang-involved offenders, Weinrath, Donatelli, and Murchison (2016) emphasized the importance for youth mentorship programs to be funded and utilized as a means for correctional behavior within the individual. Furthermore, in a narrative study that explored the impact of youth

mentorship on Native American youth, Aschenbrener and Johnson (2017) found positive results in educational performance for students participating in a mentorship program and advocate for a continued focus on youth mentorship to enhance educational goals and support for educational institutions. These youth mentorship programs, regardless of their focal point, rely on the premise that youth mentorship has evolved into an approach that is generally accepted by both the public and policymakers.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters has become one of the largest youth mentorship franchises in the United States. With 114 years of history, Big Brothers and Big Sisters reported serving 220,000 youth in America in the year of 2005 (Promising Practices Network on Children, Families, and Communities, 2009). Providing for a large sample, program evaluations and measures of effectiveness with clients have captured the attention of many researchers, advocates, and policymakers. These studies have led to extensive quantitative approaches focused primarily on demographics and other measurable means of mentor-mentee matching, and outcome analysis.

With the franchising of youth mentorship within the United States, the focal point has slowly evolved to address funding and business cycle challenges. While these entities are primarily nonprofit nongovernmental organizations, economic development is still an important and influential factor that must constantly be evaluated. As widely accepted concepts of free labor continue to emerge, an immediate need has been created to explore whether the dependability of volunteer mentors within franchised youth mentorship organizations still serves as a viable solution to the many societal challenges ranging from youth delinquency, educational involvement, and public health.

When a mentoring relationship is terminated prematurely, it negatively affects long term abandonment and psychological issues within the mentee (Yelderman & Thomas, 2015). These long-term consequences paired with the continuous challenge of longitudinal mentor sustainability has developed into a key component for organizational leaders and policymakers to consider when adopting a "best practices" approach within this franchise. Fernandes-Alcantara (2015) highlighted these challenges and suggested further examination of mentoring from the mentor's perspective. While there have been a small number of studies that have attempted to gain insight into a mentor's experiences, they have primarily been focused upon the psyche of volunteers within and sought to explore components of egoism and altruism. There is a gap regarding whether paid or volunteer mentors are organizationally effective long-term, or over five years. Prior to participating in further program evaluative studies, there is a need to explore and grasp a full understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of both paid and volunteer youth mentors so that policymakers are best able to identify what type of programs and studies are worthy of funding.

Understanding how mentors perceive the notion of effectiveness is also important for consideration by policymakers. As organizations are competing for a scarcity of resources and funding, mentors my experience a sense of dismay when relationships end. One consideration regarding program evaluations is that youth mentorship programs are governed through time-limited funding and resources that are irrespective of effectiveness outcomes. There are consequences borne by mentors and mentees when mentoring relationships end when grants and support by government and private agencies cease. By providing a voice for youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs,

policy entrepreneurs may gain a greater understanding of how to empower each type of mentor in the long-term and be able to work toward adopting best practices approach catered to the needs of specific mentoring programs.

Some mentors drop out due to family needs, job demands, and finances. While some mentors choose to volunteer for the purposes of serving others within the community, the consequence of experiencing personal inconvenience and sacrifice as a cost to volunteering and mentoring at risk youth may not initially be considered and may influence one's choices to continue this servitude (Raposa, Dietz, & Rhodes, 2017). This indicates the need for policymakers to consider supporting programs that provide payment to youth mentors. Without an understanding of both paid and volunteer mentors' experiences, perceptions, and motivations, policymakers will not be able to determine whether there is a compromise in values or intentions of each actor. This study will help policymakers ascertain whether there is a difference, other than fiscal allocation, between a paid employee serving as a mentor and a volunteer. Emphasizing the need to develop enduring mentoring relationships and new social resources rooted in the higher education context, Ashtaiani and Feliciano (2015) emphasized the importance of social capital for youth as they mature and the correlation with facilitating student success in educational attainment. There is a need for nonprofit organizations to expand relationships between caring adults and youth beyond those within our educational institutions.

Ashtiani and Feliciano's work is to not discount the impact and role of our educational institutions. Derived from interviews of school staff and students who participated in a case study within a secondary school, Frelin and Grannas (2015) explored how educational staff in various positions reported the relationships they had

with students and how those relationships influenced student experiences, success, and content. Frelin and Grannas (2015) highlighted that while the relationship between a student and teacher was primarily dictated through curriculum, outside classroom staff, such as counselors and support staff, also indicated influential effects on student experiences. Frelin and Grannas emphasized the concept that youth more readily sought help from those whom they have developed a personal relationship with rather than those who simply possess a formal title (2015). The authors highlighted that trust is critical to the development of influential and lasting social bonds (Frelin & Grannas, 2015). While acknowledging the dependence that youth place on these informal influential relationships is one factor that has already been explored toward understanding the phenomenon of youth mentoring relationships and sustainability, the gap of understanding the servants' perspectives has not been fully explored.

A mentor is a unique role that empowers a youth throughout various years of their life. Ashtiani and Feliciano (2015) found that students who were less attached to their high school teachers showed more success when transitioning to college and higher education. While students need developing and enduring relationships, they need it from outside sources beyond social institutions that shape their adolescent years. Nonprofit formal youth mentorship programs that work with educational institutions create an environment where relationships can develop.

The majority of reported successful youth mentoring relationships is based upon the components of trust, commitment, and a genuine desire to care, regardless of the policy agenda. For instance, in a quasi-experimental mixed methods design, a purposeful sample of 79 youth were interviewed in four Australian schools who had varying

exposure to a youth mentorship program called "Football United" (Nathan et al., 2013).

Examining emotional symptoms, peer problems, and relationships in prosocial behavior,

other group orientation, feelings of social inclusion, and resilience, Nathan et al. (2013)

emphasized that the level of consistency within a youth program directly impacted

effectiveness. Additionally, in a mixed methods study exploring one-on-one mentorship

within a structured group format for developing connection and sustaining mentor-

mentee relationships with early adolescent girls, Deutsch, Wiggins, Henneberger, and

Lawrence (2013) found that one-on-one support relationships was positively correlated

with retention rates of mentors and mentees. This highlights the importance of genuine

and trusting relationships between mentors and mentees and provides evidence that

mentorship can have an impact on psychosocial development of youth. By gaining a rich

understanding of whether there is a difference between the experiences, perceptions, and

motivations between paid and volunteer mentors, policymakers will have the opportunity

to better understand how to empower each type of mentor within youth mentorship

programs for supporting best practices in the youth mentorship franchise.

Lastly, feelings of ineffectiveness in one's mentoring efforts can lead to a mentor

ceasing their participation within a program. For instance, in a study that surveyed 472

faculty members at a southwestern university offering a mentorship program, Xu and

Payne (2014) found a positive correlation with mentorship satisfaction and immediate

effectiveness. Additionally, Xu and Payne highlighted the difference between the notions

of quality and quantity as it relates to mentor satisfaction. The authors indicated that

mentors placed greater importance on the need to see effectiveness and feel that the

mentoring relationship was that of quality in order to ensure job satisfaction and reduce turn-over within the program.

Mentor adaptability, flexibility, and expectations are important for the success of youth mentoring relationships. For instance, examining relationships between mentor attunement and academic outcomes, Weiler, Chesmore, Pryce, Haddock, and Rhodes (2017) conducted a within-group study among 204 mentees between the ages of 11 and 18 years old and found that mentors who have a well-balanced focus on areas of school usefulness and importance, truancy, and academic self-efficacy were more influential in their mentee's change in academic performance than mentors who were either too focused or not focused enough on the specific subject. Since mentees may have differences in abilities and learning rates, the definitions and perceptions of effectiveness or success internalized by mentors may vary. They highlighted how this attunement in mentors can inadvertently meet the effectiveness of a program, and how over-focusing on effectiveness or fixing a child can lead to less desired outcomes. Furtherly, in a study that explored how nonprofits could increase volunteer rates across third sector organizations, Allred, King, and Valentin (2014) identified that motives can come in a variety of forms to include value based (altruistic), utilitarian motives, and an emerging third motive called "extending social network" (p. 66). Allred et al. found that an influential factor on an individual's decision to volunteer was to see that what they did was making a difference. This desire for immediate fulfillment and proof of effectiveness can be challenging for youth mentorship organizations to provide due to the temporal component associated with establishing a strong social bond with a child. However, with the basis of understanding what individuals are seeking and what motivates volunteerism,

it is imperative that policymakers understand whether this same motivation exists among paid mentors. Understanding whether one of these motivations is more prevalent among one specific type of mentor is also important. By providing a voice for these different classifications of mentors, policymakers can make well-informed decisions for policy involving resource allocation. By providing a better understanding of how to empower mentors among community organizations, a best practice approach to youth development will be furthered regardless of the framework used for agenda setting purposes.

Emergence and Impact of the Third Sector

For centuries, an individual's well-being and ability to survive in society was dependent on two sectors within the economy: public and private. The span of control that these sectors held over individuals within society was foundational to the notion of living. The private and public sectors continue to power the functioning of society, organizations, and wealth within the economy. Decisions by policymakers that affect the functionality of systems within these sectors are influential to how social actors define their own happiness and success as well as the happiness and success of others. The matter in which the functionality of these sectors has impacted societal culture has also influenced how individuals find or interpret meaningfulness and their perceptions across a wide array of social systems.

In recent years, economic development has shifted across the public and private sector, and the world has witnessed the emergence of a new sector (Taysir, Pazarcik, & Taysir, 2013). This new sector is empowered through a differing set of values and notions related to philanthropy, volunteerism, and altruism. This has challenged cultural constructs of how individuals, as social actors, define notions of success, effectiveness,

and happiness (Taysir et al., 2013). This sector, also known as the "third sector,"

continues to be accepted and recognized by scholars, economists, and governing bodies

across the world and continues to have an influence on the modern society. As

emphasized by Taysir et al., nonprofit organizations and the emergence of the third sector

have led to the providing of societal needs and driving social change. As this third sector

continues to expand, private companies have begun to help with nonprofit organizations

as an effort to take on social responsibility (Taysir et al., 2013). The recognition by

leaders and actors among the private and public sectors that the third sector is an

important social entity that must be sustained demonstrates the interdependence of

functionality across all three sectors. This furthers the importance of understanding each

dimension of actors and the influence each role has within the social system.

As the nonprofit sector continues to flourish globally, the most significant lack of

resource for organizations continues to be human capital (Taysir et al., 2013). Scholars

have sought to understand the phenomena of "the volunteer" within nonprofit

organizations and found numerous outcomes. For instance, in order to better understand

why volunteers join nonprofit organizations, Allred et al. (2014) conducted a quantitative

survey of 175 individuals and examined how the circumstances of the individual being

served influenced a volunteer's willingness to donate time. Allred King and Valentin

found that volunteers reported that they were more likely to volunteer for a cause that

helped individuals who were not directly responsible for their circumstances. In an

experimental study assessing time decisions pertaining to volunteering for a fundraiser

following manipulations of opportunity cost valence, opportunity cost avoidance and

asking the preference between one donating time or money, Carlson et al. (2011) found

that individuals intended to volunteer the most time when opportunity costs were less and avoidable. The lowest time donations occurred when the opportunity cost was high and less avoidable for individuals (Carlson et al., 2011). Carlson et al. found that motives can be value based (altruistic), a matter of utilitarianism, and also fueled by a third motive called "extending social network" motivation. The authors found that most people want to see that their efforts made a difference in effectiveness and that this is a factor for deliberation by organizational leaders and policymakers in order to increase volunteer rates for nonprofit organizations (Allred, King, & Valentin, 2014).

Generational divides among social actors continue to expand as time goes on in America. The impact that this sense of time and the level of evolution our culture is currently undertaking is evident as the United States continues to see nonprofits emerge within communities. Allred et al. (2014) explored the motivations of young adult volunteers to join nonprofit organizations and assessed whether volunteers were more likely to join nonprofit organizations that provide assistance to those where circumstances are due to factors beyond their control versus personal choices. This study identified that the younger generation is vital to nonprofit organizations. Furtherly, individuals from Generation Y have been found to be more active in volunteering for causes involving youth and natural disasters than any other previous generation (Allred et al., 2014). These indicators illustrate that the emerging generation of individuals progressing into adulthood has already begun to impact the social system to the extent that volunteerism has evolved into a practice that the other economic sectors have become dependent. These indicators also challenge the quest that scholars have recently called for regarding the consideration in employing youth mentors within formal youth

mentorship organizations that, in the past, would be comprised of volunteers. While many youth mentorship programs have struggled with long term mentor sustainability, as descendants of Generation Y, individuals born after 1999, begin to mature within the social system, the dimension of mentor sustainability has potential to shift. The call for an exploration in utilizing payment toward overcoming the organizational challenge of volunteer sustainability has presented an opportune moment to explore the differences in these the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors.

Functional Influence of the Volunteer within Society

With the emergence of one of the largest and fastest growing sector in the world (Bathrini & Vohra, 2014), which is the Third Sector, scholars have explored the phenomena of volunteerism across a variety of disciplines, identifying trends, relationships, and notable constructs that are transferrable into the youth mentorship scheme. Organizations have become dependent on volunteers to fulfill operational tasks. While these individuals have integral functions across social systems, they have also established their value and, at times, threats to the economic sectors, capturing the attention of scholars across a multitude of disciplines. For instance, Rogelberg et al. (2010) found that poor relationships between paid and volunteer workers within organizations lead to stress and high turnover rates for both the volunteer and paid employee. The costs of turnover can be extremely high in terms of decreased organizational productivity, poor organization morale, staff replacements costs, volunteer replacement costs, and decreased ability to serve the public (McElroy, Morrow, & Rude, 2001). This shows that there should be caution when integrating volunteer and paid employees into one organizational setting and suggesting the utilization of one type of

employee to avoid these costly issues. Another study performed by Pennerstorfer and Trukeschitz (2012) estimated wage function using a multi-level analysis in a quantitative study that examined how volunteers in nonprofit organizations affect wages for employees, finding that if volunteers exist across any level within the organization, then wages for paid workers are lower than in organizations that do not utilize volunteers. While integrating staff has shown to have many costly risks, in another study by Hager and Brudney (2011), volunteer management practices were utilized for the purposes of influencing paid staff rather than for volunteers. Recruitment problems are lessened in organizations that invest in training for paid staff members who work with volunteers (Hager & Brudney, 2011). This shows that perhaps integrating staff is helpful if there is a segregated chain of command, and the responsibilities between paid and volunteer staff are clearly divided.

As volunteerism gained the attention of organizational leaders, scholars continued to explore the constructs related to volunteerism and individual motivations. For instance, Carlson et al. (2011) conducted a quantitative experimental design-exploratory study involving 103 people. The study revealed that the likelihood of volunteering is not a function of the relative attractiveness to alternative activity; rather, the effects of time opportunity costs should be considered in terms of multiple dimensions of valence and avoidance (Carlson et al., 2011). Nonprofit organizations' considerations of time frames, potential conflicts, and leverage will decrease avoidable opportunity costs of volunteers to encourage volunteering.

Unanticipated Consequences of Public Policy

As emphasized by Merton (1936), unanticipated consequences of social action can span across an array of social systems to include the economy and infrastructure of governments, societies, and organizations. Public policy initiatives throughout numerous social systems that may appear unrelated and exist at differing intensities of global, national, and societal significance have directed various problem, political, and policy streams toward prominent public policy agendas involving youth mentorship programs and nonprofit organizations. For instance, with the timing of the emergence and continual growth of the nonprofit sector, the gradual declining of volunteers within society (Raposa, Dietz, & Rhodes, 2017), child poverty trends (ChildTrends Data Bank, 2014), urbanization (Central Intelligence Agency, 2001), and ongoing crisis humanitarian efforts, policy initiatives have slowly formulated into frameworks targeting specific problem streams in which advocacy for investing in sustainable programs will be recognized by policymakers and deliberated.

In order for youth mentorship practices to be considered as a best practices approach for these social problems that gains the attention of policymakers, the sustainability of the people who comprise the program must be considered. Interviewing a sample of 187 participants every six months for two and a half years, a secondary analysis of the original Youth Matters in London study was conducted by Gasior, Forchuk, and Regan (2018) and found that perceptions of social supports and family relations were impactful on homeless youth. The authors found that homeless youth having available formal network service providers improved their perceptions of recovering from their situations (Gasior, Forchuk, & Regan, 2018). Finding that social

support from nonfamilial members often offset the common strain homeless youth suffering from mental illness possessed, emphasized the importance of lasting and sustaining relationships for this population in order to empower them toward success and recovery. Establishing strong social support through mentorship would be an implication for policymakers to consider. Empowering mentors who are committed to serve strained populations and determining how policymakers can empower them to remain involved would be a substantial contribution toward a best practices approach as society continues to prepare for future urbanization. If policymakers are unable to understand the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors to ensure the needs of mentors within youth mentorship programs are met, the policy in which youth mentorship is framed may not matter due to lack of program sustainability.

Global Urbanization and Crisis Humanitarian Efforts

Global urbanization is a growing and concerning trend for the United States. In a report published by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, the concern regarding global urbanization is one of the U.S. government's major population challenges to address as the country continues to strive to help others in developing countries escape victimization, starvation, and other crisis humanitarian efforts (2001). By 2020, it is predicted that the surge in youth among third-world countries will further government strain. The focus of policy agenda aimed at assisting this population of youth due to the increasing population trends is evident (Oberoi, 2016; Sleijpen, Heide, Morren, Boeije, & Kleber, 2013). This concern paired with youth poverty trends, serves an economic indicator for policymakers that the policy initiatives focused on how to sustain mentors within youth mentorship programs long term is vital. While youth poverty may appear as

a Sisyphus problem, ensuring environments that offer the opportunity for caring adults to establish positive social bonds with children facing displacement throughout their developmental years, societal values are able to be reinforced even during times of strain. Additionally, gaining an accurate understanding of how policymakers can empower paid and volunteer mentors across each of economic sectors can have valuable insight on program sustainability and assist with funding allocation policy decisions.

Youth living in poverty continues to be an influential and concerning factor across a variety of public policy agendas. The impact that youth living in poverty has on the economy, absent of future urbanization considerations, is an indicator of the trajectory in future policy agendas related to public health, education, and criminal justice. Developing effective public policy concerning the sustainability of youth mentorship programs encompasses various social system components, such as: socioeconomic conditions, culture, infrastructure, biophysical conditions, and institutions (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Crystallization of Policy Concerns

Throughout history, youth mentorship has surfaced as a legitimate concern among multiple agendas to include: the criminal justice system, public health, and education. Regardless of the agenda setting scheme, it is evident that youth mentorship is a current and relevant subject in which policymakers must focus their attention. In the past, the focal point of youth mentorship has been on program evaluations. The choice of scholars to perform specific program evaluations may be funded through policy initiatives that are politically driven due to public outcry of recent events or excessive media coverage.

Policy may be contagious. Policy decisions illuminate procedures and accepted approaches toward addressing a societal problem or agenda. Pacheco (2017) emphasized

the importance of considering the policy process step-by-step when formulating agenda, highlighting the migrating effect that policies can have at the state level across state borders and how policies expand from one another. Strategically, this step-by-step consideration is practical for scholars to understand when formulating problems and policy solutions within each stream of the policy process and applying across various stages. Following a step-by-step consideration may provide evidence of the contagious nature of policy. Researchers no longer need to explore specific categories within one agenda setting framework, as they can universalize steps to gain an understanding that is applicable to various policy agendas.

Researchers exploring the essence of the mentorship experiences and seeking to understand the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors serving within mentorship programs may lead to research products. These products will help policymakers to empower each type of mentor to further a best practices approach from a crystallization of both paid and volunteer mentors. Naturally, mentorship programs and mentor mixes should be adopted to serve particular populations.

The Power of Policy in Program Sustainability

Identifying, attracting, and retaining volunteers continues to be among the most difficult and time-consuming tasks faced by nonprofit organizations (Phillips & Phillips, 2010). Over the years, scholars have focused their efforts on understanding volunteer sustainability across a wide variety of disciplines (Goldstraw, Davidson, & Packham, 2017; Miller, Adair, Nicols, & Smart, 2014). In one case, Haski-Leventhal and Meijis (2011) presented a new model for introducing the concepts of positioning and perceptual mapping to the world of volunteers through an idea called "The Volunteer Matrix."

Through this matrix, marketing for nonprofit organizations is easier and is applied to recruit and enhance volunteerism, similar to a business model. As organizations continue to expand, marketing for sustainable volunteers continues to gain the interest of scholars, administrators, and policymakers.

Understanding the essence of volunteer sustainability and why mentors continue in their roles are the foundational missing components that this study seeks to answer. While previous research has been conducted examining the expressed viewpoints of various volunteers in general (Miller, Adair, Nicols, & Smart, 2014; Stirling, Kilpatrick, & Orpin, 2011), very little research has acknowledged the temporal component of volunteerism in today's generation and the need to re-examine policy practices pertaining to modern social actors. Additionally, more research is needed to specifically focus upon youth mentorship programs that provide additional burdens to volunteers. Burdens include such items as the responsibility of mandated reporting and background checks and the need to have prolonged contact with mentees prior to being able to observe a positive influence or changing result.

Understanding the expectations that mentors hold when they serve youth is one important aspect of perception. For instance, Stirling, Kilpatrick, and Orpin (2011) found that volunteers expect to be able to use their time to "do" rather than focus on administrative tasks. Additionally, these authors found that volunteers often want to escape the formality that is often paired with bureaucratic organizations (Stirling, Kilpatrick, & Orpin, 2011). Perhaps the more meaningful results from these authors were that having no reimbursement or out of pocket expense reimbursement led to the lowest volunteer rates of all programs and that frustration in satisfying the emotional needs of

volunteers often influenced organizational performance (Stirling, Kilpatrick, & Orpin, 2011). These results suggest the need to understand whether paying mentors a salary would offset the willingness to spend time and money with youth or whether organizations should utilize volunteer mentors while allocating funding to truly support volunteers' needs, such as reimbursement for out of pocket expenses for youths through a formalized funding processes.

The sustainability of youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs is dependent upon the development of effective public policy that truly empowers these individuals. Paid and volunteer mentors have emerged as two types of actors within the realm of these programs. As professionals within this realm continue to strive toward a best practices approach for the development of effective youth mentorship programs, the debate between which approach is best for youth will continue to be a focal point for policymakers. The temporal component, as it relates to volunteerism, policy agendas, and global trends, is a significant factor that calls for an exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors. With the cultural shift occurring due to generational gaps, such as Millennials born between 1979 and 1999, the third sector has emerged and taken root as a strong component of the economic system.

As youth mentorship programs continue to develop and program evaluations continue to emerge within the research, my study serves to provide insight for policymakers into the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of both paid and volunteer mentors. Additionally, my study provides insight into how public policy may be developed with a best practices approach to youth mentorship that would empower mentors to continue serving, enhance their ability to positively influence our youth,

embrace their role in society, help develop our future, aid with program sustainability, and minimize abandonment issues among youth due to premature termination of a mentor-mentee relationship.

Research Methods Found in the Literature

Multiple research methods surfaced during the review of the literature. The findings and directions of these approaches were a basis for methodological decisions in Chapter 3.

Quantitative Methods

Quantitative analysis is often used to measure variables such as effectiveness or change when testing a hypothesis or applying a specific treatment (Creswell, 2009; Simon & Goes, 2013; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Within the youth mentorship literature, quantitative methods often appeared in program evaluations in efforts to measure predetermined variables of effectiveness (DuBois et al, 2002; DuBois et al., 2011; Oberoi, 2016; Yelderman & Thomas, 2015). While program evaluations that use quantitative analysis techniques provide meaningful results when variables are already known and measurements for effectiveness are pre-established, these quantitative evaluations lead to an environment where there is a lack of insight to other influential factors. This lack of insight may limit and depersonalize the scope of quantitative evaluations and their conclusions.

Qualitative Methods

For decades, qualitative researchers have challenged the social sciences, continuously advancing what is worthy of being accepted into the scientific community. The argument of subjectivity, credibility, reliability, and other matters have been

challenged, justified, discussed, and re-challenged again. Ospina, Esteve and Lee (2018) challenged scholars in the public administration sector to embrace qualitative research approaches in order to clarify abstracts between researchers and practitioners. Slowly, this approach to research has evolved and earned its place within the scientific community, both paralleling and intertwining with quantitative research approaches. Specifically, phenomenological approaches have opened opportunities for increased insight and deeper understandings of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of individuals, providing for an expansion in the dimensions of what constitutes meaningful knowledge.

Qualitative research involves the analysis of interviews, words, text, and observations. Numerous of qualitative research approaches were identified during the literature review. These approaches introduced insight into foundational components that quantitative studies could not provide. For instance, in an exploratory study that involved three focus groups, Ausikaitis et al. (2015) used qualitative analysis to explore the perspectives of youth attempting to remain in high school while facing homelessness. Utilizing a qualitative approach allowed Ausikaitis et al. (2015) to provide the ability for this marginalized population to express internal factors such as feelings, perceptions, and perspectives and give them a "voice" to policymakers.

Additionally, Armstrong (2014) conducted follow-up in-depth interviews with volunteers from a church-based program that served as mentors for inmates within an early-release program. These qualitative-based interviews provided meaningful insight into the motivations and perceptions of the mentors and inmates. Without the qualitative component of delving deeper into the mentorship experience, the results found by

Armstrong (2014) would have shown a lack of effectiveness in the program. For example, Armstrong's (2014) discussion addressed unexpected insight into the motivations of one mentor who was the subject of a dyadic relationship that would initially have been classified as a failure. When exploring the reasons for the mentor's resilience and commitment to the inmate, even after they had been sentenced back to prison to complete the remainder of their sentence, Armstrong discovered that the motivations of mentors were not to see effectiveness or change in the mentees, but that mentors were serving toward a greater mission and that their efforts were directly aligned with their beliefs. These interviews highlighted internal perceptions and motivational components that influenced the mentor's resilience and mindset.

Qualitative research identifies and provides important variables that impact program development and have future implications for the development of quantitative studies. Exploring the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors and gaining an understanding of the essence of why mentors stay, may empower those who serve within mentorship organizations with a voice understood by policymakers.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological approach was used in this study to ascertain the lived experiences of youth mentors. Phenomenology was used to explore the phenomenon of sustainability among youth mentors, or more simply put as Why do mentors stay? Using Kingdon's multiple streams approach, each mentor's experiences, perceptions, and motivations can be presented to policy entrepreneurs. These inputs may enable policymakers to identify and understand influential factors among mentors in the

nonprofit sector and provide an understanding of the institutional constructs that

empower the mentor workforce and volunteer force. Understanding also allows policy

entrepreneurs to strategically formulate policy proposals in anticipation of opportunities

created through agenda setting.

In identifying a strength of phenomenology, Moustakas (1994) emphasized the

notion of returning to one's experiences to obtain comprehensive descriptions that

provide for a reflective structural analysis. A comprehensive review of the literature calls

for a phenomenological exploration of mentorship from the mentor's perspective, such

that the essence and understanding of motivations, perceptions, and experiences can be

preserved. By taking a detailed methodological approach and seeking to understand the

essence of the mentorship experience, a researcher is able to gain greater insight to both

the internal and external motivations that contribute to long-term mentor sustainability.

This stability can lead to productive and purposeful policy solutions that empower social

actors within various programs and institutions.

The cultural component within social units can change over time. Husserl (1931)

inferred that the ideation for this temporal component is necessary to understand the

current outlook of mentors' motivations. As society experiences cultural shifts, there is a

need to examine the contemporary components of youth mentorship through a

phenomenological study.

Summary

Chapter 2 directed the reader's attention to the problem of mentor sustainability

within formal youth mentorship programs. By highlighting a sense of urgency in

establishing policies that sustain youth mentorship programs, this chapter provided

insight into the emergence of the third sector and the impact that mentors as social actors have on society. After identifying and discussing how the dimensions of mentorship, needs and problems with youths, and policy streams influence one another within an overall systems approach, the research problem was framed around the need to explore and understand the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. Chapter 3 expounds on my methodological approach for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs. The findings of the study provided a thorough analysis of the lived experiences and concerns expressed by youth mentors so that policymakers and organizational leaders are able to provide appropriate support and purposefully develop policies that promote mentor sustainability. In this chapter, I discuss my role as a researcher and how my relationship and experiences with the research topic provides valuable insight and inspires this study. The discussion of the study's methodology includes participant recruitment and selection procedures, researcher-developed instruments, interview protocols, data collection instruments, and a data analysis plan. Issues regarding transparency, credibility, transferability, dependability, and ethical considerations are discussed.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for this study serves to provide an in-depth exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of mentors serving within formal youth mentorship programs. An analysis of these findings is discussed throughout Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. This study provides insight for policymakers and organizational leaders into the lived experiences, motivations, and challenges encountered by individuals who serve as mentors for at-risk youths. These findings and insights facilitate better informed decisions regarding funding allocation and public policy that supports and encourages mentor sustainability within youth mentorship programs.

The research question of this study is What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? My interview questions were targeted towards mentors' motivations as influenced by organizational differences in policies, goals, and support factors.

This study explored the phenomenon of mentor sustainability within formal youth mentorship programs from community-based nonprofit organizations. Researchers suggested that serving as a mentor for at-risk youths differs from other forms of mentoring, such as academic and career mentorship. Youth mentorship programs often exist within community-based nonprofit organizations and are challenged to overcome obstacles with limited resources (Haski-Leventhal & Meijis, 2011; Medina, Ralphs & Aldridge, 2012; Taysir, Pazarcik & Taysir, 2013). Many of these nonprofit organizations utilize volunteers for the majority of their organizational operations to overcome the challenges of having limited financial resources when serving the public.

Researchers are concerned that the current trends in immigration, economics, global humanitarian efforts, and youths living in poverty will increase the numbers of youths living in at-risk environments and without adequate support (Bond & Gebo, 2014; DuBois et al., 2011; Farruggia, Bullen, & Davidson, 2012; Jiang, Granja, & Koball, 2017; National Gang Intelligence Center; 2013; Rhodes & Schechter, 2014). Considering these trends within their interconnected and complex social systems, there is a continuous need for the development of public policy that supports and enables organizations to sustain mentors within their programs long term. Hence, the type and quality of support provided to these public servants through adequate public policy positively impacts youth outreach efforts and program sustainability. Additionally, public policy decisions

concerning mentorship programs could impact societal concerns, such as decreasing juvenile delinquency, as well as influencing the program participation equilibrium among private, public, and third sectors. Through an understanding of the lived experiences and challenges faced by youth mentors, informed and applicable policy decisions can be made. These informed decisions will provide greater opportunities for these programs to grow by sustaining mentors long-term and more effectively supporting youths living in at-risk environments.

Youth mentorship research has utilized a wide variety of methodological approaches, including mixed methods, quantitative, and qualitative analysis. For instance, in a qualitative exploratory study, Samuel, Wolf, and Schilling (2013) researched the perspectives of managers within a nonprofit organization that had experience in executing volunteer partnership activities with for profit companies. Samuel, Wolf, and Schilling sought to understand what motivates nonprofit managers to participate in corporate volunteer collaborations. After conducting 13 in-depth interviews with managers from eight selected nonprofit organizations, Samuel, Wolf, and Schilling found that corporate volunteering introduced opportunities for growth, allowed the organization to take on larger projects through shared resources, and presented opportunity for organizations to solicit additional donations. Their findings support the notion that by adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, the ability to grasp an in depth, foundational understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of individuals who serve as youth mentors within high crime communities can be made and valuable insights can be gained.

Additionally, Bartlett and Domene (2015) conducted a qualitative study involving 16 youths who had a history in criminal behavior in an effort to understand the perceptions related to success and hindrance of their short-term career goals and perceived missed opportunities. The results of their study indicated that juveniles involved in the criminal justice system perceived that those experiences contributed to the development of low prestige career goals and level of achievement. Bartlett et al.'s findings highlighted a sense of urgency for the development and sustainment of youth mentorship programs that can counteract the negative effects of the criminal justice system on youth by maintaining positive influence on their lives. Exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors provides insight into how mentors perceive their roles within the social system, and how their experiences contributed to their perceptions and motivations. By better understanding the phenomenon of mentor sustainability, policymakers are able to establish a system that contributes toward the long-term sustainability of mentors within youth mentorship programs.

In another qualitative study, Jones and Deutsch (2013) explored the factors of the developmental and environmental congruency of an urban after school program. The findings of the study revealed the activities and relationships within the program shifted as the mentees matured and faced changing social-emotional and self-identity needs (Jones & Deutsch, 2013). This study shows that mentorship is an important developmental factor in adolescents' lives. By gaining an in depth understanding of a mentor's lived experiences, policy makers and organizational administrators will be

better equipped to provide for youths through formal and stable programs that support

and facilitate the ability of mentors to commit long term.

Role of the Researcher

Participants for this study were recruited for open-ended interviews. The

interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis. An analysis of

the data is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The interviews captured the

lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of each participant. As the researcher, I

immersed myself into the research, becoming a part of the research, and explored the

essence of the phenomenon of mentor sustainability. Prejudgments were set aside through

discipline and systematic efforts according to the Epoche process (Moustakas, 1994).

This process requires the researchers to recognize their connections to prior experience

and preconceptions to the phenomenon, and mindfully detach themselves from any

notions (Moustakas, 1994). By purposefully detaching myself from many prior notions to

the phenomenon, I was able to take part in a state of transcendental phenomenological

reduction, and naively explore the essence of each mentor's lived experiences. I intended

to unveil the emotions and motivations attached to the lived experiences of mentors, the

lasting impression of those experiences, and how those experiences have shaped their

perspectives, motivations, and mindset regarding their role as a mentor and within their

organizations and communities.

I feel that it is important to declare that I serve as the executive director for a

nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization called Youth R.I.S.E. that I founded in 2011. I also serve

as a volunteer youth mentor for over 80 youths within the Kansas City community. Due

to various community partnerships formed among outside organizations, I am exposed to

numerous paid youth mentors within this community. In addition, I served as a paid

childcare counselor for Butterfield Youth Services for two years while earning my

undergraduate degree. These situations have exposed me to the models of both paid and

volunteer mentorship. This exposure opened me to bias when I proceeded to collect data

from participants. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) posited the importance of a researcher's

awareness of their role within the study's population and how, by being cognizant of this

role and any associated bias, they are able to truly detach themselves from preconceptions

so that their viewpoints are not beguiled. Concerns that my biases could have been

present when analyzing and reporting the results of my study are consequences of mu

chosen methodology, but I believe that adequate precautions were taken.

I experienced the phenomenon from both a mentor and public administrator's

point of view, and my inclination as I delved into the data collection and analysis phases

was that I have a preconception of what the mentors are experiencing. By embracing the

Epoche within this transcendental phenomenological study and intentionally suspending

my experiences, my biases were controlled. One way to establish Epoche is to be mindful

in active listening. Additionally, by allowing respondents to engage in most of the

speaking during the interviews and asking open ended questions enabled their

experiences and perceptions to be exposed without leading prompts or assumptions.

I believe that my passion for the subject matter and drive to solve the ongoing

problems with mentor sustainability as a public administrator is a normalizing force for

this situation. By practicing mindfulness, I purposefully listened and analyzed the

interview responses from a neutral standpoint for unbiased results. My experiences and

position within the nonprofit community allowed me to connect with mentors on a more

personal level so that they were able to be more apt to trust me and honestly share their responses and experiences.

My motivation for informing youth mentorship policy involves mentor sustainability within nonprofit organizations that offer formal youth mentorship programs. Since the organization in which I serve is currently operated by only volunteers, this volunteer bias could have served as a distraction from full considerations of paid mentors' responses related to their experiences, perceptions, and motivations. Other than my current organizational concerns regarding mentorship policy that exposes me to bias, no additional ethical concerns were encountered.

Methodology

Transcendental phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that unveils the essence of a phenomenon by exploring the lived experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994). This study explored the phenomenon of mentor sustainability by exploring the lived experiences, perceptions and motivations of mentors within formal youth mentorship programs. Through this phenomenological lens, these experiences, perceptions, and motivations of paid and volunteer youth mentors were revealed, presenting the opportunity for policymakers to make informed decisions that support mentors serving within youth mentorship programs long term.

Qualitative research typically involves an exploratory and intimate approach to understanding a phenomenon that requires an analysis of factors that are not quantifiable (O'Sullivan, Rassel, & Berner, 2008). Van Kaam (1966) posited that a quantitative study involving an experimental design that limits the environment and analytical approaches of participants by means of statistical methods should be considered as a distorting factor.

In these situations, in order to ascertain a true understanding, there may need to be an in-depth exploration of factors simply constrained through assumptions laid out via a theoretical foundational framework. Additionally, Moustakas (1994) discussed that by exploring the essence of lived experiences in an empirical phenomenological approach, the researcher is able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This serves as both a valued position of beginning and final points of validation for the research as phenomenology involves a progressive process that intentionally eradicates every form of prejudgment, presuppositions, and aspires to a transcendental state of receptiveness and ability to understand a phenomenon at its most primitive state (Moustakas, 1994). The rigorous process and continuous mindfulness required in an empirical transcendental phenomenological approach held value when examining the essence of lived experiences of specific individuals in order to obtain a complete and holistic understanding of a phenomenon.

Participant Selection

The sampling strategy for participant selection in this study was purposive. Participants consisted of six volunteer mentors serving in a formal youth mentorship program who did not receive compensation and six paid mentors who worked within a formal youth mentorship program and received a salary for their compensation. Selection of participants were based on the following requirements: (a) acted in a mentor capacity to at-risk youths, (b) involved within a mentorship program as a mentor for a minimum of one year, and (c) performed actions as a mentor are defined as a key role of the individual's job requirement by the organization. The rationale for these requirements was founded on the premise of the study: ascertaining the experiences, perceptions, and

motivations of youth mentors who serve at-risk youth within either a volunteer or paid capacity within a formal youth mentorship program. Whether a participant qualified under these criteria was be determined when providing answers to three questions on the Consent to Participate form.

I determined that 12 participants would serve as an appropriate sample for this study. Creswell (2009) emphasized the importance of reaching the point of saturation when considering participant selection size for qualitative research. The selection size of the sample is typically between six to 20 participants that have experienced the phenomenon of the study (Ellis, 2016). The goal of the researcher in a phenomenological study is to gather a valuable number of participants who have experienced the phenomenon; however, not to the point past saturation where new insights fail to occur (Ellis, 2016). Twelve participants provided an ideal amount of data to reach saturation. For example, Samuel, Wolf, and Schilling (2013) conducted a qualitative study that explored the perspectives and motivations of nonprofit organizational managers involved in maintaining programs that utilize corporate volunteers. Within this exploratory study, 13 managers from eight nonprofit organizations were interviewed providing for an adequate amount of data for saturation, without losing sight of the essence.

In qualitative research, external validity concerns were addressed through detailed and meaningful descriptions with a small sample of participants (Hennick, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Rudestam and Newton, 2015). Within the study, participants as well as the setting of the study were described in rich detail. Providing meaningful and detailed descriptions of the participants in a study allows for transferability to other settings.

The procedure for recruiting and contacting participants included:

1. Identify formal youth mentorship programs in nonprofit organizations within the selected large city.

2. Contact organizations regarding the scope of the study and seek assistance with the identification of willing participants.

3. Upon identifying a pool of appropriate participants, each were contacted to inquire about their willingness to participate in the study.

4. After establishing the full sample (six volunteer and six paid mentors), a Consent to Participate form and a Demographic Form (APPENDIX A) were provided to them for completion prior to beginning interviews.

5. This process did not begin until the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval and permission to proceed.

Members within the nonprofit organization in which I serve were not considered for the study in order to ensure that my presence and relationships with individuals prior to the study did not serve as an influential factor.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for qualitative research is the observer (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Within this study, I served as the sole data collector. As the sole researcher, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with paid and volunteer mentors who provide mentorship to at risk youth. Participants were selected from youth mentorship programs hosted through community based nonprofit organizations serving within the northeast Kansas City community located within preselected zip codes. These zip codes were chosen due to the notoriety of the northeast Kansas City community neighborhoods having high reported crime rates in the city. For instance, over the last

five years, the Kansas City Missouri Police Department's published annual crime rates indicated that the East Patrol Area, encompassing the Northeast Neighborhood, has had the highest homicide rate in the city (Kansas City Missouri Police Department, 2017), presenting an at-risk environment for residing youth. Programs were identified through community networking and online mentorship databases such as United Way 2-1-1 of Greater Kansas City and Mentor.org.

Researcher-Developed Instrumentation

The first researcher-developed instrument that was used for this study was an instrument for the collection of demographic information in order to provide the following:

- Name (Coded as mentor – M1, M2,…)
- Contact information for follow up (this will be de-identified for confidentiality).
- Gender (Male or Female)
- Age
- Status as a mentor: Paid or Volunteer
- Time as a youth mentor (Minimum of one year required)
- Estimated number of mentees mentored

Data Collection Procedure

The interviews took place at a location that was easily accessible, convenient, and safe. Each interviewee was interviewed one time with the opportunity for an additional telephone interview for follow up, if necessary. This data collection procedure continued until data saturation was reached.

I developed 14 open-ended interview questions to elicit the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of each participant in order to satisfy the research inquiry. As the interview questions were related to the research question of my study, the collected data were nuanced understandings of the essences of youth mentors. Interview questions inquired specifically about the interviewees' lived experiences of the youth mentor; sought insight regarding the influence and barriers faced by youth mentors that have been experienced; asked about specific examples of potential solutions that they believe policymakers could do to support youth mentors; and explored the underlying motivations of the mentor and how they persevere in the face of various challenges they are confronted. Each interview was digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis in future chapters. Transcriptions of each participant's response is provided in an appendix upon completion of the data collection procedure.

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be sought by proving that one's findings are derived from critical investigation and that scientific rigor is used effectively (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The estimated time that was allotted for each interview was 45 minutes to an hour for each participant. If additional time was necessary, it was carried out with diligence in order to meet the highest standards of rigor and care. A digital recording device was utilized to record each interview and each file was saved on a password protected flash drive. The audio files were also backed up on a password protected external hard drive that is further secured in the office of my private residence.

The interview questions were related back to the research question: What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? My interview questions (IQ) were targeted toward mentors'

motivations as influenced by organizational differences in policies, goals, and support factors:

IQ1: How would you describe your role as a mentor?

IQ2: What is the most important part of being a mentor?

IQ3: What motivates you to mentor at-risk youth?

IQ4: Why do you serve as a mentor for your organization?

IQ5: What is, or has been, your general experience of mentoring at-risk youth?

IQ6: How do you determine whether you are effective in your mentoring efforts?

IQ7: When interacting with other youth mentors, what experiences do you feel you share with them?

IQ8: What are some barriers that limit your ability to give the best care to your mentee?

IQ9: What is the hardest part about your role as a mentor?

IQ10: What is the mission of your organization?

IQ11: How effective is your organization at meeting its mission?

IQ12: What could your organization do to improve your experience as a youth mentor?

IQ13: How has your organization's policies aided in your ability to serve as a mentor?

IQ14: What public services or community efforts do you believe would be helpful to you as a youth mentor?

A reserve interviewee list was made by recruiting a total of 20 participants for the study during the participant solicitation phase. Participants that were not used as part of

the initial 12 interviews were placed on a reserve list. If it was determined that additional participants were required in order to reach data saturation, participants on this reserve interviewee list would have been contacted for an interview.

Participants were debriefed at the end of each interview. The debriefing consisted of a review of the study and the confidentiality efforts taken to protect their identity. Lastly, participants were advised of the potential need for a follow-up phone call, if clarification was needed in any of their answers during the transcription process in order to ensure that their response is fully understood.

Potential Themes

Meaningful themes hypothesized based on a thorough review of the literature included:

- Volunteer mentors lack longevity

- Paid mentors place a greater financial burden on organizations

- Paid and Volunteer mentors desire different resources

These three concepts pertained to the research and interview questions of the study. While pre-constructed themes served to guide the interview questions, the value in emergent themes was not compromised. Viewing the study through a functionalist lens led to the consideration of unanticipated societal consequences that may emerge as a result of utilizing either paid or volunteer youth mentors within nonprofit organizations. The concept of unanticipated consequences motivated the need to ascertain each type of mentor's experiences, perceptions, and motivations. This provided a better understanding of what policymakers must do in order to empower each type of mentor within their roles and whether paid or volunteer mentors are more favorable long term. The policy

implications of mentor empowerment and equipping organizations with the appropriate

resources so that mentors are able to overcome their expressed challenges are driven by

the Multiple Streams Approach (MSA) as respondents shared their views of what

policymakers could do to improve and support their situations.

Data Analysis Plan

Phenomenological research supplements other forms of research by seeking an

explanatory understanding of the phenomenon and provides a significant qualitative

component that facilitates further direction for additional empirical analysis on a matter

(Moustakas, 1994; Van Kaam, 1966). During each interview, I fully engaged myself to

observe both visual and verbal cues, as well as the experiential component empathized

through each story and experience shared by the mentors. As the mentors described their

frustrations, motivations, inspirations, and viewpoints, I was able to interpret the data,

identify emergent themes, and accordingly analyze responses to truly understand and

provide a voice for each type of mentor. A thorough data analysis of these expressed

experiences will enable policymakers to make well informed decisions that will empower

mentors and enable long-term sustainability.

Two components of a phenomenological study are the Noesis and Noema

(Moustakas, 1994). The Noesis, or reality, of the phenomenon of mentor sustainability

was revealed through each shared experience of the participants. The Noema pertains to

the phenomenon being experienced, separate of the angle in which it is being perceived

by individuals (Moustakas, 1994). The Noema of this study is mentor sustainability.

During the data analysis process, the Noema and Noesis were analyzed and serve to

foster discussion in Chapters 4 and 5.

By transcribing each interview verbatim, the proper identification of the Noema and Noesis were identified and allowed for careful consideration of emergent themes among mentor's shared experiences, perceptions, and motivations. The data collection process was supplemented with the utilization of qualitative data analysis software, NVivo to organize the data, conduct a detailed coding process, and identify any major themes for analysis. NVivo allowed for the clustering of multiple themes with similar meanings in order to consolidate the results and provide for useful interpretation to policymakers.

Moustakas (1994) emphasized the importance of embracing the essence of description as a factor for one's data analysis approach in a phenomenological study. Moustakas (1994) posited that individuals interpret their experiences in unique ways that shape their perceptions. The phenomenon under study was expressed through each of these experiences and perceptions.

The phenomenological data analysis model is comprised of four factors: Epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and the synthesizing of meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994). The Epoche process, also known as bracketing, requires the researcher to isolate oneself from all preconceptions and bias (Moustakas, 1994). This is an internal and self-reflective process that occurs throughout the study. In order to do this, the researcher must reflect on their own experiences, internalize their thoughts and conclusions, and confront any bias or prejudgments. Within this ascribed study, I have accomplished the Epoche by acknowledging my experience and role as a nonprofit administrator for an organization that hosts a volunteer-based youth mentorship program. I also note and acknowledge my experiences as both a volunteer and paid youth mentor.

After reflecting on my experiences and feelings, I continuously set aside all preconceptions and noted if I began to feel more favorable toward one type of mentor or outcome so that I could assert the self-discipline to re-isolate myself from any bias.

Phenomenological reduction is the act of reducing a phenomenon to the foundational concepts being explored by the research questions through bracketing and horizontalization (Moustakas, 1994). Horizontalization is the practice of ensuring equitable standards across all collected data by the creation and use of lists and grouping (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological reduction allows for meaningful interpretation of themes that emerge from each participant's described account (Moustakas, 1994). At this stage, emergent themes that are not commonly discussed within the literature may be explored in detail and provide for meaningful insight into the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Following transcendental-phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation focusses on capturing the structural aspect of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). While phenomenological reduction identifies each essence in solitude, imaginative variation is the process of utilizing intellect to synthesize each essence allowing for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Through this synthesis, the researcher is able to derive meaning within the context of the conceptual framework that guides the study. These meanings then permit the essence of the phenomenon to be applied to a rational system of understanding. It is through this system of understanding that pragmatic approaches to societal and organizational problems can be derived.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is that of the naturalistic science and does not adhere to the same expectations of quantitative approaches with regard to validity and reliability.

Instead, factors related to credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are

confirmed in establishing the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Within this

phenomenological study, efforts toward quality and securing the trustworthiness of this

study were taken, addressing matters pertaining to credibility, transferability,

confirmability, and dependability.

Credibility

Approaches to the study that facilitate in determining whether the results of a

study are credible include crystallization and clarifying research biases. Crystallization is

an advancement in the concept of the practice of triangulation where information is

captured through various prisms of lenses, like a crystal, consolidating together to form a

holistic conclusion or result (Lincoln, Lyndam, & Guba, 2011; Richardson & St. Pierre,

2005). The practice of crystallization is used among the qualitative researcher to

corroborate various sources of information from multiple angles that may reflect various

answers and create multifarious meanings. This practice acknowledges that one's

perspective is dependent upon the angle from which one is viewing a problem (Creswell,

2013; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Common themes can be identified across multiple

data collection approaches for analysis in order to increase the credibility of a study's

findings. Within this study, a thorough literature review across the realms of youth

programs, mentorship, and volunteerism each served as a prism. In addition, my

experiences as a nonprofit administrator charged with the creation and implementation of

a youth mentorship program, as a former paid childcare counselor, and as a volunteer

mentor also served to facilitate in the identification of pre-constructed themes within the

study. Each interview with participants provided for additional prisms to identify and

exemplify emergent themes, providing for rich and credible results.

Through the declaration of potential bias prior to the planning and implementation

stages of the study and remaining cognizant of any emerging bias throughout every stage

of the study, further credibility and trust was earned. Through the practice of constant

self-reflection by means of journaling, one is able to actively reflect on their own

opinions and ensure that preconceptions do not begin to develop into biases. If a bias was

exposed, it was thoroughly addressed and discussed.

Trustworthiness and credibility were important components to this study. The

Walden University dissertation process is by far one of the more rigorous processes I

have encountered. This study's trustworthiness and credibility were advanced by meeting

the standards set forth by the Walden University Institutional Review Board, as well as

the standards set by the members who comprise my doctoral committee. Referential

adequacy emphasizes the functionality of criticism (Creswell, 2013). Through embracing

and accepting criticism, not as a means to an end, but rather as an opportunity for growth

and insight, one is able to aspire to heightened senses of human perception and

understanding of complex matters. Every opportunity for growth and improvement in my

abilities toward operationalizing stewardship as a scholar was embraced and I approached

every aspect of constructive criticism during this study with a growth mindset.

Transferability

Transferability is to a qualitative study as generalizability is to a quantitative

study (Creswell, 2013). The participants within this study were comprised of both paid

and volunteer youth mentors. With the rigorous process of crystallization and structural

corroboration throughout the formulation of themes during the data collection and analysis phases of the study, it was expected that some transferability of the findings and conclusions would be present.

The practice of rich textural descriptions from responses of participants was used to provide an accurate depiction for understanding. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the mission to obtain an understanding of a unique phenomenon within a specific population of participants, generalizability of data was not appropriate; rather, the concepts and patterns that emerged were transferrable to other settings within similar prisms due to shared understandings (Creswell, 2013). Through rich textural descriptions and the researcher's integrity, the findings are transferable.

Dependability

The trustworthiness of data is imperative for not only the dependability of a study's methods and results but also for the entire research community. One aspect of trustworthiness in a qualitative study is dependability, or whether the data collected that comprises the results of the study is reliable. The dependability of a study is founded within the methodological rigor of the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). While no study may be completely reliable, my study took purposeful and intentional steps to ensure the dependability of study results by taking systematic steps in recording interviews, documentation, and transcribing the data.

<div align="center">**Ethical Procedures**</div>

Walden University's IRB requires that approval be granted for all doctoral research prior to conducting any participant recruitment, data collection, or analysis (Walden University, 2020). These standards are a key component of Walden University's

doctoral process and research that violates any of the IRB approval process steps will not be accepted (Walden University, 2020). The Consent to Participate forms and the IRB application were submitted to the IRB and approved prior to the commencement of this study.

Ethical Concerns

Participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis did not begin until approval had been granted from the Walden University IRB. Additionally, participants were not interviewed until they read, signed, and verified that they understood the extent of their consent to participate in the study and signed an informed consent form. Participants were provided the opportunity to request clarification on any aspects of the study, as needed.

During the course of the interviews, I anticipated that some participants might feel distress while sharing their experiences. In this anticipation, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and there was no pressure for them to continue. Additionally, if participants requested a moment to pause so that they were able to process their feelings, the opportunity was immediately provided. As a trained police officer with specialized training in crisis intervention, I possess advanced training and experience that provides me with additional knowledge on how to evaluate symptoms of distress. The training that I have received within my professional career enabled me to identify participants who may begin to exhibit signs of severe distress and who should not continue for the sake of their mental health. If an individual showed signs of severe distress, the interview was stopped, and they were referred to a local counseling

service through the Crisis Intervention network within the Kansas City area. Crisis

Intervention network resources are included in Appendix B.

Treatment of Data

Data collected during this study will be stored for five years. Participants' data

will be stored anonymously, and the identities will be kept confidential. The identity of

participants will be removed from the data, archived, and stored in a locked safe in my

personal residence where only I will have access.

Data Presentation

The results of the study are presented throughout Chapter 4. Detailed descriptions

and interpretations of the data are discussed. Additionally, an explanation of any concerns

regarding discrepancies found while reviewing the transcripts are provided. Furthermore,

emergent themes identified during this phase were compared to the pre-constructed

themes that were identified during the literature review and discussed in detail.

<div align="center">

Summary

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A well planned and constructed methodology can strengthen the transferability,

trustworthiness, credibility, and ethical safeguards of qualitative research study. In this

chapter, the purpose of the study and its relation to the research questions were provided.

Additionally, a justification for the use of a qualitative, phenomenological research

approach for this study's purpose was discussed. The methodology involving how

participants were identified, recruited, and selected was reviewed, as well as how a

participant reserve list was constructed in order to ensure the ability to reach data

saturation. The methodology for instrumentation, such as utilizing a researcher-developed

demographic questionnaire, the development of open-ended guiding interview questions,

the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection, and how the data was recorded, transcribed, secured, and stored, was addressed. The process of how pre-determined themes were identified and the allowance for additional emergent themes were discussed. Furthermore, ethical considerations related to the treatment of participants and collected data were discussed. Chapter 4 addresses the data collection and analysis phases of my study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to answer my research question. I explored the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of participants in order to better understand the phenomenon of mentor sustainability. This study provides youth mentors a voice for policymakers to hear and to better understand youth mentorship from the mentors' perspectives. This study also identifies the roles that volunteer mentors serve within formal youth mentorship programs.

This study was guided by one main research question What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? The central research question guided the development of 14 interview questions which were organized under topics. These topics were (a) role of a mentor; (b) mentor motivations; (c) mentor experiences; (d) mentor perceptions of organizational policies, goals, and mission; and (e) mentor perceptions of supportive factors.

Chapter 4 includes a description of the participants and research setting. Chapter 4 also describes the data collection and data analysis process and provides insights pertaining to the interview questions. Most importantly, Chapter 2 provides a description of emergent themes, answers the research question, and addresses the significance and quality of the study. A summary concludes the chapter.

Research Participants

The research participants in this study are mentors from nonprofit youth organizations who serve within the Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area. All the participants were recognized by their organization as mentors for youths within specific

mentorship programs. Program directors from each cooperating organization were contacted and utilized to disseminate my contact information in order to set up interviews directly with participants at either a public school in the surrounding area or at a public library. The program directors of each organization were provided participant recruitment flyers to post at their corresponding facilities and disseminated my participant solicitation letter via email to mentors serving within their programs. Mentors volunteering to participate contacted me directly. I made myself available for interviews over a 3-week period.

Demographics

A total of 12 individuals were interviewed. Six participants reported that they received monetary compensation. They were classified as paid mentors within this study. Six participants reported to volunteer time as mentors and, therefore, were classified as volunteer mentors. Five participants were females and seven were males. All participants were over the age of 18 years. One participant was in the 18-20-year-old age range. Three participants were in the 31-40-year-old age range. The remaining eight participants fell within the 21-30-year-old age range. The age ranges of paid and volunteer mentors are illustrated in Figure 1.

The incomes of participants were primarily represented by the under $30,000 income range. Only one participant classified as a paid mentor reported an income over $30,000. Participants classified as volunteer mentors represented every income range except for the $45,001-$60,000 range. This information is illustrated in Figure 2. The number of mentees served by one mentor varied substantially. The minimum number of youths mentored was 10 and the maximum number of youths mentored was 80. The

length of time participants had mentored also varied in a range from one year to 11 years.

Both paid and volunteer mentor categories had one outlier regarding years serving as a

mentor. This information is included within Figure 3.

Figure 1. Age range of paid and volunteer mentors

Figure 2. Range of income reported by paid and volunteer income

Figure 3. Number of years paid and volunteer mentors served
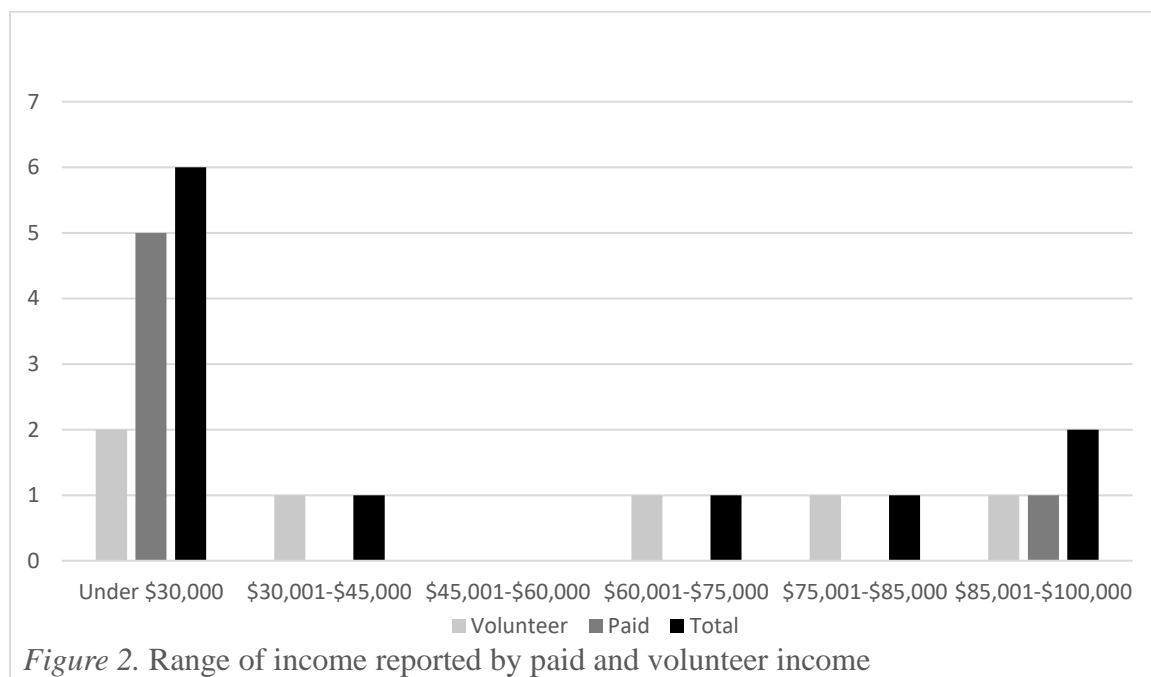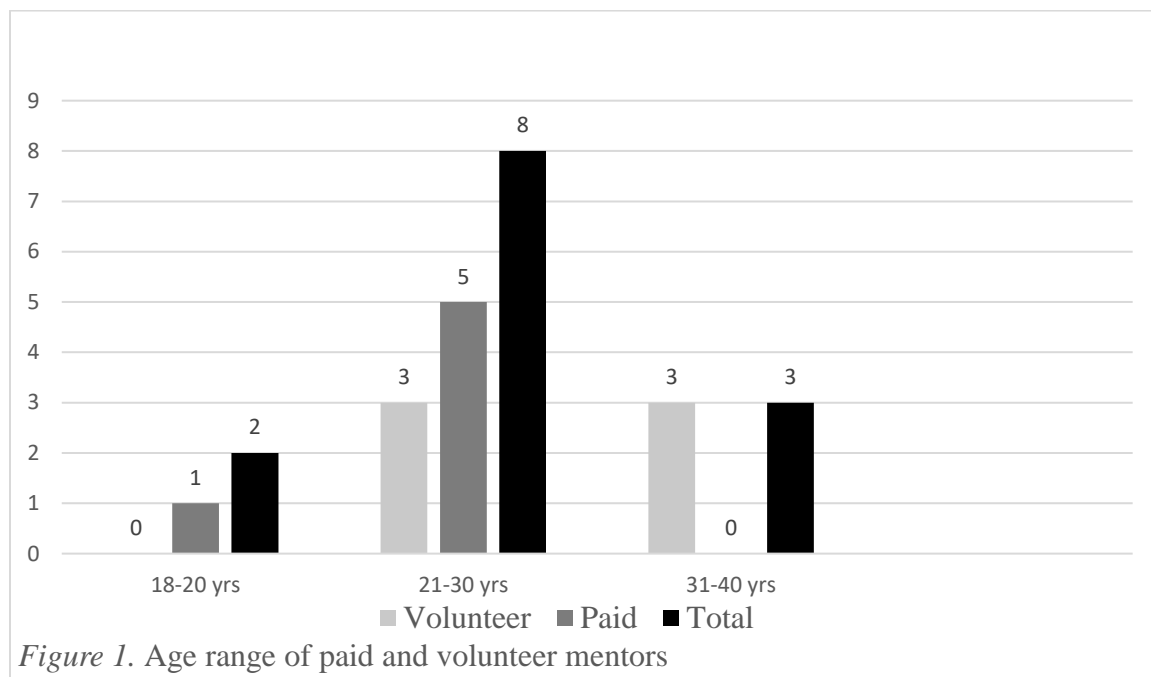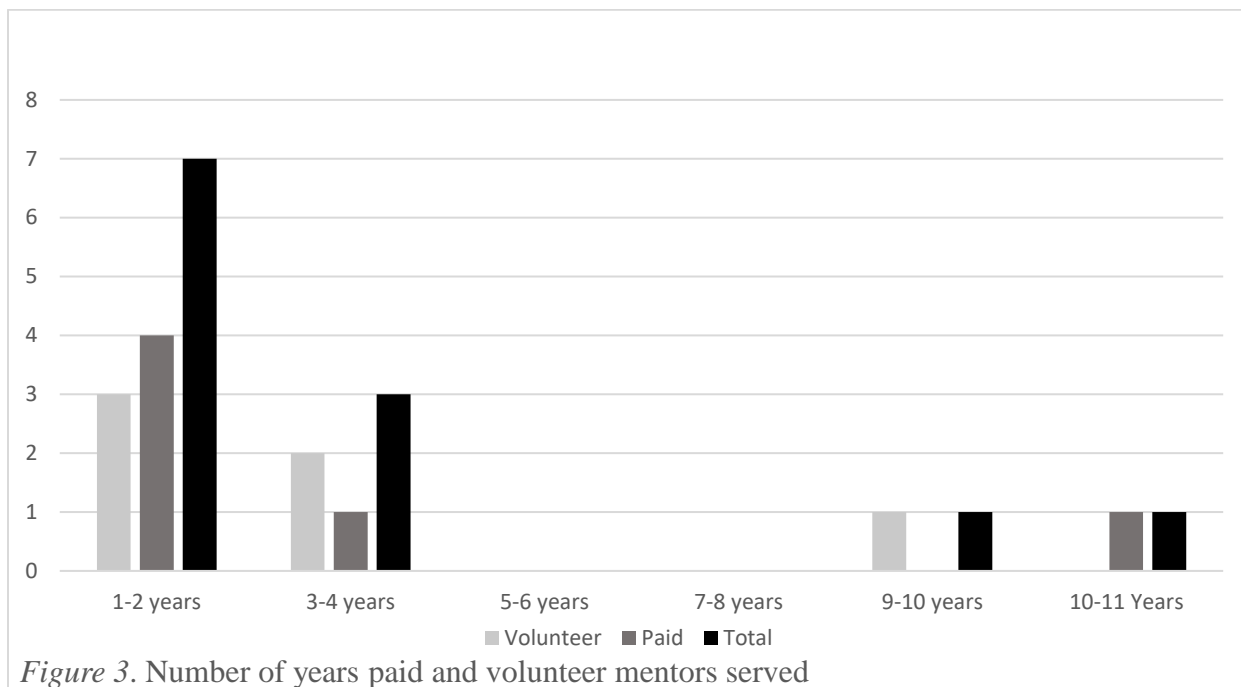
Research Setting

The research setting involved one-on-one semi-structured interviews with each of

the 12 participants. Interviews were conducted in two public libraries and two public

schools located within the community area in which the cooperating organizations serve

across a two-week period. This area is an urban inner-city neighborhood known for its

high immigrant and refugee populations. This area has some of the city's highest crime

rates and a high population of people facing homelessness. In addition, this area hosts

many people who are considered low socioeconomic status.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

None of the participants knew about the specifics of the nonprofit organization that I

belong to. Several of the participants knew that I was involved within the community due

to media or the network within the community that we serve. Additionally, the informed

consent form advised participants that I was a police officer and served as an executive

for a nonprofit organization. Participants were advised that my role as the researcher did not involve these two other roles. None of the participants had direct contact with me in an authority position or within the criminal justice system. Information pertaining to my additional roles in the community did not appear to be a concern to participants.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process involved seeking cooperating organizations for the study within the target area of the city. It took a few weeks to find cooperating organizations within the Kansas City, MO metropolitan area. One targeted organization informed me that they would have loved to participate; however, they no longer had a mentorship program within the area that the study was focused upon due to a loss in state funding. Other large nonprofits known for their mentorship programs across the country were contacted and declined to participate due to a lack of time availability. Local nonprofit organizations within the targeting community area were very responsive and eager to become a cooperating organization. These organizations' directors were electronically sent a copy of my dissertation proposal's oral presentation outlining the purpose of the study, risks, benefits, and confidentiality remarks. Directors were also emailed a copy of the participant solicitation letter, flyer for participant solicitation, informed consent form, the crisis intervention resource page, and demographics form that would be used for the study. Letters of cooperation were obtained in person by the researcher from each director of cooperating organizations. These letters were scanned and saved onto the password protected USB drive used to store the data for this study.

Upon attaining each Cooperation Letter, the IRB Application Form C was submitted to Walden University review and approval. After receiving IRB approval, I

disseminated the volunteer solicitation letters and flyers to each organization's director to

begin recruiting participants for the study. Participants from the cooperating

organizations contacted me via email to volunteer in the study. Interview dates, locations,

and times were scheduled. I adjusted my availability to meet participants at a date, time,

and location that was catered to their convenience.

Cooperating Organizations

The cooperating organizations involved were advised that multiple organizations

within the same community were involved within the study; however, they were not

informed of which organizations were participating. This approach was taken so that

organizations would not bias the study. This approach also served as a key component so

that organizational leadership and policymakers could learn and consider the overall

essence of mentor sustainability and the described experiences, perceptions, and

motivations of youth mentors within similar nonprofit mentorship programs, instead of

viewing the results as a program evaluation study. This approach was also a component

of confidentiality for cooperating organizations and participants. All organizations were

merely identified and coded as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. I noted the associations

among organizations with one or more community centers.

Each of the cooperating organizations hosted programs involving sports to

facilitate the mentoring relationship. Programs also offered after-school program

mentoring at their respective centers. These after-school programs did not always involve

a sport but instead offered projects and classroom-like activities. Other aspects of the

programs involved education and tutoring. One organization had several sites throughout

the community and participants serving within this organization came from two primary sites. Several participants from these two sites reported to rotate across all 15 sites.

Interview Process

This study includes face-to-face interviews with 12 participants. Interviews began on September 23rd, 2019 and ended on October 4th, 2019. At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and the purpose of the study. Each participant read, verbally verified understanding, and signed the informed consent form before the start of their interview. I verified that each participant understood that the study was voluntary. I also verified directly with each participant that he or she actively served as a youth mentor for their organization and were 18 years or older. Each participant was ensured that the information collected during their interviews would be kept confidential and that a pseudo-name would be used in place of their name, as well as any other individuals they mention during the interview. Participants were advised that they could withdraw from the study at any time and stop the interview if they needed a break. Participants were also advised that the interviews were being digitally recorded on a portable digital recorder and that I may take written notes of observations. Permission to begin the study was granted from each participant prior to recording.

I introduced myself to each participant, provided preliminary information about the study, and informed the participant what he or she should expect. Each participant was provided a copy of the interview questions prior to beginning the interview. The interview guide was composed of 14 interview questions. The interview guide served to ensure consistency among interviews. Every participant was also provided a printed copy of informed consent form, a demographics form, and a form with crisis intervention

resources. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions prior to beginning the interview.

The interview process was continuously evolving and follow up questions were derived from participant responses to the primary interview question. Some follow-up questions were simply to clarify vague statements to ensure a common understanding to terms was being met. Other follow-up questions were to allow the participant to delve deeper about their experiences as a mentor. Upon completion of each interview, participants were thanked for volunteering their time and energy to take part in the study. Participants were advised that upon publication of the study, a summary of results would be shared with them upon request.

The first evening of interviews took place at a public elementary school. Upon arriving to the school and meeting with the first participant, the janitor of the school had locked the doors. The outdoor classroom at the back of the school was accessible and utilized. Distance from kids in the playground was kept and participants did not seem to mind the inconvenience. All participants seemed open to adaptation in the environment due to the work they do.

During one interview at the public library, a homeless man peered into the interview room window. A security officer came by shortly after, looking for him. The interview was not stopped, and the door was not opened so confidentiality was maintained. This did not seem to distract the participant.

One participant asked for a break in the middle of his interview stating that I was "firing off questions" and that "he needed to take a drink of water." The interview was stopped, and the participant took a drink of water. When he was ready, we continued the

interview without incident. I adjusted to his input regarding the frequency of my questions and tried to be more conscious of the rate in which I was asking follow-up questions.

Overall, the interview process was a success. Interviews were stopped once I reached point of saturation. This was realized when emerging themes began to repeat themselves and the participants experiences became more predictable and less unique to the researcher as the interviews continued. Valuable insight into the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors was gained as well as the essence of the phenomenon of mentor sustainability.

Time spent with each participant varied between 30 to 60 minutes. Recorded interview times were between 13 minutes to 48 minutes. Handwritten field notes were taken during interviews to record aspects of the environment, gestures, emotions, and other nonverbal cues. These notes were scanned and saved on the password protected USB drive. Field notes for each participant were documented as memos within NVivo. The digital recordings of each interview were uploaded and saved on the password protected USB flash drive.

Data Maintenance and Storage

Data for the study were saved on a password protected USB flash drive. Data recorded from each participant's interview was organized within folders designated by their respective pseudo name. The data stored within each folder includes the participant's signed informed consent form, completed demographics form, audio recorded interview, and field notes taken during the interview process. Journal entries of my own reflections during the data collection and analysis process were saved on the

same USB device but in a separate designated folder. Only one recorder was necessary to complete the data collection process. Additional batteries were available if needed. I am the only person with access to the password protected USB drive.

All recorded interviews were transcribed. Upon transcription, the interviews were cleaned and repetitive phrases such as "like," "you know," or repeated words due to stutters were removed prior to loading the data into NVivo. Journal entries and researcher insights were also entered into NVivo as memos for analysis.

Paid Mentors: Interview Observations

The body language of paid and volunteer mentors was compared for similarities and differences. Initially, paid mentors had different body language and energy than those that were volunteers. For instance, the body language of paid mentors during the first set of interview questions were described in terms such as sitting upright, formal posture, and hands in lap. Once these participants were able to express specific experiences related to mentoring, their body language became more informal and open. Researcher notes included terms such as expressing with hands, smiling, and high energy. These six participants portrayed a positive energy about the task of mentorship and maintained eye contact; however, as the interview questions began to inquire about their personal experiences as a youth mentor, their descriptions described tragedy, frustrations, and their occasional self-doubts.

Volunteer Interview Observations

Volunteer participants body language was informal and there was a calming essence about them. The volunteers' personalities came out immediately during interviews. Volunteers were more apt to share of how they experience and overcome

barriers. Their efforts to overcoming experienced barriers indicated a high sense of resilience, hope, and less of a concern for the parameters set through rules or organizational policies. Volunteers were also more readily willing to share some of the negative aspects of their experiences and perceptions than paid mentors.

All participants seemed to have some sense of positivity and there were no sole negative responses about general experiences. All participants answered each question freely and were willing to provide supplemental information as needed. While participant interviews went down various informative paths based on the participants' responses, the interview questions guided each interview appropriately, providing insightful responses to each question pertaining to their mentorship experiences.

Steps Taken to Ensure Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality, during interview transcriptions, names of the community centers were de-identified as the center. The name of the neighborhood area was de-identified as the community or area. The name of the city was de-identified as the city, and the names mentioned during interviews were changed. Additionally, the specific sport that the mentors were involved with in their respective programs were de-identified into a generic sport. Many mentors blended the word coach and mentor. These terms were merged into mentor to help the researcher focus on the essence of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations being described.

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Data Analysis Process

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The data analysis process involved multiple phases and overlapped with the data collection process. For instance, during the data collection process, after each interview day, time for reflection was taken and journaling was used to record these reflections.

This process aided in embedding intentionality and awareness by the researcher. Moustakas (1994) described this state of awareness as reaching "Epoche" where the researcher intentionally accepts the essence of something without judgment or preconception. Through journaling, I empowered myself to reach and maintain Epoche during the study by notating my awareness and consciousness about my observations during the study. By reaching and maintaining this state during the data collection process, I was able to maintain neutral during interviews and collect as much information as possible without immediate assumptions to meanings.

The data analysis process involved transcribing the audio recorded interviews from each participant and utilizing a manual data coding technique. Through manual coding, I was able to hand code the data and identify where repeated words and phrases aligned in relation to the nodes established in NVivo. This phase was detailed and strenuous. I listened to the interviews several times over the course of a week to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate. After transcribing the interviews, each transcript was uploaded into NVivo as a file under the participant's pseudo name. The responses within interviews were reviewed several times and reflected upon. I began by identifying codes within the text.

Within NVivo, I created Nodes to represent each research topic: Mentor Role, Mentor Experiences, Mentor Motivations, Mission, Goal, and Organizational Policies, and Supportive Factors. Once these parent nodes were set up, I then began to review transcripts and identify code phrases or words that aligned with each Node. Upon reflection, two additional Nodes were created as Public Policy Support, and Community. Additionally, child nodes were created. The Mentor Motivations node was assigned child

nodes: alignment with personal interest, extrinsic motivation, hope, matured passion, life experiences, service, and rewarding. Mentor Experiences node was assigned child nodes: barriers, frustration, resilience, self-doubt, humility, success, and tragedy. Supportive Factors node was assigned child nodes: resource accessibility, advocacy, collaboration, collectiveness, communication, education, funding, and parental support. Mission, Goal, and Organizational Policies node was assigned child nodes: effectiveness, awareness, training, communication. Child nodes under Mentor Role included: approachable, caring, consistent, dependable, provider, positive force, and role model. Child nodes assigned under Community included: ability to relate, awareness, collectivism, and community patriotism. Public Policy Support included child nodes: professionalization, structure, and opportunities to expand. Some coded phrases were included under the original parent node. Additionally, some participant phrases were included under multiple nodes.

The project within NVivo was reviewed several times. Upon sifting through the transcripts several times and identifying repeating code words or phrases, I reviewed the data with the intent to identify emerging themes. Repeating words or phrases and nodes provided for a definition of each theme within the study. Upon identifying nodes and themes, I began to conduct the final analysis of the study and derive meaning from the data. Nodes are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

NVivo Nodes and Subnodes.

NVivo nodes	Subnodes
Mentor Role	Approachable, Caring, Consistent, Dependable, Positive Force, Provider, Role Model
Community	Ability to Relate, Awareness, Collectivism, Community Patriotism
Mentor Experiences	Barriers, Frustration, Resilience, Self-Doubt, Humility, Success, Tragedy
Mentor Motivations	Alignment with Personal Interest, Extrinsic Motivations, Matured Passion, Life Experiences, Service, Rewarding
Mission, Goals, Organizational Policies	Effectiveness, Awareness, Training, Communication
Supportive Factors	Resource Accessibility, Advocacy, Collaboration, Collectiveness, Communication, Education, Funding, Parental Support
Public Policy Support	Professionalization, Structure, Opportunities to Expand

Upon identification and defining of emergent themes, participants were classified into two groups based on their response within the demographics form on whether they received compensation for their mentoring efforts or a salary. Participants were classified as either paid mentors or volunteer mentors. This step was completed after a thematic analysis took place to ensure that the comparison among groups did not reflect bias based on the researcher's personal experiences as a volunteer mentor and former paid childcare counselor.

The final phase of the data analysis process was to reflect upon the emergent themes as they relate to mentor sustainability. Differences between the two classifications of participants were analyzed. Upon this analysis, a detailed explanation of the relationship between the data collected, emergent themes, and analysis after classification of participants was developed. These themes provide insight into policy or program strengths or weaknesses contributing to mentor sustainability.

During the data analysis process, not every response was relevant to the interview question. All this information was still included within the data file uploaded into NVivo; however, irrelevant information was not identified during thematic analysis. These segments of responses were not included within the data analysis process.

Use of Bracketing

Bracketing was used to avoid bias during the data collection and analysis process. Creswell (2013) described bracketing as an intentional effort by researchers to separate themselves from their own personal experiences and perceptions during the study in order to derive raw, meaningful, and interpretive data from each interview. Through the use of mindfulness and acknowledging my own insights regarding nonprofit administration and

youth mentorship, I ensured that I was collecting and analyzing data with a nonjudgmental and unbiased mindset. The use of bracketing assisted me in my ability to ensure that my perceptions pertaining to participant responses remained objective.

Discrepant Cases

Each data set was examined for inconsistencies with study's original conjectures. Anticipated themes as result of the literature review included:

1. Volunteer mentors lack longevity.

2. Paid mentors place a greater financial burden on the organization.

3. Both paid and volunteer mentors desire different resources.

These anticipated themes were reviewed prior to the beginning of the data analysis process. The first conjecture appeared to be consistent with the data that emerged from this study. Conjecture 1 was supported within the results of the demographics questionnaire. While both paid and volunteer mentor classifications had one participant that had served as a mentor for 10 years or longer, volunteer mentors had the least amount of years of service as a mentor. The second conjecture was neither supported nor denied by the data in the study. Since each cooperating organization had participants representing both classifications of mentors, and almost every mentor expressed a need for increased funding, it was not possible to ascertain whether the payment of mentors placed an organization at greater financial strain. Conjecture 3 was not supported by the study. Most mentors appeared to desire a level of professionalization, additional funding, a heightened sense of collaboration across additional community nonprofit organizations, and some version of training on mentorship.

Discrepancies within the data as it relates to assumptions of the study and the theoretical framework was included within the data analysis process. Themes that emerged which were not supportive of the theoretical framework added meaningful data because it identified variables for future research to explore and indicates that the researcher is touching on an even deeper understanding to the phenomenon that was not anticipated.

Results by Research Question Topics

The research question for this study asked, What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? The interview questions were sorted by the following topics: role of a mentor; mentor motivations; mentor experiences, mentor perceptions of organizational policies, goals, and mission; and mentor perceptions of supportive factors aid them in facilitating an effective relationship with their mentee. These topics sought to reveal the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors within formal youth mentorship programs in order to capture an essence of mentor sustainability.

The first two IQs corresponded to the first topic: role of a mentor. Interview questions one and two explored participant perceptions of their role as a mentor. These questions sought to extract how each participant viewed and identified their specific role. Participants responded with similar statements identifying that their role as a mentor was "to help", "to provide", "being a good role model," and "consistent positive figure in their life." Participants classified as volunteer mentors generally identified with the role of a role model and provider. Participants who were classified as paid mentors generally described their role as caring and provider.

IQs 3 and 4 corresponded to the second topic: mentor motivations. Participants classified as paid mentors described their motivations as organic and a process of progression and development. For instance, RP1 stated, "I kind of started off as a summer job and then it progressed into me going full-time, but I like where I work." Additionally, RP3 described his motivation as "It developed from just an opportunity to coach sport and get some money to I'm going to do this even though I'm going to have school and then I'm going to have another job and I have family things because it helps the kids." These statements indicated that the initial motivational factor for paid mentors was extrinsic motivations, such as a job opportunity; however, that over time the motivational factors evolve to more intrinsic motivations through a matured passion and is related to one's level of awareness of the need to serve. Paid mentor motivations were similar to volunteers in the sense that "hope" was a motivational factor and they found serving as a mentor "rewarding."

Participants classified as volunteer mentors generally described their motivations to mentor at risk youth due to the opportunity to mentor aligned with a personal interest and having a sense of hope that they can make a difference and help others. Additionally, life experiences were motivational factors for participants. For example, RP8 described the reason he mentored in his community as "I was once a kid and I grew up in this community. And I know the bad things that happen here and the thing that motivates me is the things that can go wrong, I can change for the later. For the later generations I can change it and I can give good advice to through a better goal. Go through a better change, a better change." RP8, a volunteer mentor, connected his experience within the community in which he serves and his awareness of problems within the area. His

motivation is driven by his experiences that made him aware, as well as the sense of hope that he can affect change through his efforts.

IQs 5 through 9 corresponded to the third topic: mentor experiences. Mentors described their experiences as "varied". Some descriptive words used by participants included "chaos", "frustration", "seeing kids in bad home situations", "death", "little steps they are taking", "engagement", "seeing a growth in the kid" and "success". Most of the responses from participants during interview questions that asked for a description of experiences came in story form. Participant experiences across both categories of mentors consistently described instances of tragedy, frustrations, feeling powerless, having self-doubt, and facing numerous barriers. The most evident barrier that both paid and volunteer mentors described was "funding." For example, RP2 stated "At the end of the day it comes down to the dollars." Additionally, RP11, a volunteer mentor, described his top barrier as "Money. Money is always number one." Even aside from the need for direct funding for program activities and equipment, other mentors focused on a general lack of funding that made their roles more difficult. RP6, a paid mentor stated, "So they go to these underfunded schools where teachers are 40 to one teacher and they can't have this one-on-one interaction with their teachers so I kind of get how that effects them." Under funding schools, lack of resources, and direct funding described during the interview questions regarding their personal experiences was important to the overall social implications of the study and shows that while mentor motivations and role identity may vary, mentors of both classifications are experiencing strain related to these factors.

Interview questions ten through 12 aligned with the fourth topic: mentor perceptions of organizational policies, goals, and the mission of the organizations in which they serve. None of the participants could articulate their organizational mission verbatim; however, all but one participant was able to describe it in their own words and were aware of their organization's goals. All participants spoke positively about their effectiveness of their organization meeting its mission.

Mentor's perceptions of their organizational mission and goals differed between paid and volunteer mentors. Paid mentors described their mission and goals in terms of preventing something such as "gangs", "drugs" and "trouble" and enjoyment such as "having fun" or "enjoying." For instance, RP5, a paid mentor, described his organizational goal as "help these kids stay away from drugs, stay away from gangs." Additionally, RP4, another paid mentor, described organizational effectiveness as "our kids have been loving how this has been going." Volunteer mentors described effectiveness as helping their mentees "succeed in life" and facilitating success in life. Volunteers did not perceive effectiveness on "enjoyment" or feedback that the kids were "having fun". For stance, RP7 stated, "My organization is effective because we have a lot of students that get scholarships to go to schools to go to colleges whether it's a junior college or university. We meet with the college or university to come up with plans because we know our student athletes have trouble academically." Instead of a focus on feedback showing enjoyment or fun from mentees, volunteer mentors expressed their perceptions of organizational purpose and effectiveness in terms of reaching educational standards and their mentees pursuing their goals.

When participants elaborated on what their organization could do to improve, "communication" was a surfacing topic. Additional phrases used were "training", "mentor training" and a focus on mentor development. One participant described her experience when she first began as "chaotic" and the need for gradual mentor development and additional communication, stating "Especially at the beginning, just more checking in with people and then again more communication. So maybe a weekly check-in with mentors to make sure they are doing okay with the curriculum, make sure they are doing okay with the sites."

IQs 13 and 14 corresponded to the topic: mentor perceptions of supportive factors that aid them in facilitating an effective relationship with their mentee. The topic of accessibility to quality facilities was one subject discussed by both paid and volunteer mentors. These perceptions of support from participants was described as "public services need to partner", "services for our mentees to get to and from places", "clean up all the parks around here. Get rid of all the trash, install trash cans, water fountains, put nets on every goal out here," and "locations that didn't cost a bunch of money or didn't have a bunch of red tape around where you had to be a part of a certain type of program or organization to get, or like weasel your way in because it's going to cost this much to use it."

Another perception of support included topics of advocacy and collaboration with other nonprofits in the area through "community events" and "sharing" the mission of the organization with others. RP7 described the need to "have more community partners to help at-risk youth" as a factor that would support her as a mentor and her organization. Participants expressed that community events and collaboration with outside

organizations could impact their ability to connect their mentees to resources they need but cannot provide due to funding.

With the exception of funding, "mentor education" and "training" were topics of discussion by participants. Training was described by most participants as "good" and "supportive", and several participants mentioned a need for situational mentor training focusing on what to expect and how to handle different situations. RP12 described training as "having that education during training about what it looks like to be a mentor and the types of things that we might see when working with kids was something that was really supportive." Mentors insights regarding education and training focused on mentoring were consistent across both paid and volunteer mentors.

Summary of Results

The results of this study can contribute toward the understanding of mentor sustainability and how policymakers and public administrators can empower mentors within their respective programs. This study provides a voice for youth mentors to public policy makers so that they know how to empower these social actors to stay active as a youth mentor and sustain programs. These results can help local nonprofit youth mentorship organizations and mentors to understand the essence of mentor sustainability, how to shape their policy practices to empower youth mentors, and perhaps what mentors should expect when entering this profession. Policy implications include ways to allocate funding to empower mentors pending their classification as volunteer and paid mentors and a deeper knowledge of where funding is desired.

Participant responses provided a voice from youth mentors regarding their lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations. While experiences may vary and remain

organic for the youth mentor, themes of experiences, perceptions, and motivations are evident. Some themes were apparent across all classifications of mentors and some were more evident in a specific classification of paid or volunteer mentor.

Themes

This phenomenological study involved the identification of emerging themes and captured the essence of mentor sustainability. Emerging themes helped identify the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors and provided an essence of what contributes to the current state mentor sustainability. Emerging themes included: role awareness, community patriotism, collaboration, collectiveness, professionalization, awareness, support factors, perceived success, motivational factors, and psychological resilience. The most predominant theme that emerged was supportive factors with 147 coded words or phrases. The second most repeating theme was role awareness with 103 coded words or phrases. This was followed by psychological resilience with 77 coded words or phrases and then followed by perceived success with 67 coded words or phrases. The lowest number of codes words or phrases associated with a theme was 10 associated with collectivism. Table 2 provides an illustration of themes and subthemes identified within this study.

Table 2

Themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Awareness	Mission, Need
Community Patriotism	
Collectiveness	
Professionalization	Formalization
Motivational Factors	Extrinsic Motivations, Intrinsic Motivations, Matured Passion, Life Experience, Opportunity
Organizational Collaboration	
Perceived Success	
Psychological Resilience	Tragedy, Hope, Frustration, Powerless
Role Awareness	
Supportive Factors	Advocacy, Education, Financial, Investment into Public Sector Services

Awareness

Awareness was the first theme identified within the study. Awareness was derived from IQs 4, 10, and 11. All participants revealed a level of awareness with regard to their goal of helping when choosing to serve as a mentor. Participants also held a level of awareness with regard to their organizational mission. Participants also responded about the awareness of the organization as a decision-making component when choosing to become a mentor. Table 3 provides responses from participants regarding awareness.

Table 3

Awareness

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP10: "I heard good words about it before I started."	Aware of organization prior to beginning as a mentor	The participant was confident and energetic.
RP12: "So I already I only knew a little bit about the Organization whenever I started like pursuing it and I thought it seemed like a good fit and I was really interested in the work that they did and I have just grown more passionate about it the more that I've worked here and gotten more comfortable with the curriculum and with the kids and everything."	Participant was aware of organization. Participant was aware of the effectiveness of the organization.	The participant was soft spoken and humble.
RP4: "I think the mission of our organization is to always be there with the kids. We always want them to know that we're always going to be with them through anything they need regardless of where they come from family, salary, anything we're going to be there for the kids even if it's for school, sports, or anything that they need."	Aware of organizational mission. Aware of goals and extent of commitment as a mentor for youth. Aware of ambiguity in expectations and situations mentees face.	Participant was engaged and spoke with confidence.
RP5: "help these kids stay away from drugs, stay away from gangs."	Aware of the mission to help youth. Aware of problems and temptations mentees face in area. Aware of preventative efforts.	Participant was confident and engaged. Participant was compassionate and open.

Community Patriotism

Community Patriotism was the second theme identified within the study. Community patriotism is defined as having intentionality and focus to give back directly to the specific community area. This theme emerged from participant responses during IQs 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, and 11. Seven participants revealed a sense of focus to contribute to the specific community in which their organization served. Many participants were from the community area and expressed their lived experiences in the specific community area. Participants expressed that their experiences and belonging to the community area were aspects that they shared with other youth mentors. Other mentors did not grow up in the specific neighborhood but spoke of experiences they encountered in the area prior to becoming a mentor. Table 4 provides participant responses regarding community patriotism.

Table 4

Community Patriotism

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP8: "To give back something that was given to you especially to your community since you grew here and you see a lot of things that go wrong and good and you want to make those good things get better and you want to make the bad things go away."	Ownership in community. Desire to have a positive impact in community. Life experience within specific community.	Participant was compassionate and calm
RP4: "I serve as a mentor for my organization because I want to show the community in here in the Area that there's many things you can do to serve for your community. It's just like an extra role that you can do for yourself and help out the community in need."	Focus on specific community area and making a positive impact. Leading by example in community.	Participant was confident and engaged.
RP2 "A lot of things that I share with a lot of the mentors you see is we all come from the same area. We all from around the area."	Shared experiences within specific community. Identifies with other mentors due to ties within specific community.	Participant was confident and direct. Participant was engaged with topic and question. Participant was proud.
RP5: "So a big one is the fact that we're not really here to collect. We're not here to get rich. We're not here to collect a massive paycheck. We're kind of here just for the kids on top of that there's a couple other mentors that we grew up in this Community and I did too."	Identifies with community and belonging to the neighborhood area. Community ties is a shared experience between participant and other mentors.	Participant was confident. Participant was open. Participant was proud.

Collectivism

Collectivism was identified as the third theme in this study. Collectivism is a collective experience with one common goal. Participants expressed sharing a sense of collectivism or team cohesion with each other. The need for a collective effort and team mentality to work together as a mentoring community was also expressed within participant responses. These responses were derived from IQs 5 and 7. Table 5 provides responses from participants regarding collectivism.

Table 5

Collectivism

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP2: "The main thing with the other mentors is just trying to make sure your all on the same page because the goal at the end is the same thing. It should always be the same thing. To impact this kid's life the best you can for the positive and not the negative. If you're trying to compete with another mentor and how to help kids out, then you've already failed."	Team mentality. Clear understanding among other mentors with regard to goal.	Participant was direct and confident
RP7: "When I interact with other youth mentors, the experiences I feel we share is having a common goal of helping those at-risk youth."	Common goal to help youth.	Participant was very articulate and comfortable. Participant was engaged.
RP4: "With the other mentors, I feel we all have a goal here."	Shared goal. Team mentality	Participant was engaged.
RP1: "I think for most part here we are on the same page. That we are all trying to help those here at least. We're here to make sure that they are having a good day, as well as helping with their sport skills, but I think at the end of the day we know that because we have a lot of kids that just come here because maybe they don't have fun at home not really because they like sports, we just want them to be happy and to be able to trust us. So, I feel like in that part it's good also if there's tension between two kids with other mentors, like if I feel I'm a little blocked in the way, I should go about it with other mentors together. We make a better team, and we figure out the problem and solution to it."	Working toward common goal. Want the same outcomes. Working together to help mentees	Participant was engaged. Participant smiling and positive.

Professionalization

Professionalization was the fourth theme identified within the study. Professionalization refers to the formalization and professional service approach to mentorship programming. Professionalization is expressed by participants as wanting uniformity and less ambiguity in their program and mentorship role. Participants also express professionalization through a desire to receive specialized education catered toward mentoring and a desire to better themselves within the profession. Professionalization was derived from IQs 12, 13, and 14. Table 6 provides participant responses regarding professionalization.

Table 6

Professionalization

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP12: "Kids crave structure and I just have found that so true and I have to keep reminding myself of that even if it's kind of a discouraging session where people aren't listening to me and it's that chaos. Also I was talking about just trying to remember that because that can, not only do I crave structure in the curriculum, but they need that too because they don't have that outside of school and so keeping that in mind that's been really helpful."	Craves structure in the program. Recognizes that kids also want structure.	The participant was open and engaged.
RP3: "We need organizations that take their job seriously too."	Desire for organizations to prioritize youth mentorship program.	Participant was compassionate.
RP3: "You have a boss recruiting college students because they can't pay so much salary and older people wouldn't want to do that. A lot of the people who come to work as a mentor, they really never gone through a struggle. They were kids that come from a good family who thankfully they didn't have to struggle through it. Or maybe the struggle they had isn't as much as these kids and if we could have anything would really be helpful to the program and to us as mentors would be a commitment pledge. Something that if you sign this contract and work with us, you have to do it for this amount of time."	Desire to establish a way to ensure mentors hired are committed. Expressed relationship between mentor pay and commitment level.	Participant was compassionate and spoke with frustration.
RP7: "There's not enough education out there for our at-risk youth."	Need for additional education.	Participant was open and engaged.

Motivational Factors

Motivational factors emerged as the fifth theme in the study. Motivational factors referenced participants expressed motivations for policymakers to consider when considering mentor sustainability. Subthemes from motivational factors include alignment with personal interests, extrinsic motivations, hope, life experiences, matured passion, rewarding, and service. Motivational factors were derived primarily from IQs 3 and 4. Table 7 provides participant responses regarding motivational factors.

Table 7

Motivational Factors

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP9: "The point of me wanting to coach was to be able to use the sport and my ability to teach the sport to them to then create opportunities to help them in their life moving forward. So that organization gave me the opportunity to jump into a position where I could coach but also work with these kids and work with kids that needed help."	Opportunity to help others. Alignment with personal interest of coaching.	The participant was engaged and open.
RP7: "I believe that youth, if they have a positive role model in their life in the hardest times, or where they come from or the less privileged, that if they have that one positive person that believes in them, that they can be successful in life and just hoping that I can be that one person that affects them to do great things is what keeps me motivated to help those at-risk youth."	Strong sense of hope. Positive outlook.	The participant spoke with confidence and engaged.
RP1: "Now I'm in college, I can use the knowledge that I have here and other things so I can now pass it on to them in hopes that they never have to go through what I might have gone through."	Sense of hope. Wants to make a difference due to past life experiences.	Participant was humble.\n\nParticipant was eager and compassionate.
RP12: "I have just grown more passionate about it the more that I've worked here."	Increase in compassion for job over time.	Participant was soft spoken.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as the sixth theme in the study. Collaboration refers to participant responses pertaining to efforts toward serving community through partnerships across multiple nonprofit organizations and public networks. Collaboration involves expression to share resources in order to help everyone in need. This theme was derived from IQ 14. Table 8 provides participant responses regarding collaboration.

Table 8

Collaboration

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP8: "Reaching out to groups that are willing to help out."	Recognizes the need to have other groups that can help. Advocacy to find help.	The participant was serious and engaged.
RP7: "Because of their mental illness, because they they're learning disability, because of their language barrier, we don't have enough partnerships to help these mentees being successful in society. So, the community needs to come together and find ways to work with my organization to help them become successful."	Identifies several factors that should be addressed through collaboration. Need for more partnerships from the community. Community needs to come together to help efforts.	The participant was confident. Participant was engaged.
RP1: "I think maybe school programs too. That could help somehow. The school having implemented "these are kids who would need a mentor". If the school gets them, they know if specifically, some kids need mentors. Because here, the kids come because they want sports. They don't necessarily know that we are being a mentor to them while schools or other programs could say "oh no this kid wants a mentor."	School collaboration needed. Connection with schools to identify youth in need of a mentor.	Participant was engaged and compassionate.
RP4: "I think there has been many organizations that work with mentees and I think if even other organizations come together as one and work together."	Need for organizations to come together. Recognizes multiple organizations that mentor.	Participant was engaged.

Perceived Success

The seventh theme that emerged from this study was perceived success. Perceived success involved experiences of feeling successful directly as a result of mentoring efforts. Perceived success was recognized across various venues such as the mentee having educational success, athletic success, life success, occupation success. Perceived success in mentoring efforts was also recognized by participants in the form of increased engagement and enjoyment. This theme was derived from IQs 5 and 6. Table 9 provides participant responses regarding perceived success.

Table 9

Perceived Success

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP5: "Seeing kids graduate is one of my biggest things at the Community area high school, at the Community area middle school I used to work at, a lot of those kids didn't think they were going to make it to high school."	Wants to see kids graduate from school. Seeing kids exceed beyond their own expectations academically.	The participant was smiling.
RP6: "We have this one kid that currently goes, and he was in second grade and he came to us and can't really read at all. Knows the alphabet for the most part and doesn't know that two words make this sound and it was just crazy to see that you know he's gone this far and then this year they passed him to the third grade and I was just shocked that they actually let him go to the next grade, but now once you do homework with him he actually gets it a little better and he sees like "hey these two letters makes this sound" so seeing that and seeing that they're actually doing a little better."	Focus on academic growth Success perceived by advancing in school.	Participant was engaged. Participant was soft spoken.
RP2: "I'd say that's the most effective way to see those things and when you see a kid show interest without you having to ask, that's when they become engaged, they've become engaged and they're buying into what you're giving them, what your trying to sell them. What your trying to do for them.	Seeing a change in engagement.	Participant was confident and engaged. Participant was compassionate.
RP12: "Success there was whenever I had them all sitting down and for a couple of minutes, they were actually listening to me while we were talking about the sport topic and the nutrition topic. And they were actually engaged and into what we were talking about."	Success gauged on behavior and engagement.	Participant was engaged and compassionate.

Psychological Resilience

Psychological resilience was another emergent theme. During IQs 5, 7, 8, and 9,

participants spoke of tragedies, frustrations, and feelings of powerlessness, but also spoke

of hope for the future. These experiences require a high level of psychological resilience

needed in mentors in order to face the conditions of their roles. RP3 referenced that his

role of a mentor was similar to a police officer.

> It's like a police officer s job. You go into your shift and you don't really know
>
> what you're going to get into. You might get a murder, you might get a bomb
>
> attack, who knows. It's the same thing. That's kind of how I take it every day.
>
> That's why whenever I go into my session every day, I have to leave everything
>
> behind because no matter what I'm going through I don't know what these kids
>
> are going through that could be worse and I have to be ready every time I go into
>
> a session for something that happens. You never know. (RP3)

Table 10 provides additional responses from participants regarding the theme of

psychological resilience.

Table 10

Psychological Resilience

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP9: "I found out, had kids unfortunately pass away in a bad experience and then you see that he was a money maker for his mom of family of five. So now she didn't just lose her oldest son, but she lost somebody in her family that brings income in."	Tragedy involving death of mentee. Empathy for family.	The participant was engaged. Participant spoke in a tone of sadness.
RP3: "At a particular site, there was a shooting down the street from the site. They heard the shots, they felt one of the shots go by."	Trauma. Concern for Safety.	Participant was engaged.
RP2: "It's the mentality that unfortunately you can't save them all. The reward is great, but the disappointment is even greater. Because you want to save everybody you want to, you want to be there for everybody, but you can't. You just can't."	Powerless.	Participant was engaged. Participant spoke with disappointment.
RP9: "finding out one of my best players sleeps on the floor because his mom didn't have the money to get him a mattress."	Tragedy. Empathy. Working in poverty.	Participant spoke with disappointment.

Role Awareness

Role awareness was the ninth theme that emerged from the study. Role awareness emerged from IQs 1 and 2. Role awareness pertains to the concepts in which mentors identified as their key roles as a mentor. Participant responses in regard to role awareness are included in Table 11.

Table 11

Role Awareness

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP2: "They can count on you that whenever it is they really need something that's really effecting their life that you're the one that more than likely should count on, should want to count on when they've got nobody else to count on."	Lifeline. Dependable.	The participant was open.
RP9: "My role as a mentor is for sure being somebody in their life that they don't currently have."	Filling a void. Provide.	The participant was engaged and open.
RP11: "Interacting with children who sometimes don't have a positive role model in their life. Especially a strong male figure. The chance to interact with them and show them not only what they are but what they could be."	Positive force. Role model. Provide hope.	Participant was engaged and spoke confidently.
RP4: "I think as a mentor the biggest part for them is showing that we care about them."	Positive force. Caring.	Participant was engaged and open.

Supportive Factors

Supportive Factors were identified from participant responses to IQs 13 and 14. Supportive factors included advocacy, education, funding, as well as investment and access to public sector services or facilities. Supportive factors expressed in participant responses are included within Table 12.

Table 12

Supportive Factors

Participant responses	Perceptions	Observations
RP8: "I feel like reaching out to community service. Reaching out to groups that are willing to help out and bring maybe grants into our organization and help grow would be helpful."	Advocacy Funding Opportunities to Expand	The participant was engaged and hopeful.
RP7: "Transportation, money, funding, money, free adult education classes for the parents to get help, free language classes for parents to get help, free tutoring for students and parents. Resources. A lot of these parents don't know how to sign their kids up for classes. Resources that are advertised better. Make it happen at the schools, make it happen at the library."	Need for additional public services. Funding. Support to empower parents. Support from schools	The participant was engaged and confident.
RP9: "If we had a set place of fields, where we could all use our fields and have practice locations that didn't cost a bunch of money or didn't have a bunch of red tape around where you had to be a part of a certain type of program or organization to get, or like weasel your way in because it's going to cost this much to use it. I think just having the fields, the facilities, would be huge for us to where we could use those type of places with our kids on a regular basis without cost to where we could get to them, use them, and actually use them for practice, use them for other events."	Access to quality public facilities. Access to facilities without need for specific affiliation or permissions. Transportation. Funding.	The participant spoke openly.
RP5: "Meet the parents of the children you know so their parents are getting involved, and basically going to know about what we do. We're here for sports. We're here. Just tell them our mission. Basically, explain to the parents what our mission is and that's just to get these kids off the streets, make sure they stay off and do something."	Advocacy to families. Communication. Increase parent involvement through advocacy.	The participant was open and engaged.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Rudestam and Newton (2015) emphasized that qualitative studies typically involve the analysis of data that is sensitive to a cultural and social context. Findings within qualitative research can be complex and interpretive as the researcher utilized

words as the analysis component (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Careful planning, execution, and reflection through the transcendental phenomenological process can amplify the integrity, validity, and trustworthiness of the study so that its results can be replicated. Acknowledging that one's lived experiences differ among each individual, if the study were replicated in an area with nonprofit organizations sharing various similarities of the cooperating organizations within this study, one should see a consistency in emergent themes across participants. For instance, while each participant had unique lived experiences with their mentees, a consistency in "tragedies" within their described stories remained consistent. Tragedy emerged as an identified experience among youth mentors and contributed to the theme of "psychological resilience." Additionally, while the description of caring varied among each participant in the form of friend, someone who cares, knowing that someone cares, the essence of caring emerged as an evident aspect in role awareness. Undergoing a rigorous data analysis and evaluation process contributes to the trustworthiness of a phenomenological study. The following section describes the steps taken to establish credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability within this study. These procedures contributed toward the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility

Credibility is an important component of a qualitative study. Adopting an Epoche process assisted with setting aside my own experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon. However, during the final stages of the data analysis process, the credibility of the study is evident through my ability to practice imaginative variation. My own experiences as a founder of a nonprofit youth mentorship organization, a volunteer youth

mentor, and a paid childcare counselor provided multiple lenses from which the essence of the phenomenon could be viewed. This crystallization process empowers the study by deriving additional interpretations of the themes that emerged during the previous stages of the data analysis process.

Another method to ensure the credibility of this study was to ensure all participants were identified and properly classified. This was used through a demographics survey disseminated to each participant and vetting cooperating organizations. Field notes were reviewed to ensure that they were accurately reflected within the data collection process. Having semi-structured interviews allowed for follow up questions to be asked after the structured interview questions to make sure that responses were fully understood and clear.

Taking measures to ensure that participant responses were honest was important to for this study. Ensuring that participation was voluntary was a priority. Additionally, continuously remaining aware of participant's body language was important. This helped the researcher notate times when a participant may be holding back information and when they really began to feel comfortable about opening up about their experiences, perceptions, and motivations. Confidentiality was also a priority. Taking time to explain the study, introduce myself, and being honest with them about my roles within the community was a way to establish rapport with participants.

Dependability

Dependability is related to the reliability of the study's results. The dependability of a qualitative study is dependent on the study's methodological rigor (Creswell, 2013). The steps taken in this study to ensure dependability was through descriptive analysis.

For instance, for each theme, a definition was developed to encompass meaning. This was important because it ensured universal understanding of why phrases captured by participants were classified within these thematic categories. This also ensured the purposefulness of the thematic process and incorporated a systematic approach to justify the judgment of participant responses to correspond directly with specific themes. A specific and detailed methodology was ascribed prior to beginning the study and followed throughout the data collection and analysis process. Utilizing a semi structured interview design allowed for uniformity, but also for leniency to clarify initial responses from participants. Reviews of the recording and transcriptions were repeated multiple times to ensure accuracy.

Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the objectivity of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). Confirmability in this study was ensured by reviewing and checking the data multiple times and following a pre-planned, detailed process during data collection. Listening to each audio interview multiple times and proof-reading interview transcripts also assisted with ensuring confirmability. The thematic process through establishment of nodes through the utilization of NVivo also contributed to confirmability.

Transferability

Transferability of the study refers to the ability for readers to understand the setting and parameters of the study and have the ability to ascertain whether findings of the study can be transferred due to similar circumstances, environments, or characteristics (Creswell, 2013). Using rich textural descriptions for participants and the environment ensured that this study is transferrable to environments and participants sharing similar

characteristics. These rich descriptions allow readers to replicate the study in similar environments and identify participants of similar demographics for future research.

Summary

This chapter discussed the results of the study. This chapter also addressed the relationships between the data results and the research question. Descriptions of each participant, the research setting, and emergent themes was provided to help understand what role volunteers serve within formal youth mentorship programs. Within this chapter, a detailed description of the data collection and analysis experience was provided, as well as steps taken to ensure components of trustworthiness and findings of the study. Processes taken throughout the data collection and analysis process were described. Nonverbal responses and researcher observations were included with participant responses.

Chapter 5 provides additional insights and interpretations of the findings within the study. Chapter 5 also provides a discussion on how these results relate to the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. Limitations and recommendations for future research and practical applications will be included within Chapter 5. Additionally, implications of positive social change will be addressed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I explored the qualitative details of mentor sustainability within formal youth mentorship programs. Through this study, I sought to explore the differences in the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations between volunteer and paid youth mentors in order to attain a better understanding of mentor sustainability within formal youth mentorship programs. Youth mentorship programs have been a focal point for policymakers across a multitude of policy realms to include criminal justice and public safety, education, and public health. Mentor sustainability is a key component to the effectiveness of youth mentorship programs (Allen & Eby, 2011; DuBois et al., 2011). Through a phenomenological exploration into the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors, this study aimed to provide insight into why mentors stay and provide a voice for mentors so that policymakers can understand needs and concerns related to mentor sustainability.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of my study provide insight to mentor sustainability. The interpretations of these findings lead to an understanding that while paid and volunteer mentors may differ in motivations and how they view their roles as mentors, their experiences and desired resources are very similar. The findings of the study provide policy implications to policymakers at a legislative level as well as administrators internal to each nonprofit organization hosting a formal youth mentorship program.

Research Question

This study sought to answer the following research question: What are the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors who serve within formal youth mentorship programs? Data from the study showed that the experiences and perceptions of paid and volunteer mentors were similar; however, the motivations of paid mentors changed throughout their time of service. This suggests that mentor motivations may evolve as they further experience the intricacies of the mentorship process.

Mentor Experiences

When delving into the lived experiences of paid and volunteer mentors, overall, participants reported to have had generally a positive" or varied" experience as youth mentors. One result revealing that no participants reported overall negative experiences as mentors was important. The result implied that mentors did not identify their roles as commodities provided as part of their jobs and that they did not serve simply due to monetary compensation. This is important for policymakers because it indicates that mentors' motivations are more directly related to their experiences and understanding of their roles within the community rather than compensation. While future research is needed to compare compensation rates and economic strain that youth mentors experience, this study indicates that mentors are not choosing to remain part of their programs due to salary or income.

The experiences of each mentor were unique. However, there were several similarities in the analysis nodes that emerged into the themes of psychological resilience, collectivism, awareness, and community patriotism. These experiences involved barriers, frustrations, self-doubt, hope, and tragedy. While mentors opened up

about tragedy and frustrations within their personal stories, they also described a sense of

hope and resilience. For instance, RP3 described his experiences as varied, comparing his

work to a police officer's job, emphasizing that there is a level of uncertainty while

serving as a mentor and the need for a mentor to be psychologically prepared. RP 2

described his experience as varied, emphasizing that there were success stories, yet also

tragedy and frustration.

> I just think you got to be mentally strong to do that, to be a youth mentor. I think
>
> you have to be mentally able to understand what you will witness, what you will
>
> see, and how things are not always as people paint them to be. Because when
>
> you're dealing with my case, inner city youth, coming from broken homes, low
>
> income, you will see it all. You will see kids abused, you will see kids hungry,
>
> same clothes, for a whole week. And you have to make sure you're ready for that
>
> because it's not easy seeing kids go through these things and knowing they have
>
> no help and not just in their own homes but in the community itself. And that's
>
> just id say is the biggest thing. You have to be mentally prepared for knowing
>
> people don't want to help. Because you have to know you cannot save everybody.
>
> You just can't. (RP2)

These responses indicate the need for policymakers to consider whether policies should

be established for mentors similar to other public sector workers in communities such as

social work, education, and law enforcement.

Identifying youth mentorship as a dimension within in the public sector and

calling for a mandated need for this role within communities could be impactful to

neighborhood revitalization. For instance, RP6 explained how her experience with the

older aged youth in her program was impacted after a women's shelter nearby had

changed their policies, stating,

> There is a women's shelter close to where I work, and they changed their policy
>
> on the ages of kids that can live there. So, before we had a lot of those kids that
>
> would come here. So, now that they've changed their policy, they don't have
>
> older kids, so a lot of the older kids don't come. (RP6)

While families affected by policys change still receive government services such as

access to education, social work, and government assistance with housing and food,

youth mentorship services are not a mandated social service available to youth.

Therefore, the weight of internal policy changes across various diverse organizations can

have negative consequences for youth receiving mentorship who may have already

established a trusting relationship with a mentor.

The theme of psychological resilience was captivating to me, as it emerged from

mentor experiences and should be a focal point for future research. Psychological

resilience was important because the stressors and experiences of tragedy were often

related to safety and trauma to not just the mentees but also secondary trauma to the

mentors. For instance, one participant described experiences with three mentees who

witnessed their parents murdered and the challenges he had to not only overcome in order

to help the youth, but also the internal challenges of sympathy and his ability to face the

unexpected traumas his mentees experienced. Another participant discussed the tragedy

of when one of his mentees died. Both of these participants revealed heightened senses of

both frustrations and hope.

Many of the participants followed their experiences of tragedy with a feeling of helplessness because they were aware of the challenges and traumas each of their mentees faced from living in poor home environments, and mentors felt they are unable to do anything to help. For instance, RP2 described the sense of helplessness after discussing his experience when he received a phone call at 2 in the morning from a mentee because his father was chasing his mother with a machete.

> There was a time that a kid called me to come get him from his home around 2 o'clock in the morning. His stepdad was threatening his mom with a machete. A very chaotic phone call. And it's…"what do I do? It's two o'clock in the morning. Do I leave my house to go pick up this kid at his house then ask him "what's going on?" Do I call the police? Do I not call the police? It seems like it's a very serious situation, but what if it's not that serious?...And then you start thinking to yourself. "okay, do I want to be involved with this going forward? Am I going to start having problems with the stepdad? Is the Mom, who is being attacked, is she going to have a problem with it because I was called? And…(sigh). Then you also worry about your own family. It's "what is my wife going to think? I'm going to go pick up a kid that works out with this sport and take him to compete, but his stepdad's threatening his whole family with a machete. He's drunk. He's enraged. Am I putting myself in danger? I have my own family to worry about. Will she be happy if I get hurt trying to help this kid out? (RP2)

When contemplating public policy influences on mentor sustainability, the notion of psychological resilience as well as motivational factors and role awareness steers

policy entrepreneurs to develop policy within the policy agenda for social work and social services.

Other descriptions of helplessness include the following:

> There's some things that we can't control. That we can only do so much of because when you start getting into the family life and what not, you can't cross those lines, because at the end of the day you have to worry about other aspects of your life and not get too involved with mentorship. It's a thin line between letting that consume you. (RP2)

> Sometimes you see kids that think they kind of don't have a chance. They're put in the bad situation and they don't really see a way out so it's kind of hard sometimes, because you want to help them, but you don't know how far you can go into helping them. (RP1)

> I kind of try to not think about it when I'm not at work, because if you think about, "oh, these kids are in a really messed up situation" it can consume you. (RP6)

These experiences coupled with a sense of helplessness led to a standard of care constricted by boundaries that do not align with the essential role of a mentor such as dependable or lifeline. These experiences are important for policymakers to understand because these experiences imply the need for programs to equip mentors with the tools that empower them to be dependable and have the security, training, abilities, and confidence to serve as lifelines to their mentees. This also highlights the dynamic of

organizational responsibility of self-care and the need to foster tools for mentors to develop the psychological resilience to bare the trauma of these experiences so that they remain healthy and are not susceptible to burnout or mental health issues as these experiences accumulate.

Along with tragedies, secondary trauma, and helplessness, mentors spoke about experienced barriers such as attendance, funding, inability to relate, manpower, parent involvement, public schools, program adjustments, quality facilities, resources, time, and trust. These barriers were often related to the perceived frustrations which included: lack of engagement, chaos, negative program experience, and feeling powerless. Additionally, frustrations and barriers were also evident in experiences described by multiple participants relating concerns of safety for mentors due to the neighborhood in which they serve. Concerns regarding mentor safety were evident in stories involving crime in the community near the locations that the mentors served. RP3 stated, "At a particular site there was a shooting down the street from the site. They heard the shots, they felt one of the shots go by." Mentors expressed the need for a different location where there was less crime. Multiple mentors spoke of shootings and violent crime, describing the neighborhood area as rough. Additionally, RP6 brought up concerns regarding homelessness and safety for her mentees as she stated:

> You'll have homeless people walking by and you're trying to do something with
> the kids and you'll just have random homeless people yelling out in the streets. Or
> just situations where you don't feel safe letting the kids walk home from the
> program. (RP6)

Another mentor spoke about his experiences in the community growing up and how the

deterioration of the neighborhood brought concerns for future youth. This should be of concern to policymakers as it provides a sense of urgency to explore how to ensure the safety of mentors serving our youth in high crime communities remain safe. Feelings of danger and insecurities paired with feelings of helplessness and self-doubt can contribute to individuals choosing to leave the practice of mentorship. If policymakers and mentorship programs can seek to influence the immediate environment of these youth mentors, the sustainability of these mentors within these programs could impact the quality of community long-term.

Mentor experiences across paid and volunteer mentors impacted their level of awareness. Paid mentors tended to emerge from the community area and already had experiences in the specific community in which they served. Two paid mentors were not raised within the community area; however, one described experiences of poverty and expressed the ability to relate those experiences to the community area and the other described that she grew up a few minutes away from the community. Volunteer mentors that were more tenured within their programs also had prior experiences in the community area.

While mentors expressed both positive and negative experiences, a sense of patriotism for the community emerged within the study. Community patriotism is defined as an intentional focus to give back directly to the specific community area. While mentors, both paid and volunteer, did not all grow up within the community area, they expressed experiences with the specific area prior to becoming a mentor. Many mentors were proud that they lived in the community area prior to becoming a mentor, regardless of the neighborhood's reputation of poverty and crime. Although some of their prior

experiences varied, the impact of their experiences was meaningful enough to later attract that mentor to serve the community. Additionally, participants expressed that they chose to serve as a mentor in order to contribute or give back to their community. There was a sense of pride, ownership, and positive energy as they spoke about the community. Participants' awareness of the poverty and crime rates within the community served as a catalyst their service. Participants also expressed a sense of hope that change is possible through their actions.

The concept of community patriotism has several public policy implications. For instance, mentors who exhibit community patriotism often reside in the community that they serve. The practice of people serving within their own neighborhood may increase community cohesion; however, this practice contributes to many barriers expressed by participants such as a lack of advocacy, funding, and resources, as well as the need for additional outside support. The lack of advocacy can be related to community patriotism because the lower-socio economic community is being served by members of that same low socio-economic status. Due to this isolation, funding is a barrier that many nonprofits face; however, organizations that have a high sense of community patriotism may not flourish as easily because there is a lack of connection with those outside of that socio-economic status that could contribute toward financially supporting program activities.

Experiences of mentors also influenced the level of awareness of the community and the need for service. As mentors continued to experience the community area, their level of awareness increased. With hardship experiences, such as tragedy and frustration, mentor perceptions were affected. Too many experiences of hardship indicated a sense of lost hope and helplessness. These powerful experiences impacted mentor perceptions of

effectiveness and how they perceived their role. This is important for policymakers as they must understand that role awareness may be influenced by tenure; therefore, having a strong support system contributes to mentors perceiving that they are being helped and are not alone.

As mentors experienced barriers, frustrations, and tragedy, they often spoke of supporting each other and a need to be aligned. Both paid and volunteer mentors recognized the importance of peer support and teamwork. This was supported by the emergent theme of collectivism. Collectivism is defined as cohesiveness and team experience with one common goal. Participants expressed a collective mindset throughout interviews and expressed a need for collectiveness as a supportive factor. It was interesting listening to interviews as mentors described their experiences and perceptions using "we" throughout. This indicated a collective mindset and that mentoring was not an individual effort to help others but, rather, required a team of mentors to meet the needs of others.

Understanding that collectivism is an influential factor in youth mentorship is important for policymakers and program managers. Policy implications regarding collectivism relates to the need for a sense of community as mentors. Additionally, this emphasized the need for managers to construct team-based components into organization mentorship programs and foster a sense of collectivism so that mentors are more equipped to overcome challenges and frustrations. Mentors are more likely to stay involved if they feel that they are on a team and have support.

Mentor Perceptions

Understanding the key perceptional components of paid and volunteer mentors is important because it highlights the mindset of mentors and how things are being perceived. These components also highlight the effectiveness and intentions of program policies and reveal whether policies are empowering or restricting these social actors. Additionally, understanding the differences between paid and volunteer mentors' perceptions indicate how policymakers can empower each type of mentor.

Within the study, paid and volunteer mentors expressed similar perceptions to describe their roles, highlighting that key components to a mentor's role involved role modelling, consistency, support, and dependability. Paid mentors perceived mentors as caretakers and volunteer mentors perceived their role as a provider. Understanding how mentors perceive their role is important to policymakers and program managers because it enables them to explore whether the mentor role anticipated by program managers and policymakers aligns with how mentors actually perceive their role. If there is a lack of alignment between the perceived role and the expected role of a mentor, then this indicates a need for training that can establish alignment. Parsons (1956) described the importance of the social actors within a social system and how the system is reliant upon the motivations and choices of these actors within their perceived roles. From a functionalist lens, the role in which mentors serve can inadvertently affect other components of the social system such as social values and empowering other social actors within overlapping social institutions such as education, law enforcement, and health care.

Perceptions of success were also explored within the study. Perceived success was focused on education, enjoyment, engagement, feeling connected with mentee, resilience, life skills, and whether they saw an impact or change in a youth. While success was described differently by each mentor, the action of directly seeing or witnessing a positive change was consistent. This witnessing is important to perceived success because it implies the need for organizations to highlight and celebrate the impact their mentors are having within the community and on their mentees' lives. Additionally, perceptions of success are indicative of dimensions that can be influenced. Dimensions or streams that can be influenced are important for policymakers and program administrators because while public policy aims to address social problems within the realms of mental health, criminal justice, and education, the results of this study indicates that the influence of youth mentorship covers much smaller realms within these public policy streams. This finding implies that mentorship cannot be used to address large public policy concerns, but rather mentorship is an approach that must supplement additional efforts. This supplementing approach supports the notion discussed within the literature review regarding the overlap that mentorship has across multiple policy streams and exemplifies the importance and impact that integrated programs have within society.

Supportive factors emerged when exploring mentors' perceptions regarding the mission of their organization, its effectiveness, and empower them to give the best care to their mentee. Paid and volunteer mentors differed in perceived supportive factors with regard to training. While training across volunteer and paid mentors was overall perceived as positive, paid mentors expressed variables related to self-doubt and emphasized the need for additional training and a mentor training program that could

serve to support the growing process of mentorship. This is important for policymakers because the concern for additional and ongoing training by participants is indicative of a need to address components of self-doubt, helplessness, and a desire from participants to improve, grow, and develop. Volunteer mentors also perceived additional training and education as a positive supportive factor; however, volunteers desired trainings and certifications for specific situations, anticipated scenarios, and tools on how to engage with specific populations of youth. The desire for training indicates a sense of hope from participants that the practice of mentorship is effective but that there is room and a willingness to grow which can contribute to psychological resilience.

Volunteer mentors focused most of their attention on the need for public support, accessibility to public parks, and a strong support network from entities such as educational institutions and local government departments. Gaining insight into the perceived supportive components contributed to the overall essence of mentor sustainability because perceived support provided a sense of understanding into the described experiences of mentors, as well as organizational and environmental factors.

The essence of public policy support expressed by mentors was captured in the theme of professionalization. Professionalization refers to formalization of youth mentorship as a public service and highlights the possibility for policymakers to consider whether mentors should have a clearly defined roles as a working for the public good just like public servants. Professionalization may mean legislating minimal standards of training and empowering organizational leaders to seek collaboration with other public good organizations to pool resources to better serve the youths within the community. Professionalization emerged as a theme in subjects of structured curriculum, increased

mentor education, peer-to-peer support program, improvement on communication, formalization of the mentorship role, and advocacy. For instance, five volunteer and five paid participants expressed a desire for some form of additional training. Every participant expressed that training was helpful to some extent. Paid mentors called for an increase in organization and structure. Additionally, paid mentors identified that having a structured curriculum was helpful and that there was a need to clearly define their role as a mentor within their program. Both paid and volunteer mentors spoke about the importance of effective communication both internally within their organization and externally, across the community. Both paid and volunteer mentors called for the need for advocacy for their efforts and organization. Additionally, their influences in the community were a focal point when describing support factors and future growth.

Collaboration was another perceived support factor that both paid and volunteer mentors expressed. Collaboration refers to efforts toward serving the community through partnerships across multiple nonprofit organizations and public networks. Collaboration entails the sharing of resources to help everyone in need. While both paid and volunteer mentors perceived collaboration as a key support factor, volunteers spoke more about the need for collaboration among schools and called for access to quality facilities and resources such as public transportation. Paid mentors spoke about collaboration across other nonprofits and sharing of funds to help everyone in need. Collaborations were expressed in the form of organizational partnerships, an increase in liaisons between schools and youth mentorship organizations, and integration of program components to be incorporated within educational and public service programming.

Collaboration is important for policymakers because it is an indication that youth mentorship programs are not receiving the necessary support from government components which is placing strain on mentors serving within programs. Additionally, this is important because it implies that mentors feel a sense of fragmentation between organizational efforts, goals, and missions and the justice system, government, and educational institutions. Mentors identified a lack of investment in public schools as well as public facilities such as parks and fields. This indicates a need for policymakers to focus their attention toward these public sector components. If policymakers and program managers can find ways to foster collaboration between mentorship organizations and public sector entities, organizations can explore ways to empower each other and serve youths across multiple dimensions, decreasing strain on mentors.

These perceptions of empowerment are important for public policy makers because they identify a complex system aligned with a functionalist viewpoint. The multiple emerging themes exemplify how the public schools, public facilities, funding opportunities, organizational policy and procedures, and individual mindsets and perceived roles are interrelated to establish a functional system. These perceptions also highlight the need to ensure that each dimension of the social system is supported in an appropriate way, to ensure optimization of each public service and empowerment of each public servant within these sectors.

Mentor Motivations

Motivations among paid and volunteer mentors were initially different but there was a unique variable that surfaced with regard to matured passion in paid mentors. While the use of compensation and personal interests may serve as an initial way to

capture an individual's interest to begin mentoring, a mentor is subject to maturation over time and continuous awareness and enlightenment about themselves, their role, and the impact they are having within their community can change the trajectory of motivation from egoism to altruism. While initial motivations between individuals may have differed between paid and volunteer mentors, the subtheme of "matured passion" emerged from paid mentors indicating that while one's motives may have initially presented from an ego mindset, the experiences of collectiveness, success, accomplishment, and awareness of their needed role in their community leads to a sense of "matured passion" across mentors. Several participants fell within the classification of "paid mentor" but revealed a "matured passion." RP3 described this experience of realization as:

> I guess how it got all started, I didn't even look for the opportunity. It's just I was wearing a hat with my country's flag on it and my boss is from the same country I am, and he just started speaking to me and he was like "Dude you should apply, get to doing it", and that's how it all started. It's developed from just an opportunity to coach sport and get some money to "hey listen, I'm going to do this even though I'm going to have school and then I'm going to have another job and I have family things, because it helps the kids. (RP3)

This same participant called for a change in policy to mandate mentor commitment for a minimum of one year due to the realization of this growing process:

> I feel after a year of constant things…you always see them on social media. "Oh, I've worked out for a whole year and look at my body now." . . . And there is a real change. There is. So, I feel personally a whole year is enough time to be able to not only change somebody but be able to make them understand. I've always

said if it goes with school, it goes with everything. If you just sit there and just go through the motions, you're not going to get anything out of it. But if you truly try to understand, you put your effort in trying to understand the reason why…not the how, not the what, but the *why* you're doing what you're doing? *Why* are we mentors and not just coaches? I feel if you have somebody putting you in a situation…you put an experienced mentor and a new mentor in the worst school that you can find, or the worst program that you have, and they get to first-hand see the struggle that these kids go through that could impact them. Not only help them, but also impact them. And be like what you're doing really matters. It's not just a ten-dollar paycheck an hour. It's not just, "I'm making a little bit of money so I can go out to the bar on the weekend." It's "what I'm doing has an impact." We need people who understand and take their job seriously. And we need organizations that take their job seriously too. (RP3)

RP1 expressed,

It just kind of fell into place that I knew this organization and I just liked what they were doing. At first, I was just kind of like, "this is a job, its flexible, it works with my schedule." But then as I ended up being here and meeting all of these different kids from different backgrounds, it was exactly what I wanted. Because everybody wants to save the world and change people's lives, and this was such an easy way to do it. (RP1)

In these instances, a sense of "matured passion" emerged where the participants describe a development process that takes place from their lived experiences as a mentor and the realization that what they did mattered.

Exploring the lived experiences of various mentors from different formal youth mentorship programs who serve within the same community revealed the essence that mentor motivation is an organic and evolving component subject to maturation. Mentor maturation could be a product of positive mentoring experiences and self-realization or negative experiences that lead to burn out due to experienced tragedies and frustrations. Additionally, within this theme of motivational factors, mentor motivations were often related to past experiences, both good and bad. The essence of mentor motivation is important for policymakers to understand because it is a pivotal component in sustainability. If programs are able to foster a positive and supportive environment that fosters positive experiences, as a mentor matures and finds their self-identity rooted within the role of a mentor, their motivations also mature in a positive direction. The more mentors feel intrinsic motivations to serve, then these motivations will contribute to the sustainability of mentors within programs.

The Essence of Mentor Sustainability

Upon combining the emerging themes and meanings from each of these dimensions, this study provides the essence of mentor sustainability. Mentor sustainability occurs when a mentor matures and reaches a state of enlightenment through a growing process of realization that their role as a mentor is impactful not only on another's life, but also on their community. Mentors reach this state of realization as they see that their efforts to provide, help, and care matter and their need to serve is being satisfied. This realization is reached through experiences of tragedy, success, and growth. This process is amplified and may be accelerated through formal and on-going training, a continuous development support system, collectivism, and access to resources that foster

a safe environment for these public servants and empower them to overcome barriers, and frustrations. Sustainability is an dynamic state and influenced by social action across multiple realms of public policy to include youth development, education, criminal justice, and public health that fall under the responsibilities of program administrators, community, local government, and federal government.

Support for the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focused on Parson's (1951) structural functionalism and Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams approach (MSA). The research question for the study was important when exploring the phenomenon of mentor sustainability; by unveiling the lived experiences and perceptions of mentors, the essence of why mentors continue in their role was highlighted. By providing a voice for mentors, this study provided a lens for policymakers to view the phenomenon of mentor sustainability and reveal components perceived as support, empowerment, and a basis of understanding of the challenges that mentors face.

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism relates to this study because it provides an explanation of how policy decisions across various policy realms can have unanticipated consequences and influence actors within the social system. Structural functionalism explores social components from a macro viewpoint and posits that society operates within a system when each part is interdependent upon another (Parsons, 1951). Like the pieces of a clock, if one part is not operating correctly, the clock is rendered dysfunctional and cannot keep proper time. When viewing the phenomenon of mentor sustainability through the lens of structural functionalism, one can gain a better understanding of how

mentor experiences and perceptions are interrelated to motivation and how this chain of relations impacts sustainability. Viewing the phenomenon through the lens of structural functionalism also provided insight into how policy decisions across various policy realms, in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors can impact mentor sustainability and emphasized the importance for policymakers to make well-informed decisions and follow a best practices approach. Structural functionalism provided a scope to view the results of the study at a macro level.

Multiple Streams Approach

The second theory used to comprise the conceptual framework of this study is Kingdon's MSA. The multiple streams approach provides a valuable perspective related to public policy and the agenda setting process. Kingdon (1995) described the policy development process in a metaphor of three streams: problem, political, and policy streams. Kingdon elaborated on this metaphor explaining that ideas make the policy agendas when these three streams intersect at one time, presenting a window of opportunity for policy entrepreneurs. This theory is important when establishing the conceptual framework because it emphasizes that there is a temporal component to understanding the policy process. Additionally, MSA provides a basis for this study because it explains why youth mentorship has been interwoven through a multitude of policy realms as described within Chapter 2.

My conceptual framework provided insight into how some of the participant responses and emergent themes were consequential of policy decisions and practices across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, as well as how participant responses and emergent themes were contributors to mentor sustainability. Utilizing this conceptual

framework to interpret the results of the study provides insight to policymakers who can make informed decisions that will empower mentors and contribute toward mentor retainment.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. For instance, this study was a transcendental phenomenological study. Phenomenological studies seek to explore the essence of an experienced phenomenon in order to reach realization and understanding (Mousakas, 1994). Phenomenological studies involve interactive interviews between a researcher and participant and are reliant upon collective understanding between participant and researcher, honesty, and a willingness to share. As the researcher, I am confident that each participant read and understood the demographics questionnaire and informed consent. To ensure understanding, both forms were read verbally to the participant and acknowledgement of understanding was obtained both written and verbally. Participants were encouraged to ask for clarification if they did not understand any of the interview questions and clarity was provided as needed. Additionally, interviews were semi-structured and allowed to flow organically with the allotment of follow up questions during and after the interviews. This allowed the researcher to clarify information expressed and also allowed the participant to ensure they were being understood.

An additional limitation for this study is that the results may not be generalizable across a state or nation. While the study utilized multiple nonprofit organizations serving youth in the same community area, the reports of experiences, perceptions, and motivations of participants are related to the organizational environment in which they serve, the community and social factors associated with the area that their organizations

are based, and the temporal components related to leadership, tenure of program, and political, cultural, and economic climate in which they serve.

A third limitation of this study includes research biases due to my own experiences and role within the community. Steps to account for this included acknowledgement of roles and possible bias, journaling, bracketing, and mindfulness to separate myself from my preconceptions during data collection and data analysis phases and maintain the Epoche state. Once I reached the phase of analysis when imaginative variation was acceptable, my previous experience as a paid childcare counselor, volunteer mentor, and executive for a nonprofit mentorship organization became advantageous in deriving meaning from the mentor's lived experiences and gaining an understanding of the results. This insight was not used until after Chapter 4 was complete, and the results of my study could then be reflected upon using multiple lenses. The various lenses in which I viewed the essence of mentor sustainability empowered me to derive meaningful interpretations of the results of the study from various points of views, providing the voice of mentors to organizational administrators, policymakers, and legislatures. Additionally, my reputation within the community enabled me to establish a rapport with participants and a sense of security that they could be truthful and open during interviews.

A final limitation was based on the demographics of participants. Ten out of 12 participants had less than five years of experience as a mentor. This low tenure may have contributed to themes related to self-doubt and the calling for additional training programs by participants. This also could have influenced reported lived experiences and frustrations. The fact that participants with such little tenure had already experienced

tragedy and frustrations is significant because additional time as a mentor would only amplify the frequency of these experiences or else have no influence on them. Additional research with a purposeful sample of tenured mentors is recommended to ascertain what the weight of these tragedies are to mentors as well long-term psychological effects.

Social Change Implications

The positive social change supported by this study is important because it brings a purpose to the need for enlightenment and understanding regarding youth mentorship. Having an impact through positive social change empowers research to further affect the way the world develops. My hope is that my research will have a positive impact on youth mentorship as related to mentor sustainability. By providing a voice for youth mentors to policymakers, decisions regarding funding allocations and the professionalization of mentorship can be well informed. My research may also contribute to positive social change for nonprofit managers by providing insight into the needs of mentors serving under their supervision. For instance, if nonprofit managers have an understanding of the matured passion that takes place among mentors as they begin their service, managers can find ways to foster this development process by providing a graduated training program. My research may contribute to positive social change for policymakers by empowering them to anticipate how to sustain programs within communities with similar demographics. By providing a better understanding into the essence of mentor sustainability and how various dimensions; such as perceived barriers, experienced tragedies, and support factors, interrelate to impact mentor experiences, perceptions, and motivations; policymakers can schedule resources in efforts to empower mentor satisfaction and retention.

Program managers are those charged with decision making pertaining development of program activities and staff training within their nonprofit organizations. Program managers can utilize this study because it reveals unique perceptions of mentors and provides sustainability from the mentors' perspectives. Understandings regarding initial and longitudinal motivations, lived experiences, and perceived barriers on a local and national level are provided through the mentor lens. Program managers can gain an understanding on what mentors desire, what they may need, and why they serve for specific programs. Program managers can also derive meaningful information pertaining to mentor recruitment, retention, and ongoing care of their employees or volunteers as their programs continue to grow. Program managers can also develop impactful policy as it relates to operations, communication, training, mentor development, program activities, and resource investments.

Another area of positive social change that can be derived from this study is for policymakers. Policymakers can become informed on the struggles that mentors are experiencing within these community-based programs. As youth mentorship issues continuously cycles across various policy realms and streams, this study can contribute to the currency of the policy stream and empower policymakers within local government to effect change and advocate more resources. Local government departments can then empower those who serve the youths within the community. By understanding the needs of youth mentors as community servants, those involved in local government can make informed decisions regarding supporting programs across all three sectors. Policymakers should foster a supportive environment for youth mentors such that mentorship programs will be lasting and effective due to the sustainment of committed mentors.

An additional implication of positive social change is at the state and national government levels. Fernandez-Alcantara (2015) identified that $90 million of federal funding was allocated toward youth mentorship. Decisionmakers charged with funding and resource allocation for youth mentorship programs can become more informed of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors. This study provides a voice for these mentors to policymakers so that resources can be most effectively allocated to support programs that align with a best practices approach and provide promising results pertaining to mentor sustainability. Investment in lasting programs will lead to lasting results in mentees' lives as well as the entire community.

Recently, research has indicated a need to better understand how to sustain mentors within youth mentorship programs and a calling for the need to pay mentors in order to address sustainability (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015). By providing a voice for each type of mentor, policymakers can better anticipate consequences of social action and the impact that legislation regarding the professionalization of mentors may have in the future. Additionally, this study suggests evidence to policymakers that the mentorship process is dynamic. Therefore, there is an acknowledged of need to establish a developmental and supportive process the empowers youth mentors with coping and self-regulation skills to face tragedies and frustrations. In addition, policymakers should provide the resources to overcome barriers mentors face when serving the youths in their community. Finally, I hope that my study provides evidence that mentorship is influential on not only the mentee, but also the mentor as well. Mentorship has a directional impact on an individual's level of altruism over time, and mentorship programs need to expedite this self-realization. Perhaps, some day, mentees will become the new mentors.

Recommendation for Action

This study has several recommendations for action. For instance, this study fills a gap in the literature by providing further understanding of youth mentorship from the mentor's perspective. This study serves as a voice for mentors to be heard by policymakers. This study supports policies that satisfy mentors' needs, especially with adequate resource allocations. Ensuring that leaders and policymakers are informed of the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of mentors empowers leaders and policymakers to reach decisions on conflicting policy streams regarding effective resource allocation for youth mentorship programs. One essential goal is to foster an environment across all three sectors that promotes mentor sustainability. Additionally, this study demonstrates components of unanticipated consequences of social action and how policy decisions regarding resource allocation can affect other components of society. The social system that mentors serve in makes them community or even public servants. As such, youth mentors should be controlled by the same policies and allowed the same resources that other public servants have become accustomed to. Youth mentors should be in a professional group like social workers, educators, police officers, and other first responders.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study calls for additional research in the realm of youth mentorship sustainability. Participants' responses identified a need to further investigate the mental health and long-term psychological costs on individuals that serve as youth mentors. This is important for policymakers and program administrators to acknowledge so that funding can be appropriately allocated to ensure that those charged with the care of youths receive

the psychological care and maintenance to absorb the tragedies, frustrations, and barriers they encounter during their time as a mentor.

Additional areas recommended in the realms of mentorship research include the following:

- Exploring mentor sustainability focused on individual experiences, perceptions, and motivation who have left the service of youth mentorship.

- Evaluation of mentor-mentee ratio and management of care.

- Longitudinal study examining symptoms of accumulative PTSD in youth mentors.

- Phenomenological exploration into the experiences, perceptions, and motivation of formal youth mentorship program leaders and administrators.

- Exploration into the perceptions and experiences of family members of youth mentors.

Researcher's Experience

My experience throughout the dissertation process and completing this study has been enlightening. I learned a great deal about myself, the research process, and how to push myself to grow. Resilience, patience with myself, and learning how to no longer fear failure, but rather embrace it, were key factors in developing my abilities to learn, grow, and overcome challenges throughout the process. Throughout this humbling process, I also learned a great deal about how to apply what I learned throughout my public policy and administration courses, as well as research courses, to the real world and how I can utilize my skills and knowledge to explore phenomenon, operationalize stewardship, and encourage others to join me in affecting social change.

This process has also provided much needed insight on the research process and how to conduct well-planned research. Understanding the challenges of conducting interviews, the importance of drafting and planning, and the amount of energy it takes to remain organized, conduct interviews, and analyze data was extremely important to me. The two biggest challenges for me were during the data analysis phase and learning how to optimize the utilization of NVivo as a tool for organizing the data, and then learning how to articulate my thoughts so that they were clear and concise to my audience. I feel that I have grown immensely as a person, researcher, and professional.

Conclusion

There is a problem with youth mentorship. Specifically, the understanding of the phenomenon involving mentor sustainability. This study explored the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of youth mentors and captures the essence of mentor sustainability. This study provides a voice of both paid and volunteer mentors to policymakers so decisions regarding resource allocation and program development can align with empowering these public servants. This study uncovers the initial differences between paid and volunteer mentor motivations as they align with compensation; however, this study also highlights that mentorship sustainability is a dynamic and developmental process for a mentor. This study is significant because it emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluations in the perceived effectiveness that mentors hold, organizational awareness of the mentors' experiences, and highlights a sense of urgency to further explore mentor self-care and psychological resilience.

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Appendix A: Demographics Form

Instructions: Please provide a response for each of the following questions:

1. **What is your age?** _____

2. **What is your gender preference?** _____

3. **What is your annual compensation? (Circle One)**

Less than $30,000 $30,001-$45,000 $45,001-$60,000 $60,001-

$75,000 $70,001-$85,000 $85,001-100,000   Greater than $100,000

4. **How long have you been serving as a mentor?** _____

5. **Do you receive any compensation for serving as a mentor?**

6. **Do you receive a salary for the position of a youth mentor within your organization?**

7. **How many youths do you currently mentor?** _____

Appendix B: Interview Guide

IQ1: How would you describe your role as a mentor?

IQ2: What is the most important part of being a mentor?

IQ3: What motivates you to mentor at-risk youth?

IQ4: Why do you serve as a mentor for your organization?

IQ5: What is, or has been, your general experience of mentoring at-risk youth?

IQ6: How do you determine whether you are effective in your mentoring efforts?

IQ7: When interacting with other youth mentors, what experiences do you feel you share

with them?

IQ8: What are some barriers that limit your ability to give the best care to your mentee?

IQ9: What is the hardest part about your role as a mentor?

IQ10: What is the mission of your organization?

IQ11: How effective is your organization at meeting its mission?

IQ12: What could your organization do to improve your experience as a youth mentor?

IQ13: How has your organization's policies aided in your ability to serve as a mentor?

IQ14: What public services or community efforts do you believe would be helpful to you

as a youth mentor?

Appendix C: Crisis Intervention Resources for Participants

Access Crisis Intervention (ACI) Hotlines - Toll-free ACI Hotline numbers:

- **Boys Town National Hotline** - Offers a 24-hour Nationwide hotline providing short-term counseling and crisis intervention to children and families experiencing any type of difficulty in their lives: 1-800-448-3000
- **Friendship Line** - The Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief Counseling offers the only nation-wide toll-free number offering telephone support to depressed, isolated, abused, and/or suicidal older adults. 1-800-971-0016.
- **National Graduate Student Crisis Line** - Call 1-877-GRAD-HLP (1-877-4723-475)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** - Calls to the Lifeline are routed to the closest possible crisis center to provide immediate assistance. Call for yourself, or someone you care about: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Online Information, Screening and Help:

- **Befrienders International/Samaritans** - An online resource that gives support through e-mail and offers a directory of local crisis helplines. https://www.befrienders.org/
- **MayoClinic.com** - Take the depression self-assessment and create a personal depression manager.

You can also look in the front of the phone book, or dial "0" and ask the operator for any of the following:

- suicide prevention
- crisis intervention
- hotlines - crisis or suicide
- community crisis center
- county mental health center
- hospital mental health clinic

If you are beginning to feel that you need immediate assistance, do not hesitate to dial 9-1-1.