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Experiences in Informal Mentoring Among African American Women in Management

Alexandria Simone Samuels-Ross
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Alexandria Samuels-Ross

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Experiences in Informal Mentoring Among African American Women in Management

by

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MA, Walden University, 2016

BS, South Carolina State University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services–Nonprofit Administration

Walden University

August 2022

Abstract

There is a lack of African American women representing senior management and executive positions within nonprofit organizations due to organizational culture, gender stereotypes, and failure to capitalize on the talents of women in general. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers for over two years in nonprofit organizations. Research has suggested the need for further study of on-the-job mentoring and its impact on employees' job satisfaction and opportunities to advance within an organization. The theoretical framework that guided the study was social exchange theory, which is based on interpersonal relations, social interaction, and serves as a cost-benefit analysis. Homogenous purposive sampling was used to recruit participants to complete this study. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 10 participants, who discussed their point of view; open-ended questions helped participants share their experiences. Participants reported that to reach goals, an individual needed to use all available resources, have confidence, know what they want, initiate relationships, and maintain relationships through reciprocity exchange. The results of this study have potential implications for positive social change by benefitting organizations that can build trust, loyalty, and dedication through informal mentoring and supports. The findings in this study may help mentors realize they are in a mentoring role that is impacting others and encourage those mentors to continue to help other people reach their goals, bringing quality and respect to each other's lives.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my mother. Mom, we did it! Fly high, my angel!

You will forever be missed, my queen.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, thank you God for everything you have done for me. Special thanks to my dad. You knew since I was in high school that one day I would have my doctorate. “The sky is the limit!”

To my husband, thank you for being my number-one supporter. Thank you for always motivating me to keep pushing. Thank you for helping to make all my dreams a reality. I’m blessed to be able to spend every waking moment with you. Let’s continue to break generational curses, create new opportunities for ourselves, and explore the world. To my son, thank you for being my motivation to be better than I was yesterday. I want to thank Dr. Garth Den Heyer, for your guidance and reassurance, as well as Dr. Gregory McCoy and Dr. Nicole Hamilton for your mentoring.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

While the number of women taking on leadership roles and becoming business owners is growing, these women often experience barriers to becoming executives, including lack of mentorship and leadership development and bias for race, gender, and educational standards (Mate et al., 2019). Mentoring plays a key role in leadership styles, career development, business growth, and success (Laukhau & Malone, 2015). Successful mentoring helps individuals from feeling isolated while reaching career goals, encourages them, and guides them through problem solving and accountability (Laukhau & Malone, 2015). Mentoring allows employees to grow in their current position and feel motivated to take on new jobs and career opportunities (Beheshti, 2019). Mentoring benefits the workplace, ensuring job satisfaction and retention (Beheshti, 2019). Sawyer (2017) disclosed that African American women's career advancement to executive positions occurs because of organizational support from senior-level leaders through mentoring. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) iterated the importance of continuing the promise of equal opportunity and allowing more women in leadership because of their unique perspectives for positive social outcomes. With a lack of mentoring, employees often suffer from burnout and depression, leading to high turnover rate or resignations from nonprofit organizations (Friedman, 2018).

Background

Seventy-five percent of nonprofit organizations have majority women employees with only 21% in chief executive positions (Kern, 2016), and only 4% of C-level positions are held by women of color (Washington & Roberts, 2019). African American women have reached the glass ceiling plateau, which is just below the senior management level (Jackson & Bouchard, 2019). The number of women in entrepreneurial leadership roles is advancing, as more than 11.6 million firms are owned by women and 5.4 million firms are owned by women of color (National Association of Women Business Owners, 2017). With less representation of African American women in leadership within nonprofit organizations, this leaves less access to African American women mentors. An area of concern for African American women aspiring to reach executive-level positions is mentoring and networking. Research shows that African American women are less likely to gain access to career-building mentoring relationships (Jackson & Bouchard, 2019). Furthermore, minority women face struggle and isolation working their way to top positions and fear supporting other women because of potential motives and criticism (Girlboss, 2018). Johnson (2018) stated, whether you are a CEO, engineer, scientist, chef, or teacher, you have the power to support and create spaces for women of color .

A good mentor can be the bridge between the individual and the employer, such as advancing to leadership positions with increased salaries and accomplishing personal and professional goals Beheshti (2019). Close relationships with mentors has helped

minority executives build a sense of pride and competence (Jackson & Bouchard, 2019). There are two types of mentoring: formal and informal. Formal mentoring is often structured, has a time duration, and is assigned by an organization (Bynum, 2015). Informal mentoring is self-directed, less structured, and not recognized by the organization (Bynum, 2015). Informal mentoring can be any networking done by the mentee on or off the worksite (Jones et al., 2018). Examples of informal mentoring include peer-to-peer mentoring, executive mentoring, and virtual mentoring. Many organizations are now reconsidering their investment in formal mentoring and looking forward to informal approaches (Beck & Bish, 2017).

Problem Statement

There is a lack of African American women representing senior management and executive positions within nonprofit organizations due to lack of coaching and mentoring, gender stereotyping, and failure to capitalize on the talents of women (Haile et al., 2016). Catalyst (2019) reported that 27% of African American women work in line positions, 57% have managerial responsibilities, and 13% have executive roles. Brown (2019) revealed that African American women experience gender bias when pursuing leadership positions. The long-time employee standards developed from men's perspectives are impacting the structure and culture of organizations (Longman et al., 2018). When capitalizing on the talents of women, females in executive roles benefit the organization, corporate practices, and reducing agency problems. Pucheta-Martinez and Bel-Oms (2016) revealed hiring women as executive leaders impacts the quality and performance

allocating capital to the organization. Through good mentorship, leadership styles, career advancement, and business growth can be generated.

Although the aforementioned research regarding mentoring illuminates important findings, there is limited research that has been conducted to examine African American women in management positions participating in informal mentoring on the job for mental health nonprofit organizations. Therefore, further research is warranted that could examine the experiences of informal mentoring on the job for African American women to address the documented problem of barriers to obtaining leadership positions, including senior management and executives (Mate et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers in nonprofit organizations. Research has suggested the need to further the study of on-the-job mentoring, the impact on employees' job satisfaction, and opportunities to advance within the organization (Brown, 2019; Graham, 2019; Hague & Okpala, 2017). Friedman (2018) revealed the impact of the lack of mentoring for human services professionals within nonprofit organizations. Thus, implementing informal mentoring has shown to be more significant to obtaining senior management positions, but there are barriers to accessing informal networks (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). Therefore, in this study, I explore experiences of informal mentoring on the job and how informal mentoring has benefited career advancement to leadership positions in nonprofit organizations.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of informal mentoring for African American women who have been employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years?

RQ1a: What were challenges African American women who have been employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years experienced when pursuing informal mentoring?

Theoretical Framework

A generic case study was used to conceptualize the framework of social exchange theory. Social exchange theory is based on interpersonal relations, social interaction, and serves as a cost-benefit analysis (Danaei, 2019). Social exchange theory provides a degree of reciprocity of benefits that exist between mentor and mentee (Majiros, 2013). The concept of exchange maximizes personal and professional benefits for individuals and organizations. Social exchange theory was developed in 1958 by George Homans (Majiros, 2013). Exchange ideology defines an organization's effort to support employees in exchange for employee trust, motivation, and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) found that high exchange ideology in relation to organizational support indicates low turnover rates, employee commitment, and obligation to the organization. Employees demonstrated organizational citizenship behavior, higher job performance, and reduced absence from the job (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

For this study, I used social exchange theory to show the reciprocity exchange between workplace, mentor, and mentee. Informal mentoring, such as peer mentoring, executive mentoring, etc., benefits the organization, mentor, and mentee. Through social exchange, a mentor gains ego satisfaction, superiority, recognition, respect, and the building of mutual relationships. The mentor's support and resources given to the mentee can ultimately benefit the place of employment as the workplace culture is impacted. The mentee becomes competent at job duties, delivering job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Job satisfaction leads to high productivity, improved employee performance, employee retention, and subsequent economic benefits for the agency (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017).

Nature of Study

Using a qualitative generic case study, I used open-ended questions to conduct semistructured interviews to gather responses from managers working for nonprofit organizations. Using professional networks, I used homogenous purposive sampling to identify African American managers working for nonprofit organizations. Managers shared their experiences of obtaining and sustaining their position. A generic qualitative approach was used to understand the experiences of informal mentoring to address barriers to obtaining leadership positions. Homogenous sampling considers people who share the same age, gender, background, and occupation (Hagaman & Wutich, 2016). Otter.ai was used to transcribe the data from the interviews. Quirkos was used to analyze the data shared during interviews to answer the research questions. Quirkos will help me

to verify theoretical relationships and understand the meaning behind what is being communicated during the interviews (Kohlbacher, 2006).

Definitions

Career advancement: A process consisting of gaining knowledge to assume more responsibility at a higher level within a particular career field (Hague & Okpala, 2017).

Formal mentoring: A structured mentor–mentee relationship including a more skilled individual with a lesser skilled individual with an agreed upon goal, often initiated in a formal setting by the employment agency or mentor (Holt et al., 2016).

Glass ceiling: The top of the labor market, women are underrepresented and wage gaps between men and women are larger than average (Wells, 2017).

Informal mentoring: A less structured relationship often formulated by the mentee, includes peer mentoring, executive mentoring, virtual mentoring, and a working relationship between two people (Holt et al., 2016).

Managerial positions: Line-related positions that require individuals to assume responsibility for an entire team or division while ensuring the work of the group of individuals is accurate. These positions assume responsibility for terminating relationships based on perceived ratio of benefits to cost (Catalyst, 2012).

Mentee: Less experienced in the mentoring relationship (Ghosh et al., 2018).

Mentor: A person with more experience, who teaches, advises, and supports a less knowledgeable or less experienced person (Ghosh et al., 2018).

Peer mentoring: Coworker or colleague serving as a role model providing guidance (Young, 2015).

Supervisory mentoring: Being mentored by someone in a higher position, including a manager or supervisor (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017).

Virtual mentoring or e-mentoring: One-on-one mentoring that takes place remotely using technology to connect (Arora & Goel, 2018).

Women leaders: Women who bring improved performance and profitability to their organizations, as well as innovation and fresh perspectives to the leadership teams and inspiring vision among their employees (Bierema, 2016).

Assumptions

An assumption is what researchers believe is true, but no adequate evidence exists to support belief (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). I designed this study based on assumptions regarding African American women in managerial roles' experiences with informal mentoring. One assumption was that all participants would truthfully identify themselves as having more than 2 years of experience in a managerial role and would be English-speaking African American women. The second assumption was that each participant works for a nonprofit mental health residential facility. The third assumption was that each interview question would promote detailed discussions about informal mentoring, and every response would show an inner recollection of experiences and personal interpretation. My last assumption was that participants would understand that their

participation was on a volunteer basis and the information shared would promote positive social change for African American women in leadership roles in the nonprofit industry.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of a study refers to the constraints under which the study is operating, what the study covers, and how it is connected to the framing of the problem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The purpose of this qualitative generic case study was to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers for over 2 years in nonprofit organizations to address the documented problem of barriers to obtaining leadership positions, including senior management and executives (Mate et al., 2019). The data collection process involved a semistructured interview about the detailed lived experiences of African American women in leadership roles and their experiences with informal mentoring. I chose semistructured interviews for detailed in-depth information.

Delimitations are used to define the parameters of a study (Sampson, 2017). In this study are all participants needed to meet the participation criteria: each participant must be an African American woman over the age of 18, instead of women of other ethnicities and age ranges. Typically, managers are in the 30–45 age range (Kasperkevic, 2017). I focused on African American women because they are underrepresented as senior management and executives for nonprofit organizations. Each participant was required to be a human services professional holding a managerial job title to show the work executed to advance their career. Each participant was employed at a nonprofit

organization in a managerial role for over 2 years. This length requirement would allow managers to have become acclimated to their job role, understanding the possible mentoring that took place to maintain their positions and potentially advance their careers. I selected this topic to address barriers to obtaining leadership positions and I specifically focused on African American women.

Limitations

Researchers must recognize the limitations to their research (Vilma, 2018). Limitations are potential weaknesses that can impact the reliability and validity of a study (Greener, 2018). Limitations that could potentially impact this study were researcher biases and my affiliation with the nonprofit organizations where I am currently employed. Researchers have an obligation to follow ethical standards that respect human dignity following the academic principles to ensure the integrity and protection of participants' anonymity (McCurdy & Fitchett, 2011). My experience as a human services professional could potentially add personal bias to the study. Researchers must remain neutral and objective during the interview process (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). To overcome potential biases, interview questions were reviewed by doctoral student colleagues. Colleagues reviewed the purpose statements and interview questions prior to a review by my dissertation committee members. I also used member checking to review the responses and validity of the responses. If any participant identified inaccuracies of data in the transcripts, I would adjust the information as necessary.

Significance

The results of this study may influence future studies on informal mentoring, mentoring on the job, and African American women in leadership roles. The focus of this study was on exploring the informal mentoring experiences of African American women holding managerial positions. This study is important for African American women seeking leadership positions and their understanding of the importance of informal mentoring to advance their careers. Informal mentoring is a fairly new approach still being researched (Jones et al., 2018). This study may help nonprofit and private agencies implement evidence-based and diverse strategies, interventions, and models on supporting their employees' advancement and growth within the agency or company (Beckwith et al., 2016). Additionally, encouraging mentorship for employees builds trust and loyalty toward the supportive company and builds the company's development, bringing new refreshing ideas to address main concerns within the company (Kembaw et al., 2019). The benefits of implementing informal mentoring will influence the turnover rate and leadership deficiencies within the company (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). The informal mentoring allows temporary assignments, stretch assignments, and job rotations to promote position enlargement and career growth for employees. This may result in competence, loyalty, job satisfaction, and confidence to take on challenging task and multiple job roles within the company (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I addressed the underrepresentation of African American women in senior management and executive positions within nonprofit organizations. I provided information related to barriers to becoming an executive, including lack of mentoring. I explained social exchange theory as the best theory to show reciprocity exchange between informal mentoring on the job benefits the organization, mentor, and mentee.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There is a lack of African American women representing senior management and executive positions within nonprofit organizations due to organizational culture, gender stereotypes, and failure to capitalize on the talents of women in general (Haile et al., 2016). The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers for over 2 years in nonprofit organizations. Research has suggested the need to further the study of on-the-job mentoring, the impact on employee job satisfaction, and employees' opportunities to advance within an organization (Brown, 2019; Graham, 2019; Hague & Okpala, 2017). Friedman (2018) revealed the impact of the lack of mentoring for human services professionals in nonprofit organizations, including employees working in the mental health setting. Thus, implementing informal mentoring has shown to be more significant to obtaining senior management positions, but there are barriers to accessing informal networks (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). Therefore, in this study, I explore the experience of informal mentoring on the job and how informal mentoring has benefited career advancement to leadership positions in nonprofit organizations.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted a thorough literature search using the terms *peer mentoring*, *executive mentoring*, *supervisory mentoring*, *group mentoring*, *e-mentoring*, *formal*, and *informal* with the terms *mentoring*, *Black women* or *females*, *African American women*, or *females*.

I used terms including *barriers*, *discrimination*, *gender stereotype*, *tokenism*, *work–life balance*, *racism*, *harassment*, and *disparities* to find articles that discussed issues related to barriers and challenges that prevent women from advancing in their careers. In addition, I conducted a search using different profession terms, including *business*, *academia*, *management*, *healthcare*, *education*, *information technology*, and *nonprofit sectors* to locate the experiences of mentoring within those industries. Search engines used included Google Scholar, ScholarWorks, and ProQuest. I reviewed various educational databases, including Academic Search Complete, ABI/INFORM Collection, ERIC, National Bureau of Economic Research, SAGE Journals, Taylor and Francis Online, SocINDEX with full text, Social Work Abstract, and PubMed.

This literature review consists of seven sections. In the first section, I discuss the conceptual foundation. In the next section, I describe the barriers in general to career advancement with subsections explaining the challenges of work–life balance, tokenism, and discrimination. The following section covers the barriers faced by African Americans, American women, and barriers faced by African American women in the workplace, including the effects of being raised in certain socioeconomic areas and facing financial disparities, with subsections including racism, racism effects on financial disparities, and glass ceiling. The next sections cover the benefits and experiences of mentoring; the different types of mentoring often used in workplaces, including formal, informal, supervisory, group, and e-mentoring; mentoring issues in relations to African American women, including difficulty with finding mentors and women in the executive

role refusing to help other minority women; and a mentoring program specifically for African American women that will explain the gap in literature of limited informal mentoring within the workplace.

Theoretical Framework

Social exchange theory originated from the field of market relations. Researchers over the years have contributed a body of research to the foundation of social exchange theory. The theory was introduced by Aristotle in 1133 and 1133, Homan in 1958, Thibaut and Kelley in 1959, extended by Emerson in 1962 and Blau in 1964 (Lambe et al., 2020). Aristotle formulated the theory of exchange through economic exchange and fair trade. Aristotle believed if there was no exchange or deals, there would be no association and no forming of organized societies (Cordera, 1988).

Homan was considered an influential sociologist in the 1960s and is named the *father of social exchange* (Muldoon, 2018). This title has been debated by many scholars due to Homan's theory of social exchange's inadequacy challenging self-interest over relationships (Muldoon, 2018). Researchers argued that Homan's interest was in relationships; interaction between a husband and wife was his first observation (Muldoon, 2018). Homan's next observation was the interaction of groups. Homan focused on spontaneous behaviors developed from the interactions between individuals and their groups and how these individuals develop norms, rules, and other structures based on their group interactions, also known as social exchange (Muldoon, 2018). For example, carrying on a conversation may cost time and energy, but the information and

relationship gained is of value (Redmond, 2015). After Homan's observation of groups, he concluded that interactions are an exchange of material or nonmaterial goods. Individuals in a cost-benefit relationship must continue to provide value to remain in the rewarding relationship. Homan and colleagues viewed the theory of human behavior through a different lens. Homan believed individuals would behave in ways to benefit another individual at a cost for rewards, including increased fame, prestige, and feeling better about themselves (Muldoon, 2018). Researchers challenged if this theory is social exchange. Homan challenged the overall functionality and recognized cultural differences but believed that culture was not a viable explanation of differences. Homan believed that cultural difference emerges from interactions between members of society, not from culture itself (Muldoon, 2018). Overall, this leads to a societal difference.

Social Exchange Theory From Thibaut and Kelley

In 1959, Thibaut and Kelley introduced the interpersonal relationship and group functioning, later considered to be social exchange theory with further development in 1978 and 1983. The comparison level concept was developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959) to represent the comparisons people often use based off past relationships and societal norms. Thibaut and Kelley also developed the comparison level of alternatives to compare the alternatives available to determine an individual's decision to remain or leave a relationship. Comparison such as rewards and relationship outcomes, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. There are also involuntary relationships, which involves violent married relationships that individuals remain in because of the absence of a better

alternative. Comparison level of alternatives also represents dependence in a relationship where a person in a relationship is constantly reliant on the other. The need to stay in a dependent relationship is influenced by obligations, staying married for the children, moral beliefs, legal pressures, economic considerations, and community pressure. (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Social Exchange Theory and Emerson

Emerson continued the research on dependence in a relationship showing how power and authority are created as the result (Lambe et al., 2020). Emerson (1962) researched the effects of power and dependence on exchange relationships (Lambe et al., 2020). He theorized that the imbalance in power can affect the relationship and the continuation of social exchange theory. Foucault's approach better explains the dynamic of power and trust. Foucault conceptualized that power is a relational construct generally present in all social relations and essentially exists to the social exchange theory (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Power in social exchange is not used in the context of authoritarian rule but in a way to achieve mutual benefits between the individuals involved in the exchange process. Power in social exchange determines the partners' ability to take advantage of the outcome of the exchange. Foucault also links power with truth in social relations. Trust is useful in reducing conflict and promoting effective collaboration and partnerships in planning and development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Trust is a key component in social exchange theory. The persistence and extension of a social exchange is based on trust between individuals in an exchange relationship.

Social Exchange Theory and Blau

Blau expanded on the social context more so than the economic exchange in social exchange theory. Blau (1964) described his conceptualization of social interaction as an exchange process (Lambe et al., 2020). Blau believed in a reciprocal favor of equal value in return. Blau (1964) noticed that when selecting to spend time in one relationship, people forfeit the opportunity to spend time in another relationship that could potentially be more rewarding. The cost people are willing to expend on a relationship relates to the rewards or profit (Redmond, 2015). The social and economic exchange individuals are expecting comes when entering a new relationship but also when maintaining an old relationship, hoping it will be rewarding, including financial gains, sharing of ideas, emotional satisfaction, spiritual values, social approval, and respect. A shortcoming to social exchange is remaining in a situation that is inequitable like being underpaid or where only one person is benefiting or profiting (Redmond, 2015). Another researcher, Macaulay, contributed to social exchange theory, suggesting that social distance decreases as mutual dependence increases. When individuals receive high levels of social and economic benefits, they will be mutually interested in maintaining the relationship until a better relationship presents itself. Also, finding credibility in the commitments one makes in a relationship positively promotes long-term trusting relationships and commitments (Lambe et al., 2020).

Social exchange theory has evolved and been applied to friendships and relationships within organizations. Benefits of social exchanges are companionship,

information, support, and friendships. The concept of social exchange is reciprocity. The recipient receiving the social exchange feels obliged to reciprocate, and both individuals benefit equally (Holtbrugger & Ambrosius, 2015).

Quality exchange happens when both parties are in the social exchange relationship. The most important components in a relationship are trust and mutuality, especially when both parties can see the benefits and opportunities. When an organization offers employees benefits and growth opportunities, employees often reciprocate by performing more than expected within the organization (Onukwuba, 2020).

Mentoring and Social Exchange

Mentoring and social exchange involve three forms of social support: (a) career-related support, (b) psychosocial support, and (d) role modeling. Career-related support refers to sponsorship, visibility, coaching, protection, and support with challenging assignments. Psychosocial support includes acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Role modeling offers the mentee to learn from the mentor. The mentor also benefits by enhanced reputation, creativity, increased personal satisfaction, new skills, and greater awareness of different workstyles. An important component of mentoring in the form of social exchange is the organization asymmetry between a mentor and mentee. The beauty of asymmetry is the power structure, organizing, acting, and thinking differently to maximize the advantages (Holtbrugger & Ambrosius, 2015).

During the mentoring process, the mentor gains ego satisfaction, superiority, recognition, respect, and the building of mutual relationships. The mentor's support and

resources given to the mentee can ultimately benefit the place of employment as the workplace culture is impacted. The mentee becomes competent at job duties, delivering job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. Job satisfaction leads to high productivity, improved employee performance, employee retention, and subsequent economic benefits for the agency (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017). Organization culture and participation from different ethnicity groups still need improvement. Informal mentoring such as peer mentoring and executive mentoring benefits the organization, mentor, and mentee. Slower career advancement occurs due to limited access to informal networks outside of the professional working environment can impede the individual ability to navigate (Bush, 2020). Forty-three percent of women reported an important component causing roadblocks within their career was the absence of a mentor or sponsor with influence (Bush, 2020). Some African American women reported lack of reciprocity exchange due to a decline of their mentorship proposal when reaching out to Caucasian leaders (Bush, 2020).

Barriers in General

Forty-four percent of women were employed in 2017 (Schmidt & Nourse, 2017). Twenty-four percent of employed women were senior representatives and 5.8% of women in the United States were chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies. These numbers are low due to the lack of sponsorship, discrimination, and lack of women advocating for other women (Schmidt & Nourse, 2017). Barriers explored in healthcare, academia, and business reveal the lack of mentoring or role models as a key drawback

impacting women's leadership and succession planning (Kalaitzi et al, 2017). Some other barriers are the lack of advancement within the company, culture, family support, gender bias, gender pay gap, glass ceiling, isolation, lack of support from workplace, flexible work environment allowing work-life balance, confidence, lack of social support or network, leadership skills, race discrimination, and sexual harassment (Kalaitzi et al, 2017).

Stereotype

Some company standards are based on a male's perceptions. In the past, men wrote the workplace policies, norms, and practices based on their experience in the workforce. Therefore, it is difficult to see the perspective, interest, and needs of women because of the deep habits created within a male's workplace. When women are incapable of meeting those standards, they are discriminated against and stereotyped as a gender that is incapable of being a leader. Because these standards are not met by women, women were only being stay at home mothers, as well as incapable of handling multiple roles such as being a leader and being a mother. Some women are not willing to sacrifice family to pursue the leadership role. Women that are creating flexibility between work and life are even discriminated against for not willing to give everything up for their job. Schmidt and Nourse (2017) reveals board of directors and executive leader positions held by men considers staying late to get the job done is an asset of being a leader; and women's roles as a mother and an executive leader does not allow them to stay late which further explains the bias against women. Mentoring has been practiced by

organizations dominated by men for many years, but it undermines women's efforts. A change in policies within the workplace is recommended to enhance the workplace culture between men and women (Schmidt & Nourse, 2017). Affinity groups within the company are helpful as a way for employees to support each other including support with managing emotions especially in a male- dominated workplace (Schmidt & Nourse, 2017). Sponsoring mentoring or coaching programs teach women to become leaders, build resilience, and help with holding mentees or employees accountable allowing women to raise their profile within the organization winning the support of superiors (Schmidt & Nourse, 2017). By implementing these workplace strategies benefits organization culture, stronger employee relationships, stronger cross- functional working teams, and effective networking (Roberts et al., 2019).

Women in leadership are incongruent with people's expectation of a woman's role, which are often seen as the homemaker role (Ojinta, 2018). Attributes that are needed to lead are being objective, competitive, aggressive, self- confident, and ambitious. (Chuks-Uguru & Amirize, 2020). These are considered agentic attributes. While women are known to have more communal traits including being helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle. These gender attributes are considered within an organization setting but not a leadership setting. When women attempt to combine their attributes along with the agentic attributes, they are violating the traditional gender role (Ferguson, 2018). These prejudice perceptions lead to restricted access to leadership for women (Ferguson, 2018) Women who attempt to pursue the

leadership role may often struggle with access to useful information, appropriate data for customers and suppliers, access to mentors, or network to share knowledge (Ojinta, 2018). Due to the shortage of women in leadership, there are a lack of sponsored mentoring programs by other women leaders to support career advancement (Ibarra, 2019).

Work–Life Balance

Striking a balance (2019) revealed that women in management, legal service, and education are less satisfied with their work-life balance due to the longer hours and strain that goes into the job responsibility. This leaves a greater conflict between work and home. Women working in blue collar jobs such as trades/transport revealed work- life balance satisfaction due to flexible hours but reports show that some blue-collar jobs are low paying jobs. Organizations or agencies think of this as a tradeoff. Flexible hours and lower pay, or longer hours and higher pay (Striking a balance, 2019)

Women with poor work- life balance stated feeling unsupported at work and home, unhappy, and suffering high levels of stress. Brown and Yates (2018) showed that women with no support from the workplace are feeling dissatisfied, distressed, low self-esteem, limited quality of life, and dysfunctional social behavior including mood swings and impulsivity. The key to balance is developing a support system at home and work (Schmidt and Nourse, 2017). Visser et al., (2016) conducted a study showing 27% of the participants that were married reported receiving moral support from their spouse satisfying the work- life balance. When establishing work- life balance, cultural practices

also play a key component. Women entrepreneurs in Nigeria reported work- life balance is challenging. The husband is typically the breadwinner, and the wife are homemakers. Nigerian women struggle gaining support from their husbands. When a husband is home, he wants his wife home as well. Ojinta (2018) shares the challenges of women having multiple roles as a wife, mother, sister, and leader. Due to the struggles of balancing work and life, many women explained having sleepless nights to cater that time towards their business to continue thriving.

Tokenism

The few black women who are in leadership positions are often referred to as token women (Dickens et al., 2017). Tokenism is often practiced by organizations to recruit a small number of minority people to show the company's equality. Black women described feeling isolated throughout their leadership experience leading to challenges with maintaining the position resulting in anxiety and decreased job satisfaction (Dickens et al., 2017). Tokenism can also impact women's careers pushing them to be an overachiever. Women on the board of executives or any group dynamics bringing a positive impact on research and development investments (Srivastava et al., 2018). Women have been recognized as an important asset to stability, decision making and strategic involvement (Srivastava et al., 2018).

Many women explained that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) makes a big contribution to those being hired to join the Board of Directors. By observing the top management of any company, you will be able to notice if it is gender- balanced

(Guildiken et al., 2019). Prospective executives are usually nominated before being hired to join the Board of Directors. Having one female on the Board of Director can benefit the work dynamic bringing a robust number of female candidates for the next nomination. If the nomination committee prospects are majority males, there is a significant chance the one female will be hired. Some organizations suggest having a diverse executive board is always beneficial featuring gender, race, and a mix of young and older members to keep the organization relevant and trendy (Guildiken et al., 2019).

Discrimination

Female employees in the information technology (IT) career field explained feeling teased, harassed, having low self-esteem, and being pressured to be an overachiever compared to male colleagues (Kaushiki & Pullen,2018). Many of the female employees prefer to have female supervisors to relate and feel comfortable with communicating challenges. The female employees handled the junior level work with no opportunity to learn and advance to senior level positions. Female employees in IT wanted to be challenged with intense work but the urgent and intense jobs were given to male employees. (Kaushiki & Pullen,2018). As a result, women are paid a lower salary than men, even the men that came on later than some of the women are paid more. When confronting supervisors about wanting more challenging work, the supervisors are highly opinionated, explaining that some of the females are too young and would do better being assigned to junior level work (Kaushiki & Pullen,2018). Females continue to work in these harassing environments remaining passive and accepting the discrimination. Cain

(2015) shows that women do not make the same amount of money that men make. Even when promoted to the senior level, women are still about 15% less than the male pay rate and doing the same amount of work (Cain, 2015).

Low Socioeconomic Areas and Education for People of Color

African Americans have not had an easy road through the education system. Despite the struggle and reform since *Brown vs Board of Education* (1954), there continue to be challenges through education equity (Green et al., 2020). The 2017-2018 African American average graduation rate for public high school was 79%. Ranging from 67% in the District of Columbia to 88% in Alabama. Arkansas, West Virginia, Texas, and Alabama were the only four states in which the rate for Black students was higher than average. More than 45.9% of students completed their bachelor's degree in 6 years (Bridges, 2020). The high dropout rate is partially due to 65% of African American college students having to balance pursuing a degree with a full-time job, and family responsibilities.

After students enter higher education, their socioeconomic status begins to affect their college experience, academic achievement, and rates of graduation (Jury et al., 2017). Emotional distress has been reported affecting the achievement of students from low socioeconomic areas. College students reported high levels of depression and isolation having fewer opportunities to talk about their negative experiences (Jury et al., 2017). Isolation and feeling out of place often lead to confusion while trying to discover your identity in college changing self- esteem and self- perception (Jury et al., 2017).

Students from low socioeconomic status are less likely to receive encouragement during the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, vocabulary, and oral language (Li et al., 2020). Families from low socioeconomic areas have limited access to learning materials including books, computers, stimulation toys, skill building lessons, and tutors to help with stimulating literacy growth. Individuals from socioeconomic areas often lack career related self- efficacy and vocational aspirations (Li et al., 2020). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have a lack of resources, experience economic hardship, experience social identity, and negative stereotypes regarding intellectual capabilities undermining their academic performance (Li et al., 2020).

Being raised in a poor family means education is less affordable, mentors are hard to find, and they are often a victim of prejudice and discrimination (Laurin & Engstrom, 2020). The potential for financial success is being undermined because people believe an individual from low socioeconomic status is associated with poor education. People are often observed by behavior, mannerism, communication skills, and social media to determine how they were raised (Laurin & Engstrom, 2020). Students often have part-time jobs to support school tuition and expenses making it challenging for them to take advantage of resume- building programs which makes it difficult for those students to obtain a well- paying and well-respected career (Laurin & Engstrom, 2020). People from low socioeconomic areas may value the identity and respect from their community by getting the same blue-collar jobs to fit in. They also feel guilty if they surpass family members (Laurin & Engstrom, 2020). By pursuing higher education, people of low SES

may lack the support they are used to receiving from family and friends when attempting to better themselves. Instead of understanding by pursuing higher education and more career opportunities, they can give back to their family and their community (Laurin & Engstrom, 2020).

Barriers faced by AAW in General and in the Workplace

Though the labor market for African Americans continues to build after segregation and the civil rights movement, Weller (2019) stated that the barriers and hurdles of employment, few job opportunities, lower pay, poorer benefits, and job instabilities continues to be an issue for African Americans. Haile, Emmanuel, and Dzathor (2016) claimed that the reason for the lack of women in top management positions and leadership is due to not meeting the education requirements. Growing up in low socioeconomic areas, girls are not taught to chase their dreams, but believe that only Caucasian women succeed at top leadership level. As a result, women of color are the most impoverished (Roschelle, 2017). The National Poverty Center (2017) reported that African Americans poverty rate was an average of 23.6%, Latinx was 26.2%. Women rate was lower than men. African American men poverty rate was 18.7% and Latino men was 16.4% (National Poverty Center, 2017). Impoverished communities are exposed to public acts of violence including intimate partner violence and gang violence. These barriers come with high levels of stress causing substance abuse, mental health issues, and physical health issues (Roschelle, 2017). With daily violence and acts of abuse, as

well as low-income jobs and missed bill payments; it is difficult to focus on continuing education.

Financial disparities have lessened over the years as salaries are rising for educated African American women (Institute of women policy research, 2016). Laurison and Friedman (2016) found that parents with higher professional and managerial occupations lead to higher professional and manager occupations for children. Fifty-three percent of doctors are the children of higher managers and professionals. Only 16% of senior public sector managers also come from privileged upbringing. Less than 7% of doctors, veterinarians, dentists, and physical scientists are from working class or no-earner families. Laurison and Friedman (2016) also found that higher professions had more power and superiority, restricting access for working class people from progressing.

Discrimination and racism have contributed to African American women underprivileged and disadvantages in the workplace. In result, African American women are oppressed with limited progress in business. False distortions of African American women including servile mammy, angry sapphire, licentious jezebel, and welfare queen, continues to linger within the workplace (Sales et al., 2020). This image is bestowed on all African American women which makes pursuing leadership roles challenging. African American women in executive roles reported disempowering encounters, needing validation, feeling stereotyped, and being excluded from “good ole boy social network” as challenges they experienced while in leadership positions (Sales et al., 2020).

Racism

The overall exposure of racism has had an impact on African American over the years in several ways. The experience of racism includes race- based stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that has deprived African Americans. Deprivation from social status, educational and career opportunities, and societal resources for African Americans (Greer & Spalding, 2017). Racism affects having a sense of purpose and feeling of being an asset at the job. In turn, affects the loyalty and dedication of African American employees (Greer & Spalding, 2017). African American women report unintentional racial discrimination that insulted their intellectual capabilities and contributes to their work performance affecting promotions or extra compensation (Sawyer, 2017). Internalizing the racial discrimination plays on confidence, trust, and performance (Sawyer, 2017). Some women avoid the pressure of bias all together by adapting to the male dominating society and becoming content with balancing work and home responsibilities (Sawyer, 2017).

Racism affecting Financial Disparities

National Academic Press Consensus reported “differential treatment on the basis of race that disadvantages a racial group is disparate treatment and treatment on the basis of inadequately justified factors other than race that disadvantages a racial group is disparate impact” (Odoms-Young & Bruce, 2018, p.4). Due to disparate treatment, African American have limited access to social and economic resources resulting in lack of education and employment opportunities, and food instabilities (Odoms- Young &

Bruce, 2018). Limiting education and employment opportunities is the cause of disparities like low socioeconomic status and health disparities (Quick & Kahlenberg, 2019). Low socioeconomic status is higher amongst African Americans and is one of the factors contributing to racial health inequalities and residential segregation (Quick & Kahlenberg, 2019).

The residential segregation purposely excludes black from white residential space (Murray, 2019). Researchers found that African American pay more in housing, food, and insurance. The quality of nutrition is lower and more expensive due to limited accessibility (Murray, 2019). St. Louis, Missouri reported that educational funding is based on the local population's resources (Murray, 2019). Areas that were poor are unable to fund schools even areas that were labeled good. Also, there was a denial of financial assistance to African Americans which created a barrier to building equity (Murray, 2019). Little home equity affects little funding for schools. Poor people are kept poor (Murray, 2019).

Glass Ceiling

African American executives stated supporting resources to becoming senior management and executive including 72.1% reported high visibility projects gaining recognition, 70.6% had company role models of the same race/ethnic group, 61.2% had informal networking opportunities with influential colleagues, and 53.2% had an influential mentor or sponsor supporting their journey to becoming executives or senior top management of their company (Rahman et al., 2016). Though the number of women

in leadership positions is rising, the expectations are high risk where minority women are unlikely to succeed and fall off the glass cliff (Barnes, 2017). Glass ceiling is an invisible obstacle for African American women struggling to obtain leadership positions. Twenty-seven percent of the Caucasian women were earning \$100,000 or more compared to ten percent of the African American women (Rahman et al., 2016).

Some African American women have navigated through racism by altering leadership styles, networking, educating themselves on politics to break the glass ceiling into leadership (Thorpe, 2019). Gender-based leadership is also a barrier and contributes to the glass ceiling including women being stereotyped for their gentleness and nurturing characteristics instead of aggressive; and Black women being stereotyped as being aggressive (Thorpe, 2019). Women are not meeting the expectations as leaders. Some of the expectations include decision-making authority, effectively managing change, and providing supportive structure within the organization of other leaders. Occupational choices and level of education are contributing factors to the glass ceiling (Thorpe, 2019). Women are underrepresented in fields of study including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Undergraduate and graduate programs are promoting the benefits of the STEM program encouraging more women to pursue careers in these fields. The U.S Department of education is awarding \$3.9 million in new grants to 17 historically Black colleges and other minority serving institutions to improve science and engineering programs for students (U.S department of education, 2020). This will

increase education status for more African American women overcoming the glass ceiling.

Once breaking the glass ceiling, women are also dealing with the “Queen Bee Syndrome”. Queen Bee Syndrome is when women who have broken the glass ceiling and made it senior roles. Women with the Queen Bee Syndrome feel that other women should work hard and work equally hard to reach the top (Famiglietti, 2015). These women with the Queen Bee Syndrome believe that since they had limited support while making it, they will provide limited support to other women. This is also evident why African American women are becoming entrepreneurs and owning businesses to avoid the glass ceiling. Some people deny the existence of a glass ceiling. Women consider work-life balance reaching top positions consists of hard work, spending more time in the workplace, and less time raising children (Famiglietti, 2015) Others believe education and mentoring assures success (Famiglietti, 2015). Saleem et. al. (2017) reported lack of training opportunities, insufficient previous experiences, and lack of education are the reasons why some women do not obtain senior managerial positions.

Lack of Mentoring for African American Women

In the past, the human resources department hired external providers to come develop and train employees on communication, handling conflict, team management, and leadership competencies. To assess progress and show success to the leadership development, balanced scorecards were used (Hieker & Rushby, 2020). Due to the budget limitation, line managers took over the coaching skills-based training since they

were more involved in the development of the teams. A structured mentoring program began to have conflicts due to the line manager who was also the mentor/coach independently assessing the performance of the individual (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). Best practice mentor program includes clear objectives formulated by the mentor and organization aligning with the mentee development to help with objectives and direction while mentoring (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). Having a willing and supportive mentor does not guarantee program objectives will be met (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). The mentor needs support from supervisor or senior leaders on strategies to meet objectives. As well as this, mentors may also feel burned out and in need of support. A poorly implemented mentoring program discredits the entire experience and members may begin to withdraw (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). A mentoring matching process should consist of having the mentor and mentee meet two to three times to formulate a potential professional relationship or match with another mentor. Some challenges arise when the mentor has too many mentees. Mentoring benefits the mentor, mentee, and organization showing increased awareness on all ends (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). As mentors, line managers can become emotional intelligent leaders (Heiker & Rushby, 2020). The mentee benefits with the opportunity for higher profile roles when being mentored by managers. Peer mentoring is also encouraged to talk about challenges, enhance the learning environment and networking, as well as creating positive work experience for line managers and employees (Heiker & Rushby, 2020).

Mentoring and networking are known to be the most effective tools. Lack of mentoring makes navigating and understanding the corporate world more challenging. In 2017, 67% of Howard University accountant students reported mentoring aids in their career development, especially informal mentoring (Bush, 2020). Some African American women executives reported becoming wiser in intelligence, increased motivation, and dedication through a huge contribution to informal mentoring (Sawyer, 2017). Some women developed resiliency, emotional intelligence, and hard work including working long hours to show dedication to the company to gain executive roles. Some African American women that have participated in formal mentoring reported feeling dissatisfied with the program and explained feeling discriminated against or unconscious bias against them. African American women were perceived to be angry and aggressive (Sawyer, 2017). Other African American women reported the lack of role models/mentors to improve self- efficiency, self- esteem, and innovation to inspire to be more (Sawyer, 2017).

Mentoring in General

Mentoring is important in forming life purpose. Mentoring can be a critical part of development (McCreary & Perrin, 2019). A mentor is seen as having more life experiences and can assist mentees in managing decisions and choices (McCreary & Perrin, 2019). Mentoring focuses on encouragement, positive feedback, positive social support, improvements to build psychological strengths, wellbeing, and self- esteem. This also makes an impact on career goals. Mentors also provide social networks to help

advancing careers. Holistic mentoring is an extremely popular type of mentoring featuring related life and academics for students (McCreary & Perrin, 2019). Holistic mentoring helps undergraduate and graduate students have a better understanding of their purpose, mission, and goals as well as the Universities (McCreary & Perrin, 2019).

Building an Effective Mentor Relationship

Mentoring consists of building a relationship with others (Hague & Okpala, 2017). Even if the relationship was organized formally and you are assigned a mentor; or informally and you build a relationship on your own, building relationships can help with opening the door to new opportunities. Participants in Hague & Okpala (2017) reported the experience in a leadership program at North Carolina Community College leadership program. One participant stated having a white male mentor who supported her in getting an internship, a full scholarship for a doctoral program, and leave of absence with pay until the doctoral program was completed. The same mentor encouraged and coached the interviewee to go beyond her career. Another participant stated working strategically to find a mentor and participated in all leadership activities (Hague & Okpala, 2017).

Positive mentor relationships help the mentee to probe deeper and understand the capabilities to grow (Ghosh et al., 2018). The mentoring process requires “shadowing” following the mentor to different meetings, gathering, and networking at different events (Ghosh et al., 2018). The point is to observe and take notes for questions or clarification debriefing. This enhances learning in turn builds confidence (Ghosh et al., 2018). The opportunity can allow for deep conversations related to the debriefing committee meeting

mentor and mentee attended and challenging each other for different views. Mentors feel energizing and invigorating to learn according to former mentees (Ghosh et al., 2018). This also motivates the mentor to stay aware and updated on new developments. Emelo (2017) discusses the importance of creating a strategic comprehensive mentoring program. Though it is challenging to build relationships, it is important to have a working respect, and positive relationship. A two- way mentoring relationship is important and requires both mentor and mentee to be in frequent contact (Ghosh et al., 2018). Some of the skill building during the mentoring process was facilitative learning allowing the mentee to be proactive in driving the learning goals (Ghosh et al., 2018). This requires taking initiative and building leadership skills.

Transformative Mentoring

Transformative mentoring is built through trust and communication. This includes open dialogue and mentoring agreement (Emelo, 2017). Mentoring relationships take constant focus and framing conversations towards mentoring goals (Emelo, 2017). This includes what the mentee and mentor long term goals and plan on how to accomplish the goals. Each goal should have a time frame and should be reviewed on the monthly basis (Emelo, 2017). Some accomplishments discussed during mentoring are career development, leadership development, and roles development (Emelo, 2017). Career development includes advancing your career like going back to school or gaining certifications. Leadership development includes key components to being a leader and management, organizational skills, and types of leaders. Role development includes

learning the responsibilities to fulfil a role such as a chief executive officer (Emelo, 2017).

Mentoring Relationship Versus Mentoring Program

Many executives believe in the power of mentoring but not when forced. Many executives discuss mentoring relationships versus mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are often difficult to measure. One executive interviewee discussed mentoring on an organizational level allowing mentees to experience and adapt to the rapid changes, new demands, and unforeseen challenges (Emelo, 2017). Many of the interviewing executives indicated formal mentoring programs offer networking and an opportunity for everyone to be offered the same options. The formal mentoring process is rigid and overly complex (Labin, 2017). Since the relationship was forced, less personal information was shared and felt more like a check- box learning.

Forced relationships are awkward minimizing the talent, emotion, drive, and culture (Labin, 2017). Many organizations have thrown together unorganized mentoring programs that are facilitated by in-experienced practitioners. Successful mentoring programs feature a budget set aside for supportive staff and administrators and enable a broad network to build deep trusting relationships (Labin, 2017). All programs should have a measurable time frame. A suggested mentor development is AXLES framework featuring aligning to a purpose, design the experience, launch the program, evaluate for effectiveness, and support all participants. Align to a purpose assures the participants are aware of the purpose of the mentoring experience. Design the experience includes

supporting mentor and mentee in the matching process assuring the matching process is warm and genuine and allotted enough time to build a relationship (Labin, 2017).

Evaluating for effectiveness measures mentor and mentee progress just in case the format of the program should be altered (Labin, 2017).

Intentional Mentors

Ogzen et al. (2019) showed the commitment to being a mentor including interaction on the job, expected benefits from mentoring, and previous positive mentoring experiences. It is reported more experienced and higher educated employees are more likely to have the intentions to mentor (Ogzen et al., 2019). One consideration when choosing mentors is the workload and communicating the objective and responsibilities clearly to ensure the mentor can handle the extra; and mentee can fully benefit from experience. Ozgen et al., (2019) showed mentoring in organization can be an energy drain, negative rumors by mentee, and dysfunctional relationship. Dysfunctional relationships include interpersonal difficulties, submissiveness, harassment, unwillingness to learn, and lack of performance as expected (Ozgen et al., 2019). Positive mentoring traits include positive effects, compassion, accountability, and helpfulness (Ozgen et al., 2019).

Mentoring on different organization levels such as peer mentor, supervisory mentor, and executive mentoring involves different advantages for the mentee. A peer level mentor is also recommended to help the mentee to be expressive and have more in common with as far as job roles (Ghosh et al., 2018). Peer mentors are suited to support

the mentee emotionally and to be role models demonstrating the performance within the organization. Senior mentors are more experienced and wiser with creative ideas towards skills development of the mentee. Overall, mentoring helps with networking and sharing organizational issues (Holtbrugger & Ambrosius, 2015).

Challenges in Mentoring

There can be exchanges from negative mentors with feared cost and benefits that lead to mentee reporting of bad experiences:

An Absentee mentor that has distanced themselves. This could be because mentors have more responsibilities. The mentor may be disappointed with the relationship with the mentee and unmotivated to generate new ideas and perspectives. The mentee may not be meeting the demands and making progress creating an estranged mentor. The mentor could have another mentee and created a better relationship. There could also be organization rumors and accusations of the mentee receiving many advantages within the organization, or mentor/mentee relationship appears personal (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019). Some mentors lack Emotional Intelligence, where they struggle to read and understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of others to know when to assist with motivation and encouragement. These mentors may interpret situations negatively and come off very hostile to mentee (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019). There are unethical mentors that reveal their negative side including coming to work intoxicated, conduct is inappropriate, embezzlement, or revealing confidential information showing how unethical the organization runs. The mentee struggles with

loyalty of keeping the secrets of the mentor or revealing to the organization what their employees are doing (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019).

There are some mentors that have failed high profile projects, lost out to a rival in a promotional race, accused of ethical violation, or left organizations to work with a competitor. This mentor is called the Corporate Pariah (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019). The mentor/mentee relationship has become a liability. The mentee struggles with loyalty towards organization or to the mentor creating hostility within the relationship. Colleagues of the organization may have stopped communicating and sharing important business information (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019).

There is also the Enabling Mentor that covers the mentee's work ethics and under achievements by maybe completing tasks to make the mentee look good which makes the mentor look good to the organization. This is not helpful for a mentee that is hoping to be hired to work for an organization or advance within the organization because they will always need much assistance from their mentor (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019). The mentor could also enable the mentee as an ego booster or to always feel needed by the mentee. During the mentor/mentee relationship, there will be times when the mentee assists in completing projects with the mentor. During this time, the mentor may feel like a rival to the mentee, especially if the mentee is receiving much recognition. This may lead to mentors conducting projects solo and avoiding the sharing of information to help mentee's growth. Finally, there are narcissistic mentors that are passive aggressive. They disguise attacks with humor, give constructive criticism in public, and master

manipulators. Mentee reported they are expected to be loyal while in a toxic and unmanageable relationship (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2019).

The mentor and mentee that come from the same department can be detrimental on an organizational level. This may be detrimental to the growth of the department, and cost and benefits of the mentoring relationship. Mentee might avoid discussing problems with the mentor because of the potential image that may spread around the department (Holtbrugger & Ambrosius, 2015).

Mentoring Millennials

Mentoring Millennials can also be challenging. Millennials are known to be impatient with the system, and often eager to put their creative and digital skills to use. It is suggested that senior mentors come in as mentors to help guide and channel millennials' energy (Onukwuba, 2020). Mentor managing millennials are recommended to be open- minded, non-judgmental, approachable, and interactive (Onukwuba, 2020). Mentoring millennials can help with mentors staying relevant and aware of today's trends.

Mentoring in Business

Mentors can support mentees in three ways: vocational, role- model, and social support (Holtbrügge & Ambrosius, 2015). Vocational prepared mentee for career advancement. As a role- model, the mentor demonstrates appropriate attitude, values, and behaviors. Social support helps the mentee with networking. Mentoring can be role- models, advocates, confidants, evaluators, partners, encouragers, motivators, and friends.

Mentoring allows the opportunity to network with other leaders or even professionals. Mentoring within the organizations also allows the building of relationships, sharing new ideas and best practices while feeling competitive as a company. This helps mentees to understand what to expect when working for a company (Holtbrügge & Ambrosius, 2015).

Different Types of Informal and Formal Mentoring

The benefits of formal and informal mentoring in the Financial Insurance Business (Young, 2015). Mentoring in the Financial Insurance Business is required for all advisers, agents, and management. Mentoring in the Financial Insurance Business has been open for two years and helps employees to learn and expand their knowledge through discussion and participation. One of the mentoring groups is called “Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) consisting of informal, formal, reverse mentoring, team mentoring, and peer-group mentoring (Young, 2015). Reverse mentoring includes mentor/mentee learning from each other. Reverse mentoring involves being open-minded and supportive in sharing new ideas. Reverse mentoring can be beneficial for mentors when it comes to learning more about technology now that technology is evolving in the 21st century (Young, 2015). Since millennial mentees are more technology savvy, they can support mentors in this department. Team mentoring involves team members with similar learning goals working together with one of two mentors. Peer- group mentoring consists of meeting with experienced stakeholders, sharing knowledge and experience, building connections, and debriefing learning experience with

the group of mentors and mentees (Young, 2015). Participants shared the mentoring experience expressing how there were few, if any, women in the mentoring program.

“The male to female ratio was 67% male to 33% female” (Young et al., 2015, p3).

Participants stated women mentoring styles are different and women often want to work with other women. The difficulties with cross gender mentoring has improved using e-mentoring (Young, 2015).

E-Mentoring

E- mentoring occurs virtually between mentor and mentee. Programs may be run through emails, blogs, discussion forums, chat rooms, video chat, and news groups. E-mentoring is not just limited by geographical difference. This allows opportunities to be mentors beyond the U.S communicating with others across the world (Arora & Goel, 2018). One of the first e- mentoring programs was the “MentorNet program” (Arora & Goel, 2018). This program aims to encourage retention and advancement for women students in engineering and related science fields. Email and telephone have extensively been used in the past. Video chat has been evolving, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gomez et al., 2020). Organizations worldwide were forced to shift their entire business platform online with no time to prepare. Many mentees have gained experience with helping teachers or employers with transitioning training, scheduling online meetings, lectures, workshops, and virtual exams through platforms including Zoom, Google hangout and forms, and Microsoft Team (Gomez et al., 2020). Business report difficulties in navigating newcomers helping them to understand the company’s

information (Oranburg & Kahn, 2020). Companies also discuss finding new ways to establish organizational culture in the workplace including familiarizing new employers with ethics, culture, values, and informal interactions between employees, peers, and superior officers (Oranburg & Kahn, 2020). This system is called the “Mentor -Mentee System” meaning pairing the incoming directors with an experienced peer. The newcomer can consult throughout the onboarding process to understand the director’s role in the company. Mentors provide context in a situation to help newcomers understand how to contribute to the board and success of the company (Oranburg & Kahn, 2020).

Supervisory Mentoring

The benefits of supervisory mentoring along with using three functions of supporting a mentee (Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017). Through supervisory mentoring, mentees can observe the daily work and interactions with other subordinates. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2017) also found a connection in formal mentoring and turnover rate, but saw a change when mentor was the supervisor informally made a change. Supervisory mentoring helps with retaining employees. Employees, who are mentees, tend to be more committed to staying with the organization. Mentoring on the job with the support of the organization through performance management systems and reward systems. The key component in any mentoring relationship formal or informal is communication skills consisting of giving constructive feedback and listening empathetically. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2017) showed supervisory mentoring to be

the most effective mentoring strategy. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2017) showed supervisory mentoring is linked to job enrichment and career development opportunities, but it is important that organizations maintain consistency and establish a commitment as supervisors, as well as seek to meet the personal growth needs of their employees.

Mentoring Issues in Relation to African American Women

Minority women at the top often feel invisible and isolated (Girlboss Inc, 2018). With less representation of African American women in leadership, this leaves less access to African American women leaders to mentor (Girlboss Inc., 2018). Depending on the profession, there may be few women in the industry and even less minority women (Natalie Cofield, n.d.). For minority women in the top position, they struggle and work their way to the top and fear others may take their spot. Alicia Bundle, Journalist, Author, and Great- Granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker, explains how many mentors are skeptical about giving advice or feedback because of the person's motives and criticism. From a mentee perspective, they often think women in top positions are too busy to take on a mentee. Women of color struggle with searching for a mentor and knowing how to ask for support (Girlboss Inc., 2018). This explains why it is difficult for mentees to find a minority mentor (Natalie Cofield, n.d.). One way to overcome some of these challenges is joining a mentoring network or program and aiming to be mentored by the same race and gender due to the similar backgrounds and feeling accepted. Minority women gravitate to other minority women (Mitchell, 2018).

Mentoring Based Off Race

Shaunah Zimmerman, co-founder of Women who Creates, recommends being mentored by any leader, not just high-profile leaders in executive positions (Girlboss Inc. 2018) Everyone may not have access to high profile leaders. Therefore, creating a relationship with the shift leader or mid-level manager can help with being introduced to those next level leaders (Girlboss Inc. 2018). While it is recommended to mentor with someone of the same color and gender, other mentors like Mark Livingston, partner and member of the Board of Directors for Heidrick & Struggles and Christie Lindor, management consultant and Author recommends mentoring with different diversities to get a different point of view (Rio, 2018). Livingston explains mentoring two females and doing his best to relate and create professional relationships with the female mentors. Livingston also recommends organizations doing informal mentoring approaches before formal mentoring. Issues were observed during formal mentoring due to being placed together (Rio, 2018). Informal mentoring is an opportunity to build trust and invest time into the relationship creating a long-lasting relationship. Livingston advises companies to buy into and work on creating a culture where mentorship is valued (Rio, 2018). Then, implementing formal mentoring for the learning and development focus with the features of informal mentoring already established through building a trusting relationship. Overall, this creates a productive relationship (Rio, 2018).

Lack of Support

Sixty percent of participants reported competition, jealousy, and lack of support from female mentors or when connecting with other women (Mitchell, 2018). A key component in successful mentorship is support through network. Common themes stated in Mitchell (2018) by participants are the long-lasting valuable relationship initiated informally. Mitchell (2018) suggested creating a servant- leader mentoring program for minority women to build upon the skills of their employees which helps with the thriving of the company. Being taught by the leader always helps with career advancement. Employees are usually loyal and dedicated to the organization because of the support and hopes to advance within the company.

Specific Mentoring Program

African American women with mentors gained support, strength, and direction (Sawyer, 2017) Through mentorship African American women had an opportunity to network with inner groups which led to networking with executive leaders and advancing to senior level positions much quicker (Sawyer, 2017). Being mentored by leaders also helped women control their emotions. They were trained on building resiliency while on the job and problem solve the situation with their mentors (Sawyer, 2017). Young (2015) revealed how women within the financial insurance mentoring program noticed a lack of women involved in the formal mentoring group. Therefore, a female mentee initiated a female group that met every week for 15 minutes.

There are many mentoring programs whose mission is to help teen girls and undergraduate/graduate African American students (Aminian, 2018). The Minority Student Club at Regional State College recruited eight female African American students to participate in a mentoring program with four female African American mentors and two white females and two white males (Aminian, 2018). Participants shared different mentoring experiences and networking groups to continue connecting with others including workshops, clubs, organizations, and residencies. Some participants stated receiving moral support, advice, and guidance (Aminian,2018). Mentors also shared some of their personal experiences, fears and challenges which built a respectful and trusting relationship; mentoring was instrumental in their success by writing recommendation letters, referrals, and continuing to be supportive during participants' personal crisis or frustration with trying to succeed. Students were also able to gain additional scholarships and network around the school (Aminian, 2018).

New Pattern Utah is a grant and mentorship program for Black women Entrepreneurs. The program consists of receiving up to \$10,000 as well as mentorship to support the strategic use of the capital including eight-week intensive fundraising course, six-month peer-based leadership development course, holistic support on fundraising, marketing and product, access to legal support, assistance with obtaining business certification, and other training and networking. These opportunities are provided by womenpreneurs: The Raise program, Womenpreneurs Circle Program, Beta Boom, Utah

Black Chamber, and collaboration with Sorenson Impact Center of the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah.

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women (2020) is dedicated to leadership development, advocacy, empowerment of Black Women, and strengthening women's health, education, and economic programs. Mentoring programs provide opportunities for high school and college students to network and shadow mentors in the discipline of their interest that they are paired with. The National Coalition of 100 Black Women has chapters in different states that are involved in making social change in the community tackling teenage pregnancy, training, and outreach activities to reduce sudden infant death in African American infants (The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, 2020).

The National Congress of Black Women Inc. is a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes women leadership in business, politics, military services, and community awareness through training and internships on entrepreneurship. African American women are encouraged to engage in political activities including registering to vote, develop, and advocate for public policies. Women are encouraged to promote more women to nominate more African American women in all levels of government and political parties (The National Congress of Black Women, 2020)

Sisterhood agenda (2020) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1994. Girls supporting each other, sharing goals, and women helping women together. Sisterhood is all about women empowerment, feminism, and uplifting each other. Sisterhood mission is unity to accomplish more as a team (Sisterhood Agenda, 2020)

Women Economic Development Council (2020) foundation is a nonprofit organization located in Huntsville, Alabama. The organization consists of influential women business leaders impacting economic success. Women Economic Development Council (2020) The mission is to empower women to achieve self- sufficiency and economic independence by providing mentors, professional networking, development programs, and flexible financial assistance. This program is for students currently in a two year or four college Women Economic Development Council (2020).

Summary

Chapter 2 focused on the original theorist of social exchange theory including Aristotle, Homan, Thibaut & Kelley, Emerson, and Blau. Social exchange theory impacts mentoring through career related support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Barriers African American women experienced in general and in the workplace includes feeling stereotyped, work- life balance, tokenism, discrimination, lack of education, financial disparities, glass ceiling, and lack of mentoring. Mentoring consists of building an effective mentor relationship, transformative mentoring, and understanding the difference between mentoring relationships and mentoring programs. It is important to recognize the challenges of mentoring including negative mentors.

Mentoring in business includes formal mentoring, informal mentoring, E-mentoring, and supervisory mentoring to support career advancement, job roles, and networking. Mentoring in business will support African American women from feeling isolated, and invisible while pursuing top positions, African American women often

reported mentoring issues including lack of access of mentors within the same race and lack of support. Michelle (2018) explains the lack of support from female mentors, competition, and jealousy when connecting with other women. Finally, chapter 2 ends with listing mentoring programs that have helped with support, resiliency, career opportunities, and direction.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Research has suggested the need to further the study of on-the-job mentoring, the impact on employee job satisfaction, and employees' opportunities to advance within an organization (Brown, 2019; Graham, 2019; Hague & Okpala, 2017). Friedman (2018) revealed the impact of the lack of mentoring for human services professionals within nonprofit organizations, such as professionals employed at mental health facilities. Thus, implementing informal mentoring is more significant to obtaining senior management positions, but there are barriers to accessing informal networks (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the experiences of African American women with informal mentoring on the job and how informal mentoring has benefited career advancement to leadership positions in nonprofit organizations for African American women.

In this chapter, I present an overview of the study's research design and rationale. This includes the role of the researcher, methodology, and instrumentation. This chapter will then conclude with a discussion of the data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and a comprehensive summary.

Research Design and Rationale

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of informal mentoring for African American women who are employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years?

RQ1a: What were the challenges when pursuing informal mentoring experienced by African American women who are employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years?

Qualitative research is conducted to explore how and why a phenomenon occurs and what meaning people bring to it. Qualitative generic case study for this study places attention on the strengths and barriers of being an African American woman, self-awareness to the experience of informal mentoring, and bringing recognition within the context of nonprofit organizations. Qualitative research grants the opportunity to gain richer understanding of phenomena that depend on individual descriptions of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with richer data, descriptive details help with identifying particular finding transferable to similar populations in a colorable context (Clark et al., 2019).

A case study is a research approach used to generate in-depth understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context, particularly when human behavior and social interactions are central to understanding topics of interest (Crowe et al., 2011). Case studies can be used to explain, describe, or explore events using how and why questions that elicit more explanatory data from participants (Yin, 2017). In choosing this design, I was able to gain more in-depth insight into each participant's personal, informal mentoring experience and the benefits for advancing their career. By using case study design, I understood the barriers to obtaining or continuing informal mentoring that shed

more light on the problem of underrepresentation of African American women in executive positions within nonprofit organizations.

I reviewed several qualitative methods as potentially useful for my research but determined the others would have been insufficient in providing a comprehensive understanding of the informal mentoring relationship. For instance, a narrative study is quite natural, and a researcher makes meaning of it through participants' stories. Narratives comprise knowing the time, place, and story to develop the knowledge through the experience of learning. Narrative explores the inner and outer focus of the character's drive and motive to become more knowledgeable of the process (Altman, 2008). This method can explain the experience and tell the story of African American women while working for nonprofit organizations but cannot highlight the key factors and outcomes related to informal mentoring.

Ethnography comprises a year or more worth of observation and fieldwork of a particular culture, society, and community. Researchers would usually live with the local people and observe their lives. The purpose of ethnography is to understand local knowledge, values, and practices from the natives' points of view (Howell, 2018), such as studying a culture's religion, kinship, or marriage practice. In this study, African American women's daily lives and values would be observed, but there was no highlight of the relation of nonprofit organization and the informal mentoring experience.

Grounded theory is grounded in data meaning little is known about the phenomenon. Grounded theory is founded on symbolism interaction (Tie et al., 2019).

The grounded theory is used to generate a theory during the process based on actions, patterns, and information collected from the participants (Creswell, 2009). The goal is to collect and review the data, allowing the theory or conceptual framework to emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The goal in this study was to support the theory of social exchange and the principles of formulating professional relationships.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher and interviewer was to remain ethical and unbiased and to provide a safe and protective environment for my participants. As the researcher and interviewer, I provided a safe and confidential environment. I have extensive experience as a former human services employee working in the mental health residential setting. I am also an African American woman. This posed the possibility of bias establishing a relationship and rapport with the participants; my own perceptions under scrutiny may have influenced participants. Researchers should remain open toward participants and develop authenticity to eliminate any such scrutiny or idea of the researcher (Van Manen, 1997).

Methodology

Participation Selection Logic

I used homogenous sampling to recruit participants to complete this study. Homogenous purposive sampling considers people who share the same age, gender, background, and occupation (Patton 2015). Purposive sampling is the selection of vital participants offering key information and insight related to the research (Patton, 2015). I

aimed to recruit 10 to 12 African American female participants who were members of the professional network site LinkedIn. I chose African American women because they are underrepresented in the nonprofit sector's senior management and executive positions. The final number of participants was determined based on data saturation and repetitiveness while completing semistructured interviews (Ness, 2015).

To participate in this research, prospective participants had to meet the following eligibility criteria: (a) must be an African American woman over the age of 18, (b) a human services professional holding a managerial job title, (c) employed by a nonprofit organization, and (d) must have held the managerial role for over 2 years. I required participants to be over the age of 18 because this opens the opportunity to interview younger and older managers about their informal mentoring experience, as well as exploring key components to obtaining and maintaining management positions sooner rather than later. Managers were able to share what it took to maintain their management positions and to support other managers in maintaining their management position. I chose the criterion of participants having 2 years of experience to ensure managers were accustomed to their managerial roles and grasping the concept of advancing their career. According to Indeed (2021), managers train for between 3–14 months and 2 years before becoming fully accustomed to their management positions. I collected data using semistructured interviews. As the researcher, I asked each participant the same open-ended questions. I ensured that participants met the eligible criteria by having the qualifications and job title to strengthen the reliability of the study.

Instrumentation

Semistructured interviews allow participants to discuss their own points of view using open-ended questions helps participants share their experience (Kallio et al., 2016). Interviews for this study were conducted online via video through Zoom. Interviews allow an interviewer to observe body language and nonverbal reactions of respondents during personal and controversial questions (Patton, 2015). Online video interviewing was chosen due to the public health challenge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Only researchers have access to participants' contact information including phone number, email address, and other relevant identifiable information. Each participant interview was recorded to transcribe in preparation for data analysis.

Data Collection

Before collecting the data, I received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). My approval # is 10-13-21-0406778. Once approved, I begin recruiting participants by reaching out to each potential candidates personally through social media and professional platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. I joined different social media groups posting an ad/flyer. The flyer consisted of the purpose of my study and contact information for participant recruitment. The flyer, demographic questionnaire, and informed consent form showing IRB approval would be sent via email. All study participants had a minimum of 3 weeks to respond via email. I confirmed eligibility based on participation criteria at that time. I also addressed additional questions or concerns. I also sent the IRB approval for participants' review.

Interviews began with participants signing an informed consent form, including the purpose of the study, confidentiality, potential risks, and benefits of the research for participants. All consents were sent via email. Documents were signed and scanned back to me. Once consent was signed and received, one-on-one interviews were scheduled. Semistructured interviews are used to explore participants' perceptions and experiences regarding a topic (Silverman, 2016). Before beginning the interview, I asked participants if they had additional questions or concerns. All interviews were conducted during nonwork hours. For those who agreed to proceed with the interview, I conducted an interview through online video using Zoom. To ensure confidentiality during video interviews, participants were asked to sit in a private area, close any doors, use meeting in progress or do not disturb signs, and use headphones if needed instead of an external speaker. During the interview process, all participants were audio recorded to ensure validity using a cell phone recorder or digital audio recorder such as Zoom recording.

Data collection for this study came from online video semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. Interviews were expected to last about 1 hour. The semistructured interviews were conducted with participants who met the inclusion criteria. Data were collected to develop a better understanding of the participants' informal mentoring experience. Criterion sampling is one of the purposeful sampling methods used to select study participants based on specific criteria. The criterion for this study included participants who were African American women over the age of 18 holding a managerial position for over 2 years employed for a nonprofit organization.

Audio recording and handwritten notes were used during interview. Upon starting the interview, I used rapport-building conversations regarding the nonprofit organization where the participant was employed, the mission and vision of the organization, daily working environment and tasks, and learning more about the organization. Being at ease during the interview helps with openness. Participants received \$5 gift cards through money transfers at the end of the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

Fusch and Ness (2015) explained how data saturation relates to the research question, theoretical approach, and analysis impacting the quality of the study. During the interview process, data saturation is reached when participants began to have similar repetitive statements or trends within the data (Saunders, 2018). In this study, the data were analyzed in a private room. Audio recording was used to capture the data along with handwritten notes. Otter.ai was used to transcribe video interviews using the voice recording. This process allows accuracy as well as helps in identifying themes and categories that emerge while capturing descriptive data from participants' informal mentoring experiences. Content analysis was used to hand code, analyze, and transcribe data.

Content analysis was used to analyze the responses of interviewees using four steps: (a) decontextualization (identifying meaning units), (b) recontextualization (compare with original data), (c) categorization (categorize the meaning bringing subjects together), and (d) compilation (find the underlying meaning; Bengtsson, 2016). A

highlighter was used to color code participants' statements pertaining to their informal mentoring experiences. Sticky notes were used to identify codes during hand coding. Rereading data and manually coding the data allowed for familiarity of participants' experiences. Quirkos' computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software was used to help formulate more intensive themes and codes. Quirkos is user friendly and comprehensive. Quirkos creates visuals and colors to transcribe the data developing themes. I uploaded the transcriptions from Otter.ai to Quirkos to organize the data to identify codes and themes. Quirkos was used to make sense of the collective meanings, to organize, and to develop systematic links based off experiences of the participants to conceptualize the findings (Terry et al., 2017).

Coding using handwritten notes to support data analysis combined with digital software to support data management provides validity and tested analysis methods for qualitative research studies (Maher et al., 2018). Transcriptions are password protected on a personal computer. Each participant received a copy of the transcription for their review once the interview was completed. Participants reviewed and provided feedback on whether the transcripts represented the information shared. If the participants had recommendations or changes to their transcript, I consulted my committee chair before making any adjustments. Because I am following a generic qualitative study, I followed a general inductive analysis, ensuring that I am guided by the following steps: (a) prepare raw data files, (b) become familiar with the transcripts, (c) begin coding by creating different categories, (d) overlap coding and uncoded text, (e) continue revisiting and

refining the different categories, and (f) highlight themes that have emerged from the coding procedure (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Issues of Trustworthiness

As a researcher, it was necessary that I address how research findings will be credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable to determine trustworthiness (Leung, 2015). To ensure trustworthiness and credibility, data analysis was based on arranged and recorded interviews. The method and analysis breakdown strengthens trustworthiness showing validity of the research design (FitzPatrick, 2019). Categories of trustworthiness include integrity of the data, reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings (Leung, 2015). Trustworthiness was maintained through rationale, description of data gathering, evidence of understanding the coding process, triangulation, and interview process (Peterson, 2019).

Credibility

Peterson (2019) stated a qualitative research study is transparent and understanding of the researchers' purpose and process while completing research study. Thorough interpretation of qualitative data can be challenging to maintain, assess, and demonstrate credibility. This means the research results should mirror the views of participants. Credibility was determined during checking interpretations against raw data and debriefing with participants on how research provided was used within the study and overall results from data (Rahman, 2016). This process is called member checking by

validating the subjectivity from participants to ensure the credibility of results (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other settings or context with other respondents based on reader's judgement (Fitzgerald, 2019). Thick descriptions ensure the behavior, experiences, and context of an outsider to assess if findings are transferable (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I provided rich and detailed descriptions regarding the meaning and context of the participants' experience. This enabled the future research to assess whether the findings are transferable to their study. This study describes demographics, setting, sample size; as well as the clinical characteristics and descriptive data during an interview that was useful for other researchers. Social exchange theory is also transferable to other studies regarding reciprocity and relationships in mentoring (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017).

Dependability

Dependability is based on the participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation, and recommendations supported by research data to assist in the stability of the finding (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Data triangulation can enhance qualitative research by using multiple approaches and data sets. By using triangulation, potential biases can be prevented with interpreting results (Leung, 2015). Triangulation allows data to be supported by other data resources. This ensures legitimacy in findings.

Triangulation, in-depth interviews, codes, and theoretical saturation guaranteed rich

information to establish truthfulness and stability (Roulston, 2018). Auditing and verifying accuracy of information are methods that reflect the dependability of a study (Leung, 2015). Reflectivity was used to examine the barriers and experience engaging in informal mentoring. Reflexivity ensures dependability by studying the beliefs, judgement, and practices of the participants.

Confirmability

Confirmability focuses on the transparency of the study (Forero et al., 2018). The transparency in this study was gathered through an audit providing a complete set of notes during the research process. Confirmability is information gathered from an interview with participants, sampling process, research materials, and reflective thoughts (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Confirmability was demonstrated through the emerging data, themes, and meaning of this study. By conducting this study without bias and interpreting what the data shows in an unbiased way ensures confirmability. Audit reports was shared with the research team to study openness, honesty, and clarity of study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Ethical Procedures

Researchers have ethical responsibilities to the participants, and it is important to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants in the study (Creswell, 2012). Participants reviewed and signed consent forms. Participants were given a verbal and written consent, assuring that their information remained confidential, and study will not affect their evaluation or job. Participants were reminded they can withdraw from study

at any time. Prior to signing an agreement, the purpose, procedure, and the benefit of the study will be shared. Any risks to the participant were made known. Participants were not identified by name. Participants were identified by numbers, Participant 1 & 2.

Summary

Chapter 3 involved the methods that was used in the study and the tools I used to assess participants' responses to interview questions. In this chapter, the purpose of this generic qualitative study is to understand the informal mentoring experienced by human services managers and how informal mentoring experience supported their career advancement through semi-structured interviews. This chapter provided a thorough overview of this study's methodology, highlighting the research questions, and discussing the specific research design and rationale that was followed. This chapter then discussed the study's population and sampling procedures, data collection methods, and the study's procedures. The chapter then concluded with a discussion of the data analysis plan and ethical assurance that aided in protecting human participants. I obtained data in a concise manner that did not reveal the identity of participants but provided information useful for myself and future researchers. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the study's results after the data analysis has been completed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers in nonprofit organizations. Research has suggested the need to further the study of on-the-job mentoring, the impact on employee job satisfaction, and employees' opportunities to advance within the organization (Brown, 2019; Graham, 2019; Hague & Okpala, 2017). Friedman (2018) revealed the impact of the lack of mentoring for human services professionals within nonprofit organizations. Implementing informal mentoring has been shown to be significant to obtaining senior management positions, but there are barriers to accessing informal mentoring networks (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). Therefore, in this study I explored the experiences of African American women regarding informal mentoring on the job and how informal mentoring has benefited career advancement to leadership positions in nonprofit organizations.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of informal mentoring for African American women who have been employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years?

RQ1a: What challenges were experienced by African American women who have been employed as managers of nonprofit organizations for over 2 years when pursuing informal mentoring?

Demographics

The participants in this study were African American women ages 18 and older. The inclusion criteria included working for a nonprofit organization for over 2 years in a managerial role.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Participant	Job titles	Education	Experience working in a nonprofit
1	Director of quality assurance	BA with certification	29 years
2	Program director for behavioral health	PhD	8 years
3	Founder/CEO of youth mentoring program	PhD	10 years
4	CEO of a financial institution	BA with certifications	20 years
5	Senior management	Certifications	2.5 years
6	Clinical manager for counseling department	Finishing PhD	8 years
7	Vice president of strategic communication	MBA	20 years
8	Deputy director	BA and certifications	14 years
9	Executive director of a county organization	PhD	15 years
10	Senior coordinator for counseling department	Finishing PhD	9 years

Data Collection

Data were collected from 10 African American women over the age of 18. The inclusion criteria included working for a nonprofit organization for over 2 years in a managerial role. I used a generic case study approach to collect the data. After receiving

approval from the IRB, I posted my research flyer on the Walden University Participant Pool and on Facebook, Instagram, and GroupMe. Participants responded through Facebook direct messages and my Walden email. Each participants shared their email address. I forwarded the consent form to each participant. Participants replied with “I consent” before interviews were scheduled. Prior to starting the interview, I described the study and answered any questions participants asked. The informed consent form was sent via email. Participants emailed me their availability. A schedule request was sent via Microsoft Outlook or Google Calendar for participants to accept the time and date.

All interviews were scheduled the same week participants gave consent. Some interviews were conducted the same day. Only one interview took place on a weekend. Three interviews took place prior to participants starting their workday, four interviews took place later during the evening after work. Two interviews took place during participants’ lunch break. One interview took place in the afternoon on a weekend. All participants except one declined receiving the \$5 gift card.

Once participants joined the Zoom meeting, I began by initiating conversation on the participant’s current employment, the mission and vision of the organization, and their daily working environment and tasks. I sought to learn more about their organization. I verified the criteria for participating in the study: Each participant needed to be an African American woman over the age of 18, each participant needed to be a human services professional holding a managerial job title, each participant needed to be

employed for a nonprofit organization and must have held the managerial role for over 2 years.

Each interview was conducted via Zoom using audio recording to transcribe and analyze data with sticky notes and highlighters. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Probing questions were asked to encourage participants to describe more detail regarding their informal mentoring experience. All participants were thanked for their time. Otter.ai was used to transcribe the interview recordings.

Participant Descriptions

In this section, I describe each participant in the study. I discuss their experience leading to their current position, and the relationship they had with informal mentors. Lastly, I discuss what each participant learned from their mentoring experiences.

Participant 1

Participant 1 has been in the nonprofit industry for 29 years. Her starting position was a direct support professional, which was hands-on with people with intellectual disabilities. Participant 1 explained leaving the position because she was not properly trained and did not feel comfortable performing the duties of the job. Participant 1 explained that she returned to the job due to financial issues and advocated to become more competent in the position. Participant 1 engaged in peer mentoring with an African American woman and became more competent with caring for individuals.

Her next position was recreational coordinator and teacher to ensure individuals were active and social throughout the day. Next, Participant 1 was promoted to assistant

manager. Participant 1 described this experience as self-teaching, learn as you go, and she attended trainings to gain more certifications. Next, Participant 1 was a behavior specialist. She described having a Caucasian man who helped walk her through the job duties. Because she had a bachelor's degree with experience and the behavior specialist position was more clinical, the mentoring was "short and sweet."

Participant 1 was promoted to quality assurance coordinator. Participant 1 described this process as very influential. She described being groomed by her supervisor, an African American man, to become director of quality assurance. Participant 1 described that once her supervisor left and she was promoted, she continued to call him when she needed help. She also reached out to other group professionals and affiliates for guidance. She continues to read policies and attend trainings to stay current on all new information. When she requested time off to attend trainings, she was told "she was smart and could figure it out." Participant 1 explained that she had to invest in her own education and trainings.

Participant 2

Participant 2 explained working for child protective services and then she went on to work for nonprofit organizations. First, she worked as an investigator, then director of residential services, and now she is a program director for behavior health. Participant 2 explained she did not receive any mentoring experience. She stated that her education, experience, and relationship building with management helped her advance her career. Participant 2 explained that she always has had to learn as she goes. Participant 2

explained that when she was hired as director of residential services, her supervisor, the executive assistant stated, “I hope you are not here to take my job.” Mentoring was not provided to Participant 2.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is the founder and CEO of a youth mentoring program. Participant 3 stated that she also works for a for-profit agency, which is where she received all her mentoring. Participant 3 also has her PhD. Participant 3 stated that she had no problem going to different departments within the for-profit agency to gain help, including asking for sample budgets or website design tips. Participant 3 explained reaching out to other similar nonprofit youth organizations and being told, “We do not have time, call us back, or we just do not do that.” Participant described how disheartening it was being turned down.

Participant 4

Participant 4 has been in the nonprofit industry for 20 years. She started out as an administrative assistant to an executive vice president. She left that organization due to burnout and went to another nonprofit organization. Participant 4 stated that her informal mentor was an African American woman she met in church who also served in the community. Participant 4 explained watching how this woman moved, spoke, and presented herself in meetings. Participant 4 stated she initiated luncheons to ask questions. Participant 4 stated she initiated another informal relationship with an African American woman mentor who was a city council member and county council member.

Participant 4 stated, “I love how she saw so much potential in me and took me under her wing.” The informal mentors helped Participant 4 in obtaining her current job. Participant 4 started out as a program manager, and six months later, she became the program director. One year later, she was made director of operations and programs. The next year, she became the chief operating officer.

Participant 5

Participant 5 has been in the nonprofit industry for 3 years. Participant 5 works for a charity organization linked to a church. Participant 5 explained that she attended the church and wanted to become more involved. Participant 5 stated her job includes meeting and interacting with many people, as well collaborating with people in a teamwork setting. Participant 5 describes team meetings as a learning environment, where most of the informal mentoring takes place. Before projects can move on to the next step, everyone has to do their part, which Participant 5 identified as one of the biggest challenges working for the current nonprofit organization.

Participant 6

Participant 6 has been in the nonprofit industry for 8 years and in management for two and a half years for a counseling department. Participant 6 started working in direct services providing counseling to individuals in home. Then, she became a therapist working with foster families. Participant 6 then transitioned to working in the nonprofit industry as an intern. She returned to for-profit organizations after graduating with her master’s degree. Participant 6 explained receiving informal supervisory mentoring. She

built a networking relationship with her supervisor, who was also a classmate. The supervisor frequently informed Participant 6 of potential job opportunities. Participant 6 explained that she did not apply for any of the positions because she was a new mom and wanted to become acclimated to that new life first.

Later, her supervisor was planning to leave and wanted Participant 6 to become her successor. Once receiving her licensure and building experience, Participant 6 was put in a leadership role, which is her current position. She mentioned having to learn while in the position because the agency did not have enough resources to provide and support mentoring.

Participant 7

Participant 7 has been in a management position in the nonprofit industry for 20 years. Her current position is vice president of strategic communication and internal affairs for a social impact nonprofit. Participant 7 stated she is the first African American woman in the marketing communication department at her job. Participant 7 stated, at her first job, the president stated that she needed her MBA, which was her first informal mentoring experience. She explained being a high performer but needing credibility.

Participant 7 received peer-to-peer mentoring from Caucasian male colleagues. She explained being told she needed to work the room, especially because she was African American and a woman. Also, she was taught she needed to be able to support her own point of view, especially in meetings, and speak in language that indicated she was confident, not aggressive or feeling self-doubt.

Participant 7 explained how informal mentoring and networking happened once she started initiating conversations around the office. Participant 7 stated before then she was an employee who went straight to her cubicle and never socialized. She was the first person into the office and the last person to leave. But she never was assigned the good projects and was contemplating leaving the company. After speaking with management, she was told she appeared boring. When in meetings, she did not seem confident in the ideas she was sharing. If other team members did not agree on her ideas, she never fought or stood up for what she believed and was often quiet.

Participant 8

Participant 8 has been in the nonprofit industry for 14 years. She is currently a Deputy Director. Participant 8 explained that the company believes in growing their own. She has frequent supervision meetings to go over her professional goals with the company. Participant 8 is currently being trained by her supervisor to be the senior director, since the current senior director wears many hats within the company. Participant 8 stated that at the end of the year the team goes over the company goals. This is an opportunity to stand out by offering solutions and initiating new projects. Participant 8 has experienced group mentoring, peer to peer mentoring, and supervisory mentoring.

Participant 9

Participant 9 has been in the nonprofit industry for 15 years. She started as assistant director of childcare resource, center director at a day care, and currently an executive director for a nonprofit. Participant 9 explained she received much of her

informal mentoring and networking when attending conferences, hosting trainings for different companies in the profit and non-profit industry. For example, she hosted trainings for a technical college. After the training, they wanted to hire her fulltime. Participant 9 stated that she continues to initiate informal relationships creating opportunities and continues to maintain relationships with her mentors. Participant 9 described how her first mentor helped her with her public speaking by encouraging her to attend trainings to improve her public speaking. Participant 9 explained the public speaking is beneficial when she has to attend mandatory county meetings advocating for the community.

Participant 10

Participant 10 has been in the nonprofit industry for 9 years starting as a social skills builder, mental health assistant, and student mental health counselor. Once graduating with master's degree, she continued as a master level mental health therapist, behavioral therapist, and currently a senior coordinator training other behavior therapist. Participant 10 explained receiving her informal mentoring as a social skills builder from one of the licensed counselors, African American female. The mentor guided the mentee by educating and providing information about becoming a professional counselors, as well as allowing mentee to observe a few of the counseling sessions with the client's permission. Participant 10 explained completing her internship experience as a student mental health counselor, which she initiated with supervising counselor in order to complete counselor supervision hours and maintains that relationship with the interning

supervisor. As a Master- level counselor and behavioral specialist, it was a “learn as you go experience”. Participant 10 described as a behavior specialist, the position consists of being on different committees, which allowed the opportunity to network. “In order to understand how to fit in with your expertise, you had to network in order to understand the topic of discussions; and over-time relationships were formulated”. Participant 10 described being the key speaker at some meetings and directors sharing their feedback; and needing the confidence to except the constructive criticism. Participant 10 explained following -up with some of the directors bringing coffee when heading to their office to pick their brains. Participant 10 stated maintaining relationships with mentors that she met through former employers. Participant 10 experience supervisory, peer to peer, and executive, and group mentoring.

Data Analysis

Subsection on Starter Codes

Otter.ai was used to transcribe the data. I analyzed the data focusing on each line of data to identify key words and phrases from the participant’s interviews. I placed codes next to words and phrases as I went through the data produced from the interview. The codes were short phrases consisting of: supervisory mentoring, peer to peer mentoring, nonprofit and profit industry mentoring, years of experience in the nonprofit industry, advanced in career due to mutual professional relationship, grooming to supervisory position, being overworked and no time for mentoring, and learning as you go.

After receiving approval from the IRB. I posted my research flyer on Walden University Participant Pool, Facebook, Instagram, GroupMe. Participants responded through Facebook Direct Messages and my Walden email. Each participants shared their email address. I forwarded the consent form to each participant. Participants responded right away to email "I consent". All interviews were scheduled the same week participants gave consent. Some interviews were conducted the same day. Only one interview took place on the weekend.

Once participants joined the zoom meeting, I began by initiating conversation on participants current employment, mission and vision of the organization, daily working environment and tasks, and learning more about the current organization. I verified the criteria for participating in the study: Each participant must be an African American Female over the age of 18, each participant is a human services professional holding a managerial job title, each participant must be employed for a nonprofit organization, and must have held the managerial role for over 2 years. Three interviews took place prior to participants starting their workday, four interviews took place later during the evening after work. Two interviews took place during the lunch break. One interview took place in the afternoon on the weekend. All participants declined receiving \$5 except one participant.

Data saturation was reached early during the interview process. I continued interviews until reaching 10 participants just to verify if any participants experience may be different. There were similar trends including the type of informal mentoring, the

knowledge received during the informal mentoring experience that supported becoming more competent at job task, having the opportunity to network, and stand out during board meetings. Participants that directly services humans including servicing the intellectual disability population or counseling stated they had to learn as they go. Two of the participants in the direct care field experienced racism and Queen Bee Syndrome. I followed the inductive analysis to assist with my coding process. The data was analyzed in a private room using the transcriptions generated through Otter.ai. Sticky notes and highlighters were used to analyze content and identify codes. Quirkos was used organize codes and themes, and to identify more codes and themes. During the interview process, researcher repeated and summarized participant's response to ensure accuracy. Later, researcher emailed participants description stated above; and the themes formulated from overall interviews. Through my consent form and prior to ending interview, participants were made aware that the information shared in interview will remain confidential.

Common themes that were formulated from informal mentoring experience was (a) informal mentoring, (b) Encouraged education and training with certificates, (c) sitting in board meeting with executives and networking at conferences, (d) standing out at meetings, (e) participate in any setting of informal mentoring. Common themes formulated from barriers experienced when initiating informal mentoring consisted of: (a) lack of initiation, (b) lack of confidence, (c) stereotyped (d) often told "you can figure it out" (e) burnout/ mentor not having time, (f) Racism, (g) Queen Bee Syndrome.

Themes Associated With Research Question 1

This section provides discussion focused on the themes that were created from the interview questions. I displayed quotes that best summarizes the theme. Participant 2 and 5 lacked information linked to informal mentoring stating they have never received informal mentoring experience and their career advancement was based solely on continuing education/ trainings and experience. Some of advantages stated during informal mentoring experience included career advancement, learn and network, and opportunity to stand out. Outcomes stated based off barriers includes overlooked, isolated, and forced to learn as you go. Below are themes associated with research question 1.

Theme 1: Informal Mentoring Experience

Participants described engaging in supervisory, group, executive, peer to peer mentoring, and networking with others within the community. Participant 5 stated” she took advantage of group meetings as informal mentoring experience”. Participant 6 stated being groomed for positions, always informed of new opportunities, and given good references. Participant 9 stated “attending recommended trainings to help with public speaking.” Participant 4 stated “initiating relationships with different advocates in the community that guided participant and assisted in networking to help with new career opportunities.” Participant 10 stated first informal mentoring experience was “being educated on the process to becoming a counselor and observing counseling sessions.”

Theme 2: Education/Trainings and Certificates

Participants describes during their informal mentoring experience to continue education. Participant 7 stated” being told by the president of the company she was employed at advised her to get her MBA.” Participant 4 stated mentors sending training invitation to help her gain certifications. Participant 10 stated as a behavior specialist “working side by side with the psychiatrist and often encouraged to attend different events to continue education and building awareness in the mental health field.”

Theme 3: Sitting in Board Meetings and Networking at Conferences

Participants describes their opportunity to network and formulated relationships while attending conferences. Participants also described giving the opportunity to sit in executive meetings. Participant 7 stated “sitting in meeting and observing the CEO”. Participant 9 also stated “sitting in community meeting and attending conferences where she has the opportunity to network”. Participant 10 also stated sitting in board meeting and using those opportunities to initiate relationship, as well as bringing coffee to pick their brains.

Theme 4: Opportunity to Stand Out

Participants described writing their professional goals and reviewing goals with supervisors so supervisor can best guide them. Participants also describe standing out at meetings and being confident when speaking. Participant 7 stated being told by her peers “people see me before they can hear me”, and to always be confident when she speaks in the meetings. Participant 8 stated at the end of the year, the job review goals and errors.

This gave her the opportunity to stand out by providing feedback and initiating strategies to improving goals for the next year. Participant 9 stated “I attended community meetings to network to get my name out in the community; and networking to find the right people in leadership positions to push certain goals to be met” including fund raising for different projects that the community has advocated for. Participant 10 stated “I had the opportunity to speak during board meetings with other board members and executives”.

Theme 5: Participate in Any Setting of Informal Mentoring

Majority of participants received mentoring from nonprofit organizations. Some participants did not have the opportunity to gain informal mentors through nonprofit organizations. Therefore, participants used any opportunity to engage in informal mentoring. Participants 3,7, and 9 spoke about receiving informal mentoring experience while employed at for-profit agencies. Participant 3 described when starting her nonprofit organization, she spoke with different departments at the for-profit agency she is employed at such as asking for a sample budget report from the budgeting department to understand how to manage budgeting for her nonprofit organization. Participant 4 explained initiating relationships with advocates in the community. Participant 9 stated while employed at a for-profit agency, she attended trainings recommended by her informal mentor as well as conducted trainings with different nonprofit agencies. This allowed her to network and be presented with job opportunities.

Themes Associated with Research Question 2

Theme 1: Lack of Initiation and Avoid Being Seen as Weak

Participant 7 & 9 described avoiding conversations with teammates to avoid people being in their business wondering what people would think. Participant 7 also stated that she wanted to look important. “I was the first person to arrive to work and the last person to leave but avoided socializing by going straight to the desk”. She described growing up and being told to be careful what you share at the office. Due to her avoidance, her ideas were often overlooked.

Theme 2: Lack of Confidence

Participant 7 stated that she stopped attending meetings. “When I attended meeting with new ideas, the ideas were continuously looked over”. Participant 7, 9, & 10 stated being nervous to speak up at meetings. By not attending and avoiding being noticed, participants lost the opportunity to network. Participant 7 stated “I learned from the president of the company that her ideas were actually good”, but she never fought as to how the idea was good and how the ideas could benefit the company. Participant 9 stated that her mentor realized how nervous she was during meetings and her mentor recommended public speaking trainings. Participant 10 stated “receiving encouragement and validation after meetings from other team members explaining they also started off nervous during meetings”.

Theme 3: “You Are Smart and You Can Figure It Out”

Participant 1 stated “I wanted to attend trainings, but her supervisor would say you are smart you can figure it out”. She would pay for trainings herself to further educate herself. Participant 1 stated because of her leadership position, other employees would look to her to have all the answers. Which further validates, why she would continuously read policies and attend trainings to build her awareness. Participant 2 stated never receiving mentoring and always having to read policies and learn as she worked. She stated that her field involves policies, investigations, and laws, which consist of educating yourself and staying aware of policies. Therefore, Participant 2 stated “there is no mentoring”. Participant 10 stated “because of the leadership position she was in along with the master level education, she was expected to have all the answers”. She stated that she was the only person in her position and her supervisor recently resigned. Therefore, she often researched to figure out the answers, as well as followed up with the quality assurance department to ensure she was following appropriate guidelines.

Theme 4: Burnout/Not Having Time to Mentor

Participant 2 stated “people just do not have time to mentor”. Participant 3 stated “I tried asking for help from similar agencies and was told she needs to call back at a later time”. Participant 3 stated eventually, other agencies stated they did not have time, or they do not mentor other competitive agencies”. Participant 4 stated leaving one job due to burnout and no work- life balance.

Theme 5: Experienced Racism, Being Stereotyped, and Queen Bee Syndrome

Participant 6 stated experience racism after being looked over when applying for a higher position and the position was given to an intern. She stated during her interview process that she needed assistance with diagnosing using the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) and the employer stated they did not have time to teach her how to diagnose. Participant 7 stated peers stereotyping her as “aggressive”. Asare (2019) stated how African American women have always been judged as angry, hostile, and aggressive women. Participant 2 experienced Queen Bee Syndrome from her supervisor while employed as the Director of Behavior services. The supervisor stated “I hope you are not here to take my position” as the Associate Executive. Participant 2 stated she never received mentoring on any of her jobs and was expected to know how to fulfil her job description without any help because of her doctoral educational level. Participants that engaged in informal mentoring stated no challenges experienced during the informal mentoring process.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

There are several strategies to provide credibility to the results of the research. (Noble & Smith, 2015). Through researcher’s bias, careful record keeping, member checking, and debriefing with participants about the purpose, research study process and results using the list Noble and Smith provided. After each interview, I read back responses to the participant to ensure they were correctly interpreted. I made sure that I

repeated key points and interpretations to the participants to ensure that the data was accurate. As Cope (2014) suggested, I built credibility by noting my involvement in the study, and by providing an audit trail such as my interview recordings and research documents used for the study. As Cope (2014) explained a study have transferability if the findings have meaning to people that are not involved and those reading the research can connect the results to their own experiences.

Transferability

My intention was not to highlight the experience of a whole population but emphasize and understand the experiences of a small group of African American women who provided a comprehensive and thorough account of their informal mentoring experience and to note how their experience has influenced their career. All participants were given the opportunity to add additional comments after the interview as well as elaborate on any information provided during the interview. I provided an adequate amount of information on the participants and the research context to allow those reading the research to analyze the study's ability to be suitable or transferable (Cope, 2014).

Dependability

All of the interview questions were approved by the Walden University IRB and were appropriate to the research being carried out. I used Zoom to audio record the participants during the interviews so I could provide an accurate account of the information provided rather than my interpretation of what was being said. The Zoom recording was the recording website utilized; and the website downloaded the recorded

information. The recording was then uploaded to Otter.ai to be transcribed. The study has dependability as there is sufficient information throughout each stage of the research process that repetition of this study will generate similar findings (Cope, 2014).

Confirmability

The researcher had no bias in the study but is familiar with experiences of the individuals in the study. Cope (2014) suggested describing how interpretations and results were established and showing that they came straight from the data as maintaining confirmability. Also, I established confirmability by providing statements from emerging themes (Cope, 2014). I analyzed each document and manually coded using Quirkos to establish phrases and sentences that were patterns in the data. I made a list of all of the relevant information and made them into codes. I went back and analyzed the data and placed the codes next to the data. Then I took similar categories and brought them together into broader themes (Smith & Noble, 2015).

Summary of Findings

Evidence has shown that informal mentoring is a key tool to reaching executive and senior management role for nonprofit organization. Participants have shown that in order to reach your goals, use all of your resources, have confidence, know what you want, be willing to initiate relationships that bring assets to your life, and maintain long relationships through reciprocity exchange. Themes that arose from question one: type of informal mentoring, continuation of education/training and certificates, observe, and participate in board meetings, engage in your opportunity to stand out, and participate in

any setting of informal mentoring such as for-profit agencies. Themes that arose as challenges to initiating informal mentoring relationships: lack of initiation/ not wanting to be seen as weak, lack of confidence, often told “you are smart, you can figure it out, burnout/people not having time to mentor, racism, stereotyped, and Queen Bee Syndrome. When initiating informal mentoring relationships, it is important to know what you want, be confident when communicating, finding the right mentor, and using every opportunity as a learning opportunity. Participants explained some of the main components to maintaining relationships: checking up on your mentor periodically, engaging in reverse mentoring, honesty, and transparency.

The participants described the mentoring relationship as positive and impacting their life. Participants noted that informal mentors were fundamental in their learning. They explained that their informal mentors influenced the life they are living today since the individuals knew what goals they wanted to achieve but did not know the steps to take to accomplish them. The informal mentors aided in directing them in the right direction to achieve their goals and helped them with challenges and provided strategies to overcome them. Participant 4 describes leaving leadership role, speaking with her informal mentor about her goals, and her mentor helping her to network to reach her goals. Participant 8 also described frequently meeting with her mentor to go over her goals and where she is in the process of meeting her goal. Also, participants spoke about their mentors exposing them to learning opportunities that helped them with their future goals.

Summary

This chapter captures the study's population and sampling procedures, data collection methods, and the study's procedures. Chapter 4 involved the process of recruiting and scheduling participants, the tools I used to collect data including conducting semi-structured interviews using a zoom and audio recording. I also used Otter.ai and Quikos to analyze data collected from participant's interviews. In this chapter, the purpose of this generic qualitative study is to understand the informal mentoring experienced by human services managers and how informal mentoring experience supported their career advancement through semi-structured interviews. This chapter provided a thorough description of participant's response, as well as codes and themes collected. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical assurance that protected participants. I used the data in a concise manner that will not reveal the identity of participants but will provide information useful for myself and future researchers.

In this chapter, I have discussed the demographics of the participants and the data collection method and analysis. Also, I described the findings and the themes that were extracted from data. In the next chapter, I will be discussing interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, and the meaning and implications with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

Informal mentoring is an important step to career advancement. Based off the results of this research, participants describe how initiating and maintaining relationships has helped them network and gain new opportunities. Participants explained gaining opportunities on the job they have been in for many years and gaining new opportunities with other agencies. Participants explained how their mentors helped them to become competent with managing their job responsibilities, encouraged them to continue their education, encouraged trainings to gain certifications, and helped them become confident in themselves, which benefitted them and the company. Participants explained having the opportunity to sit in board and executive meetings and observe the chief executive officers. Many participants stated that being able to sit in meetings is a form of informal mentoring. Mentees have the opportunity to observe the body language, speaking, and persona of chief executive officers. Participants also explained feeling like they had to learn as they went along; they felt isolated and lacked confidence, but advocated for themselves by initiating relationships with individuals in leadership to reach their professional goals.

Interpretation of the Findings

Informal Mentoring

The most popular type of informal mentoring participants engaged in was supervisory and peer to peer. For example, some participants spoke about supervisors

taking them under their wing and helping them to one day be their successor. In addition, participant discussed peers helping them to become more competent at completing their jobs. One participant spoke about formulating relationships with advocates within the community to help her gain job opportunities. Three participants spoke about group mentoring experience with team members. Two participants stated never engaging in informal mentoring relationships but believe that creating relationships with management was a form of networking that can benefit career opportunities. Participants 1, 4, 6, 8, and 9 spoke about job opportunities being created after networking with their mentors and seeing how their talents could benefit other departments. Participant 7 stated that there are people available ready to help you, but you have to be willing to initiate and listen to their feedback.

Continuing Education and Training

Participants stated they had a few informal mentoring relationships but the majority of their career advancement had to do with continuation of education or attending trainings and gaining certifications. For example, Participant 1 stated attending trainings and gaining certificates helped her gain new job opportunities while working for the same employer. Participant 2 stated that her education and experience helped her gain new career opportunities as well. Participant 9 stated that she was encouraged to attend public speaking training to help her fulfill her job requirements. Participants stated that, because they met the educational requirements, they often had to learn as they went along

on the job. Some participants stated that their mentors told them to continue their education for the purpose of gaining knowledge and respect.

Opportunity to Network and Receive Mentoring While in Meetings

Participants explained opportunities of sitting in on board meetings to network and observe executive and senior management while working under certain mentors. Some participants met their mentors while in attendance at board meetings. For example, Participant 1 stated that once she became an assistant manager, she sat in many meetings where she networked and explored other opportunities she wanted to pursue. Participant 4 described sitting in meetings, observing the CEO, and debriefing after meetings with her mentor about the meetings. Participant 7 also described sitting in board meetings and having the opportunity to observe the CEO as an informal mentoring experience for her. Participant 8 also explained attending meeting and initiating new ideas to help the company reach goals. Participants also stated the opportunities to not only attend the meetings but to stand out while at the meetings by being confident when speaking. Participants explained being nervous and speaking up during meetings with their team or board members. Participant 7 stated being told by a peer mentor to “know what you are talking about and be confident.” Participant 4 discussed standing out at county meetings and getting the right people in her corner to raise funds for different projects within the community.

Participate in Any Setting of Informal Mentoring

Participants explained receiving mentoring not only through their nonprofit jobs but through for-profit jobs as well. Participant 7 and Participant 9 stated that they received informal mentoring from both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Participant 3 is the founder and CEO of her own nonprofit organization. When attempting to receive mentoring through other nonprofit organizations, she was told she could come and work for them to learn. Otherwise, they were unwilling to help and did not have time to provide mentoring. Therefore, Participant 3 used resources from her for-profit job to help her in organizing and managing her nonprofit. Participant 4 explained initiating relationships with advocates in the community and described her mentor helping her network to access new opportunities.

Challenges Experienced When Initiating Informal Relationships

Participants described having lack of confidence to initiate relationships with mentors because they did not want to appear weak asking for guidance. Participants explained feeling as if they were overlooked because they did not socialize and network. For example, participants stated being afraid to let people in their business because they did not want to appear they were bragging. Participants later realized that identifying similarities through conversation is a great way to initiate relationships with others. Participant 7 stated that during team meetings, she avoided sharing her ideas due to being afraid they would be rejected. She later found out through supervisory mentoring that her ideas are great but were diminished during meetings because she never debated or stood

by her ideas. If she did not feel confident in her ideas, it was difficult for anyone else to trust her ideas.

“You Are Smart and You Can Figure It Out”

Participants explained occasions where they did not know the answer and struggled with finding the answer. Participants described often reading policies and attending trainings to build their awareness. Mandatory trainings usually compensated by the employers were now up to the employee to complete. Participant 1 explained she asked her employer about a training opportunity, and they responded, “You are smart. You can figure it out without attending the training.” Participants 1, 2, 5, and 10 often had to learn as they went along. Participant 1 and Participant 2 stated because of their education level, they were expected to know the answer.

Burnout/No Time for Mentoring

Research has shown that health care workers or human services professionals are often exposed to burnout (Jeung et al., 2018). Exhaustion and emotional depletion can lead to employee absenteeism, turnover, and reduced job performance. Participants 1, 2, 4, and 10 stated that they have observed that burnout at work leaves less access to mentors. Participant 1 explained feeling burnout but willing to help others because she remembered when she needed the help and the access she had to mentors. Participant 3 explained when reaching out to other similar nonprofit mentoring organizations, organizations stated they were too busy to mentor her. Participant 6 stated that when

applying for a full-time position, she did not get the position because the employer stated they did not have time to guide her with diagnosing patients.

Racism, Stereotyping, and Queen Bee Syndrome

Participant 6 explained racism played a role in her not receiving a full-time job opportunity; instead, the opportunity was given to a Caucasian intern. Some of the other challenges participants experienced when initiating informal mentoring was stereotyping and queen bee syndrome. Participant 2 explained feeling knocked down at the beginning and definitely felt there was no reason to initiate an informal mentoring relationship. Participant 2's former supervisor stated, "I hope you are not here to take my position" as the associate executive. Participant 7 explained that through peer mentoring she learned she was being stereotyped as aggressive. Participant 7 explained that she felt she spoke with confidence but, with her Jamaican accent, her tone and demeanor appeared as aggressive to others.

Key to Initiating and Maintaining Informal Mentoring Relationship

Initiating mentoring relationships means socializing with other people and getting to know them. Participant 9 stated that she thought that gaining new opportunities meant being the first one at work and the last one to leave. She explains being told she appeared boring because she never socialized with any of her peers. Participant 9 stated that she would not socialize with others at work and just stayed in her cubicle. For example, she overheard about Paris, even though she has lived in Paris before she chose not to open up about her experience. Similarities is a great way to form relationships. By not speaking,

you are missing out on networking opportunities. There is a constant argument the idea of co-workers being in each other people business because anything they may say could possibly damage their careers. Therefore, people avoid speaking all together. Research has shown to have balance where you are an active listener and inclusive without damaging your professional reputation as well as no showing to be a bragger.

Researching Your Mentor

Some participants spoke about studying and observing their mentors before initiating conversation to understand them, find ways to initiate conversation with them and to understand what they are looking for out of that mentor. Other people stated after initiating a conversation, the relationship was formulated later, and most of the time the mentor saw something in them like ambition, leadership, or someone that needs guidance.

Honesty and Transparency

Participants 4, 6, 7, and 9 stated that mentee have to be willing to except constructive criticism and allow it to build them instead of becoming emotional about it. Participant 4 explains being critiqued about her clothing to meetings and her mentor reminding her that “people see you before they hear you. You do not want them audience focused on your clothing but instead what you have to say.

Interpretation With Theoretical Framework

Social exchange theory fully supports the benefit of mentoring and the three forms of social support: career related support, psychosocial support, and role modeling.

Social exchange theory consists of a reciprocal favor of equivalent value in return (Blau, 1964). African American women (AAW) in the managerial role described informal mentoring relationships as a cost and benefit relationship between the mentor and mentee; for participants that gained their informal mentors on the job also benefitted the mentor, mentee, and organization. By the mentor providing value to the mentee like encouraging mentee to continue education, attending trainings, giving the mentee the opportunity to sit in board meeting constantly benefitted the other individual.

The mentor benefited by gaining superiority and respect. Homan believed individual would behave in ways to benefit another individual as a cost for reward including increased fame, prestige, and feeling better about themselves (Muldoon, 2018). The satisfaction and outcomes gained from creating these informal relationships on the job such as career advancement; benefits the organization and mentors creating loyalty, dedication, trusting employees, and an asymmetrical organization. Thibaut and Kelley stated that reward, relationship outcome, satisfactory or unsatisfactory determines the individual decision to remain or leave a relationship. Trust is useful for organizations to reduce conflict promoting effective collaboration and partnerships in planning and development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012).

Participants explanation of maintaining informal relationships supports Blau's theory of exchange of maintaining old relationships hoping it will be rewarding including financial gain, sharing of ideas, emotional satisfaction, spiritual values, social approval, and respect. Participants stated maintaining relationships by sending gifts and doing

check-ins. Participants explained venting to mentor for guidance and support, as well as reviewing goals to discover new career paths.

Limitations of the Study

All the information analyzed was taken from one source: African American Women in managerial roles working for non-profit organizations. Therefore, any conclusion drawn from the results of this study must be interpreted as coming from only one side of the mentoring relationship. If the perspective from the employer or organization were captured, more light would be shed on the type of mentoring relationships and outcomes observed. Interviewing more first line manager to understand the process it took to reach their leadership position but barriers to informal mentoring that has possibly prevented advancement to senior positions will show more information on the underrepresentation of African American women in senior and executive management. Interviews were conducted through Zoom using video recording. Some participants originally agreed to participate but had hectic work schedules and later declined to participate. In this situation, observing informal mentoring may have been beneficial allowing the researcher to analyze directly without possibly interrupting the participant's daily routine or job task.

Recommendations

Some participants indicated informal relationships created within the community, or while working with for-profit agencies. I recommend future researchers to do a larger sample by gaining more information could further benefit career advancement,

networking, and social exchange. Another future recommendation is to have a sample without restrictions to race. I recommend that future researchers sample another minority group such as Asian Americans, Japanese Americans, American Indians, etc. I also recommend that employers that are not engaged in formal mentoring will come to understand that informal mentoring is better than no mentoring at all and will continue to find creative ways to engage in informal mentoring. Future research could explore mentors perspective of informally mentoring while on the job. Lastly, a researcher could compare formal mentoring versus informal mentoring to gain a better understanding of mentoring styles, benefits, and challenges.

Implications

This study influenced current and future studies on informal mentoring, mentoring on the job, and African American women in leadership roles. The focus of this study involved exploring the informal mentoring experience of African American women who held managerial positions. This study is important for African American women seeking leadership positions and their understanding of the importance of informal mentoring to advance their career. Informal mentoring is a fairly new approach that is still being researched (Jones et al., 2018). Nonprofit and private agencies should implement evidence-based and diverse strategies, interventions, and models on supporting their employees' advancement and growth within the agency or company (Beckwith, Carter, & Peters, 2016). Additionally, encouraging mentorship for employees builds the company's development bringing new refreshing ideas to address main

concerns within the company (Kembauw, Soekiman, Lydia, Shankar, Huda, 2019). For example, participant 8 explained at the end of the year her team meets to review goals and errors. Participant 8 stated “this is an opportunity to stand out and initiate new ideas”. The benefits of implementing informal mentoring will influence the turnover rate and leadership deficiencies within the company (Agarwal & Sajid, 2017).

Participants experiences of navigating through life in order to reach their career goals is necessary for social change. Their experiences can contribute to the literature, mentees with similar backgrounds, as well as mentors and organizations. This may influence policies at the state and community level that affect minority development. Also, the data from the study can benefit organizations that want to build trust, loyalty, and dedication within their organization by helping one another. This study will help mentors to realize that they are in that mentoring role impacting the lives of others; and to continue to help other people reach their goals bringing quality and respect to each other lives.

Conclusion

The purpose of this generic qualitative study is to understand the informal mentoring experienced by human services managers and how informal mentoring experience supported their career advancement through semi-structured interviews. This study addressed the informal mentoring experience from African American women. I provided information related to barriers to becoming an executive including lack of initiation and confidence or no time for mentoring. I explained Social Exchange Theory

as the best theory to show reciprocity exchange between informal mentoring on the job benefits the organization, mentor, and mentee. Chapter 2 focused on the original theorist of social exchange theory including Aristotle, Homan, Thibaut & Kelley, Emerson, and Blau. Social exchange theory impacts mentoring through career related support, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Mentoring consists of building an effective mentor relationship, transformative mentoring, and understanding the difference between mentoring relationships and mentoring programs.

Chapter 2 also recognizes the importance of negative mentors. Mentoring in business includes formal mentoring, informal mentoring, E-mentoring, and supervisory mentoring to support career advancement, job roles, and networking. Mentoring in business will support African American women from feeling isolated, and invisible while pursuing top positions, African American women often reported mentoring issues including lack of access of mentors within the same race and lack of support. Michelle (2018) explains the lack of support from female mentors, competition, and jealousy when connecting with other women.

This study described this study's population and sampling procedures, data collection methods, and the study's procedures. This study described recruiting and scheduling process with participants; and the tools used to collect data including conducting semi- structured interviews using a zoom and audio recording. Otter.ai and Quirkos software was used to analyze data collected from participant's interviews.

Evidence has shown that informal mentoring is a key tool to reaching executive and senior management role for nonprofit organization. Participants have shown that in order to reach your goals, use all of your resources, have confidence, know what you want, be willing to initiate relationships that bring assets to your life, and maintain long relationships through reciprocity exchange. Other key components are finding the right mentor and using every opportunity as a learning opportunity. Participants explained some of the main components to maintaining relationships: checking up on your mentor periodically, engaging in reverse mentoring, honesty, and transparency.

In conclusion, the study described how the continuation of informal mentoring are in the lives of all people. All the participants are leaders because they were advocates for their own lives and finding other people that support their vision. Despite challenges and barriers, participants never gave up, found the right mentors that were willing to help, as well as advocated for themselves by continuing their education to assist in their journey to success. Knowledge, expertise, and networking through informal mentoring, participants were exposed to new opportunities for success in their careers.

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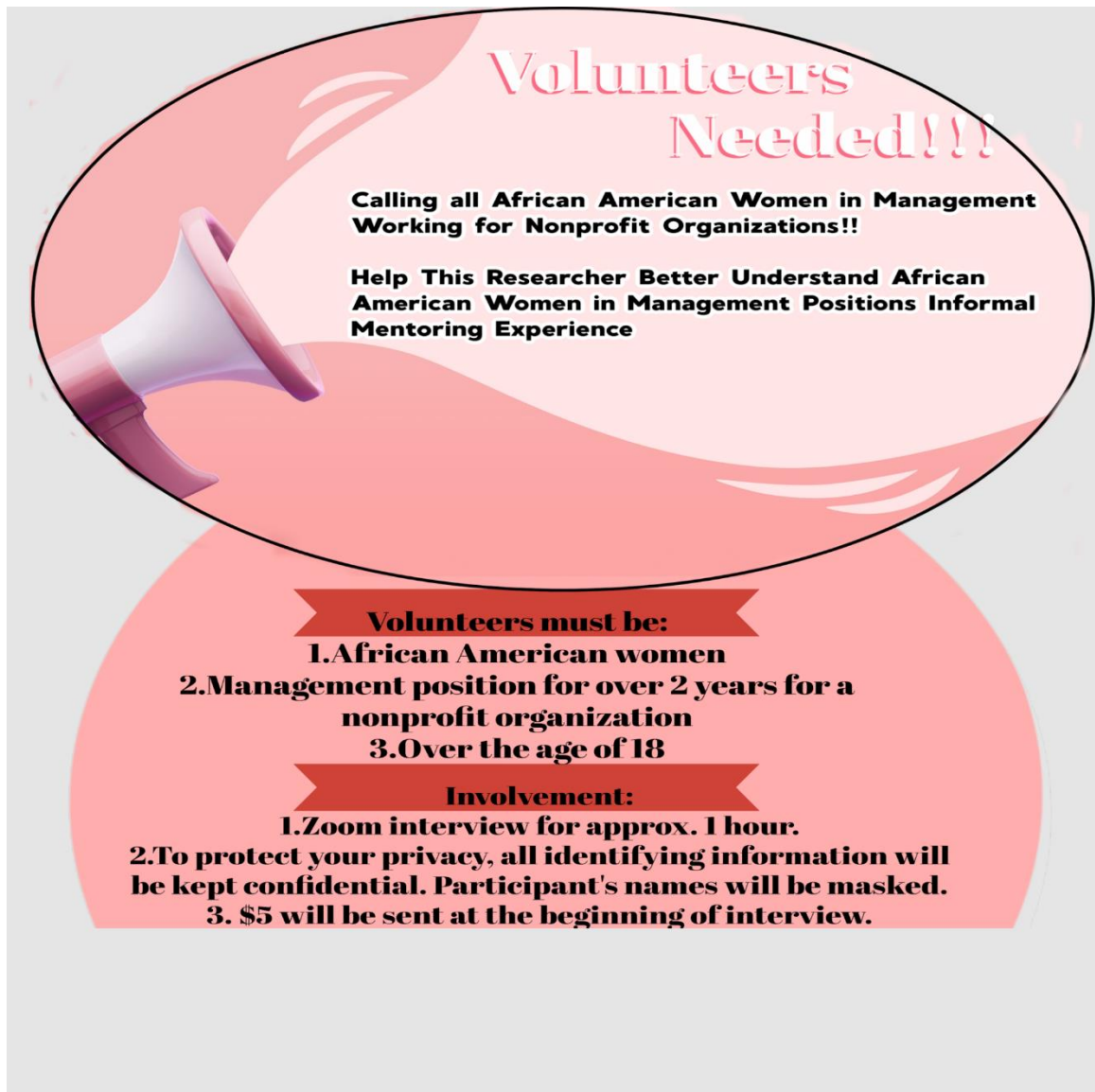
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Appendix A: Flyer



Volunteers Needed!!!

Calling all African American Women in Management Working for Nonprofit Organizations!!

Help This Researcher Better Understand African American Women in Management Positions Informal Mentoring Experience

Volunteers must be:

- 1. African American women**
- 2. Management position for over 2 years for a nonprofit organization**
- 3. Over the age of 18**

Involvement:

- 1. Zoom interview for approx. 1 hour.**
- 2. To protect your privacy, all identifying information will be kept confidential. Participant's names will be masked.**
- 3. \$5 will be sent at the beginning of interview.**

Appendix B: Email Sent to Potential Volunteers

My name is Alexandria Samuels, Doctoral student at Walden University. I am reaching out because I would love to interview you for my research study on African American Women in Management Experience in Informal Mentoring. Interviews will be conducted via zoom. Participants will receive \$5 at the beginning of the interview. Please review and reply "I Consent" to the email. Please let me know if you have any questions. I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you,

Alexandria

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about your informal mentoring experience exploring the benefits and challenges to engaging in informal mentoring. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 10-12 African American Women volunteers who are:

- working for nonprofit organizations in the managerial role for over 2 years.
- managers must be over the age of 18.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Alexandria Samuels-Ross who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore the informal mentoring experiences of African American women employed as managers in nonprofit organizations.

Procedures:

This study will involve you completing the following steps:

For a 1-hour audio-recorded interview.

Review of the transcript to ensure its accurate and email the transcript back to me after review. The length of transcript is approximately a 10-minute read.

Here are some sample questions:

Please tell me about your informal mentoring experience.

How has the mentoring relationship affected your career?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.

If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether or not they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study would have minimal risk to your wellbeing as questions related to what may have been challenging times in your professional careers or during your informal mentoring experience that can be stressful to recall such as negative events. This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by allowing the participants to share their perceptions and experiences in regard to their informal mentoring experience and the understanding of the importance of informal mentoring to advance careers.

Payment:

\$5 will be given through money transfer at the end of interview.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure under a password protected folder on my laptop that is also password protected during the data collection and analysis process. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by responding to this email stating "I consent".