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The Impact of Mentoring on Social Excluded Adults in a Small Midwest City

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Abstract

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by

Rose Anita Hunt

MA, Kaplan University, 2013

BS, Bethel College, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Empirical data have indicated that a considerable amount of the world's population, 45.3 million in the United States, live in deplorable conditions, some of which are created by social exclusion. Social exclusion is a disenfranchisement experienced by individuals and families living in poverty conditions created by circumstances such as lack of education, lack of economic sustenance, unemployment, poor health, and other social ills. Mentoring is a multidimensional skills-development opportunity for disadvantaged youth, aspiring new professionals, employed individuals being promoted, and instructor-student relationships. There is the possibility that mentoring could be useful for other societal groups as well, particularly social excluded adults. The purpose of this phenomenological research was to examine and gain an understanding of mentoring as experienced by social excluded adults in a small Midwest city. The theoretical framework included the theory of mentoring as postulated by Kram, Bandura's social cognitive theory, the social exclusion theory by Bourdieu, and the social capital theory by Muddiman. Social excluded adults between 25 and 50 years of age were interviewed regarding their mentoring experience. Ten research participants were interviewed. A NVivo assessment was used to analyze data. The study revealed that mentor and protégé relationships among social excluded adults yielded similar positive results as in other mentored groups. The significant social change provided by this study is that outcomes of the mentoring experiences will provide policy makers and nonprofit services providers with important data to create programs that more adequately meet the needs of social excluded adults.

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Dedication

To my dad John for his inspiration, my mom Melinda for her encouragement, my son David for his unwavering belief in me, and my dearest friend Laureen, who challenged me and was an exceptional role model.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Mentoring is a teaching and learning experience shared between a mentor (teacher) and a protégé (learner). Eby, Rhodes, and Allen (2007) defined mentoring as an opportunity for a knowledgeable individual to share accumulated information and expertise with a novice or less experienced individual. Social excluded adults are especially in need of mentoring due to their social and economic status. According to empirical data (Bayram, Bilgel, & Bilgel, 2012; Bynner, 2000), social exclusion encapsulates a certain segment of society that is uneducated, undereducated, unemployed, underemployed, impoverished, dependent on government subsidies, and provided little or no socioeconomic contributions to society (Atkinson & Marlier, 2010; Carew, Birkin, & Booth, 2010).

The focus of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of mentoring as experienced by social excluded adults in Benton Harbor, Michigan. According to the Consolidated Plan for Benton Harbor, Michigan (2016-2020), the City of Benton Harbor is an economically depressed area, with marginal government oversight and high levels of unemployment and crime. During this study, I discovered data that illustrated the societal value of mentoring social excluded adults to allow transition from abject poverty to a productive and substantial lifestyle. Based on the experiences of the research participants, this study may provide policy makers and nonprofit service providers with important data to create programming that more adequately meet the needs of social excluded adults.

I have included in this chapter the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, nature of the study, research question, theoretical framework, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and significance of the study. I provide an overview of the societal context regarding social exclusion and the positive influence of mentoring. I describe the living standards as dictated by mainstream society and the traumatic effects of social exclusion improved by mentoring opportunities. The proposal language is guided by a hermeneutic phenomenology approach based on key contributions by van Manen (1990) and Moustakas (1994). The theoretical foundation is supported with literature regarding social exclusion provided by Muddiman (2014), details about mentoring as described by Kram (1983), Bandura (1977; 1989) provided details of the social cognitive theory, and the social capital theory is explained by Bourdieu (1971).

Background

I describe mentoring as a universal phenomenon that provides training and social skills development to individuals desiring to improve their employment, social, and communication deportment. Representatives of the Institute for Clinical Research Education (2014) stated that mentoring could mean the difference between success and failure, especially in today's complex and highly competitive global environment. A spokesperson for University of Miami (2015) along with members of Business Miami (2015) commented that mentoring has been a part of the workplace for as long as there have been places of employment and that mentoring is particularly important in building relationships when those relationships occur between members of the same organization.

In most instances, mentoring is made available to disadvantaged-at-risk youth, embodied through teacher-student relationships, and employer-employee work related skill-building opportunities as described by Kahle-Piasecki (2011) and Wareing (2011). However, there are other segments of society that could benefit from a holistic mentoring relationship as indicated by Cole and Blythe (2010) and de Greef, Segers, and Verte (2012). One group that has not had access to the enriching facets of a mentor and protégé relationship is social excluded adults (Scutella, Wilkins, & Kostenko, 2013; Smith, 2013). Social excluded adults are individuals who, due to intellectual and social disabilities such as the lack of a formal education, economic deprivation, deficient job skills, inadequate communication skills, lack of interpersonal/social deportment, or poverty level existence, live on the fringe of society and are unable to perform basic societal protocol because of their disabilities (Wilson, Jaques, Johnson, & Brotherton, 2016).

A gap exists in the knowledge of how to involve other segments of society**,** such as social excluded adults, in mentoring opportunities. The deficit of knowledge regarding how mentoring influences social excluded individuals does not allow policy makers and service programs access to ways to create opportunities for growth, advancement, and upward mobility to those ensnared by poverty, substandard living, and low-level economic resources.

When reviewing the plethora of literature describing the enriching facets of mentoring, it seems to follow that other segments of society could learn and benefit as well. The intent of this study was to examine the lived experiences of social excluded

mentored adults in Benton Harbor, Michigan and add empirical data to literature regarding the experiences of social excluded adults. Such data could be a catalyst for policy makers and service providers, particularly nonprofit organizations, to establish developmental programs designed for mentored social excluded groups.

Problem Statement

Social exclusion dominates the lives of some individuals and families within the United States. Social exclusion is a condition that is created by many factors such as illiteracy, poverty, cultural differences, and the lack of money. There are adults and families in the United States that have limited lifestyles and opportunities due to poverty. The statistics on poverty in the United States for 2014 was that 14.8%, or 46.7 million people, were living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Poverty can separate social classes: the rich from the poor, the deprived from mainstream society, and the excluded from the acceptable societal status quo as described by DeWall et al., (2011), Scutella, Wilkins, and Kostenko (2013), and Spyrou (2013). Bohnke (2010), Brownlee (2013), and Whiteford (2013) each concurred that exclusion of any kind and generated from any source can be devastating. When an individual or group is excluded from mainstream society, the results and circumstances are overwhelming, confining, demeaning, and restrictive (Grant, Jack, Fitzpatrick, & Ernst, 2011; Seccombe, 2011).

Typically, social excluded individuals and families live in substandard conditions, which include inadequate housing, poor nutrition, ill equipped educational facilities, deficient access to health services, mental health issues, high-crime, and insufficient employment opportunities due to a lack of skills. Smith (2013) summarized her research

of social classes by saying that poor people experience realities of deprivation and lack, which individuals and families living outside of poverty escape. Research has revealed a noticeable mindset among members of society that disregard the poor and view them as noncontributing members of society as reported by Newheiser, Merrill, Dunham, Hoosain, and Olson (2014) and Rainwater (1967). Miliora (2002) suggested that people being subjected to the pressures of poverty experience emotional pain and mental deprivation that can erode their self-esteem and outlook on living productive and meaningful lives, which could create a sense of uselessness. Most people want to be accepted and to receive recognition as being valued and respected. Rosen, Milich, and Harris (2011) and other social psychologists described the desire to be included as a fundamental human need shared by individuals of all ages. Social exclusion is an unpleasant, unhealthy, and undermining condition (Miyauchi, 2012). Social exclusion entraps individuals and families that have the potential of being healthy (mentally and physically), vibrant, and productive (Tuason, 2013).

One potential solution for the social exclusion dilemma is mentoring. Mentoring provides skill-building and career development opportunities. Mentoring is a process that eradicates learning deficits and provides access to skill-sets, which can transition individuals into improved lifestyles and societal upward mobility as indicated by Borders, Cashwell, and Nichols (2014) along with Tuason (2013). According to Xu and Payne (2014), having a mentor proved to be much more advantageous than not being exposed to a mentoring opportunity. The primary benefit associated with mentorship is gaining access to a broader range of knowledge and skills that prepares an individual for

employment opportunities, career advancement, increased economic potential, and an improved lifestyle (Ghosh, 2012; Menges, 2016; Robinson & Reio, 2012).

Mentoring has been used for cognitive development, improved living, and employment enhancements for decades (Borders, Cashwell, & Nicholas, 2014). There is empirical data supporting the premise that mentoring has been instrumental in improved teacher confidence, knowledge, instruction, elevation of student achievement, and increased retention (Desimone et al., 2014). Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014) noted that mentoring sets a higher expectation for academic progress and aids in an elevated level of learning for students compared to non-mentored students. The literature review provided considerable empirical data, which substantiated the practicality and universal value of mentoring as described by Ennis (2015), Gong and Chen (2014), and Ilevbare (2011).

There is a gap in literature relative to mentoring of social excluded adults. Merriweather and Morgan (2013) indicated, after a research study of cross-cultural mentoring, that there existed a gap in literature relative to marginalized groups. Duntley-Matos (2014) revealed a deficit in literature based on her investigation of mentorship for under-represented groups, where she discovered a need for intervention to reverse the *institutional repression (discrimination)* and *actor resistance (person's refusal to provide equitable treatment to certain groups)* for the alignment of equity in mentoring within academic programs. A review of mentoring methodology described three areas of mentoring scholarship that prevail. The three areas include mentoring of disadvantaged-at-risk youth, employees in the workplace, and academia relative to the enhancement of teacher-student relationships (Eby et al., 2013).

Very little literature was available about mentoring opportunities and programs for the social excluded. Typically, the literature referred to social exclusion as experienced by adults in the areas of academia and the workplace (Arulmani, 2010; Chagnon, 2012; Chung & Kowalski, 2012). Many marginalized groups in the United States live in environments of social exclusion and could benefit from programs like mentoring.

The premise of this study was to examine the lived mentoring experiences of one such marginalized group, social excluded adults in Benton Harbor, to understand the context and essence of their experiences. Literature validated the merits of mentoring and suggested that when administered appropriately, mentoring renders a high percentage of successful mentor-protégé relationships (Allen, 2006; Chung, 2012). In turn, these relationships translated into meaningful and productive social and economic capital for both the mentor and protégé (Boon & Fransworth, 2011; de Dreef, Segers, & Verte, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences of mentored social excluded adults and to collect data appropriate for further research in creating programs and opportunities of social and economic advancement for the socially excluded. I used a hermeneutic approach to gain an understanding of personal perceptions and assessments of mentoring as described by a select group of adults residing in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Boon and Farnsworth (2011) explained that social exclusion is a by-product of poverty. Poverty is the inability to provide financially for

oneself, which reduces living to substandard levels of existence affecting many individuals and families (Bohnke, 2010; Gerovska-Mitev, 2015). Understanding the perceptions and practices of mentored excluded adults will provide insight for policy makers and service providers to establish opportunities for improved lifestyles made possible through the tenets of mentoring relationships (Borders & Cashwell, 2014; Bozionelos et al., 2016; Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014).

My goal for this study was to introduce rich in-depth empirical data regarding the lived experiences of mentored social excluded adults. As a result, the data may be relevant to the existing body of literature regarding mentoring scholarship and provide insight for consideration by policy makers, service providers, nonprofit organizations, and funders to expand mentoring services to include provisions and opportunities for social excluded adults. I gathered data through one-on-one audio-recorded interviews of 10 research participants in Benton Harbor, Michigan who expressed thoughts about their mentoring experience. The participants conveyed personal descriptions of each nuance of interaction with his/her mentor. The lived experiences included sociological and psychological perspectives as illuminated in mentoring literature (Giorgi, 2013). I also included observations of the physical deportment exhibited by participants in the collection of data.

Research Question

The central question for this research study was: What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?

Theoretical Framework

The principle theories that I used for this study were the social exclusion theory as explained by Muddiman (2014), the theory of mentoring by Kram (1983), Scandura and Pellegrini (2007), which presented an overview of mentoring practices; and Bandura's (1977; 1989) social cognitive theory, which is used to describe how learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of a person (protégé), the environment, and observed behaviors of the mentor by the protégé (Denler, Wolters, & Benzon, 2014). The fourth component of the framework was the social capital theory developed by Bourdieu (1971), which described social capital and its value in society as a precursor to an acceptable standard of living (Tampakis, 2016).

Muddiman (2014) provided an overview of social exclusion and its negative effect on members of society and the devastation created by this social ill. The premise of Kram's mentoring theory provided empirical data regarding the attributes and outcomes of measured dynamics of a mentor and protégé relationship. Bandura (1977; 1989) explained the theory of social cognition in which individuals mimic their surroundings and environment resulting in positive environmental influences that dictate motivation to perform positive activity with the reverse being true of a negative environment and influences. Bourdieu (1971) explained the theory of social capital and the benefits gained through acquiring employment skills training and knowledge regarding acceptable societal protocol. I used these four theories in the analysis of data and they were instrumental in developing explanations of the lived mentoring experience of the research participants.

Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion affects a significant number of individuals and families in the United States and throughout the world. Galieva and Eflova (2016) indicated in their article on institutionalization of social exclusion, that society labels, stigmatizes, and underestimates the possibilities of individuals, groups, and communities through legislation and regulations. Also, prestige, influence, and status are distributed by certain individuals who have amassed vast amounts of economic and political power, which is then dissimulated by unwritten regulations to selected individuals (Galieva & Eflova, 2016). In other words, social exclusion is a form of discrimination that precludes some groups in society from social and economic advancements, while other individuals, who identify more directly with mainstream and the elite segment of society, receive preferential treatment. However, there exist the possibility that those subjected to social exclusion may be able to escape exclusion through skills development and employment training provided by programs such as mentoring.

Theory of Mentoring

Kram (1983) described two categories of mentoring: career development and psychological support; the former assists in career advancement while the latter provides guidance for personal development and growth from a psychological perspective. In Kram's (1983) description, each category provided specific information and support. In career development, a mentor offers tools and strategies for a protégé to advance in work related and professional aspirations. With psychological support, a mentor and protégé establish a close bond in which the protégé develops self-esteem, self-confidence, clarity

of identity, effectiveness in communication, and interpersonal proficiency (Kram, 1983; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007).

Trust, open communication, and commitment are of utmost importance in a successful bonding relationship between a mentor and protégé. Burke (1984) and Scandura (1992) along with Scandura (1993), Ragins (1993), and Viator (1994) concurred that role modeling is a distinct mentoring function. The success of the mentoring relationship is validated based on the way the mentor interacts with the protégé and conducts the skill building sessions to gain the respect and allegiance to the mentoring process of the protégé.

Not all mentoring experiences are equal. Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins (2010) stated that marginal mentoring situations occur. In such cases, the mentor fails to provide effective mentoring practices and adequate transitional training for a protégé. The literature review revealed several incidences of failed mentoring attempts, which resulted in short-term unproductive interactions of the mentor and protégé (Eby & McManus, 2004; Matz, 2014; Williams, Scandura & Hamilton, 2001).

Social Cognitive Theory

There continues to be much debate, speculation, and research regarding functions of the human cognitive process as it relates to human reasoning and associated actions. Bandura's (2004) social cognitive theory described four features of human agency: intentionality, forethought, self- reflectiveness, and self-reactiveness by which people formulate action plans and strategies. Bandura (2004) explained that people set goals for themselves based on contemplation and forethought. These goals translate into actions

and the actions are viewed as positive or negative by society. In addition, the level of knowledge one acquires, environmental influences, and personal decorum are components that collectively influence a specific action. One of the primary motivators of self-thought, personal actions, and assessment of one's action is efficacy. According to Bandura (2004) self-efficacy is how a person perceives and reacts to a particular situation. If a person is informed and has high self-esteem and confidence, that person's action emulates their personal cognition. Actions prompted by high self-esteem include astute comprehension, clear and concise communication, mature judgment, and efficient execution of a physical response to a situation. On the other hand, if a person is less informed, has low self-esteem, and lacks confidence, their actions and reactions may reflect a less mature and reasonable cognitive response such as inappropriate verbal and physical interactions (Bandura, 2004). The cognitive processes as described by Bandura (1977; 1989) are processes required in the acquisition of knowledge by a protégé during his/her mentoring experience. A mentor can provide advice and guidance that creates a learning environment for a protégé to acquire knowledge for personal growth and economic advancement.

My goal for this research was to examine the lived mentoring experiences of social mobility for the social excluded. Bandura's (1977; 1989) social cognitive theory was the transitional guiding influence in analyzing and understanding the research data contributed by participants. Bourdieu's (1971) social capital theory explained the value of acquiring societal skills, referred to as social capital. Individuals and families acquiring social capital by receiving training, knowledge, and skills were able to

participate in opportunities of upward mobility that included economic and social advancements.

Social Capital Theory

There are multiple benefits acquired by a protégé during the mentoring experience such as acquiring communication and reasoning skills, employment training, and development of personal acumen. Social capital is defined as social and cultural influence that a person or group creates during networking and business ventures as a result of personal deportment. Bourdieu (1971) developed the social capital theory about the unwritten rules of societal power. His theory was based on the manner in which an individual uses the power of persuasion to gain access to opportunities of advancement and social position.

Social capital is defined as relationships, resources, networks, and opportunities that may be used to receive goods, services, and other benefits using influence and social status. In the context of this study, a mentored social excluded adult could gain social capital through the acquisition of new knowledge about appropriate social and employment skills. In other words, social capital is a resource that can be used by mentored social excluded individuals to escape the limitations of substandard living and gain access to mainstream society, which includes an elevated and productive lifestyle.

Nature of Study

This was a hermeneutic phenomenological study in which I examined lived mentoring experiences of social excluded adults in Benton Harbor, Michigan. As suggested by Patton (2002), I selected a purposive sample of 10 participants for the study.

I created themes, categories, and topics from individual participant audio-recorded interviews. I used Moustakas (1994) recommended phenomenological process of textual and structural descriptive analysis to explain the essence of the lived mentoring experiences. As indicated in a report by Reedy (2013) both social skills and employment performance enhancements were incorporated in the majority of mentoring programs in Benton Harbor, Michigan. I manually analyzed and coded responses to questions from the audio recorded one-on-one interview sessions and later imported the manually reviewed data into a NVivo qualitative software program for further analysis of the interview responses.

The research question regarding the essence of the lived experiences guided the study. The research question was: "What were the mentoring experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?" Ten research participants were selected and interviewed individually using semi-structured open-ended questions. I audio-recorded interviews and documented details of facial expressions and body language. I emailed verbatim interview transcripts to participants for verification of each interview. The manual coding that I prepared from each interview was imported into an NVivo qualitative software program for assessment regarding topics, themes, and categories (QSR International, 2016). The data I collected from both the manual coding and the NVivo analysis assisted in explaining the phenomenon in Chapter 4.

The research participants I purposefully selected between the ages of 25 and 50, lived in various locations in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Both employed, unemployed, and

underemployed individuals participated in the study. I held interviews in secluded locations in Benton Harbor, Michigan. I manually coded each interview, which I imported into a NVivo software analysis program to create themes, topics and categories, which described the essence of the participants' lived mentoring experiences.

I selected the hermeneutic phenomenology study as the best design because it allowed for rich and detailed direct input from participants and flexibility in managing the nuances of an examination of this nature. I selected four theories for the theoretical framework to assist in facilitating the understanding of the social, psychological, and mentoring context of data. The theories were instrumental in my examination and analysis of the collected data. My research design and the research question provided extensive data that yielded rich details of the phenomenon mentoring as experienced by the research participants.

The research reflected the principles of public policy and administration in that the research revealed how individual development leads to personal improvements, which affect individual involvement in the community, elevated civic participation, and increased economic contributions (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012; Brownlee, 2013; de Greef, Segers, & Verte', 2012). Without programs that promote individual development, untapped human resources are wasted. Social exclusion inhibits personal development. Positive human cognition promotes and inspires progress and development with the outcomes resulting in groups such as mentored adults making significant contributions that benefit entire communities (Jos, 2014; Oleksiyenko, 2013; Pierce, 2013).

The literature I selected regarding mentoring indicated that when a group of individuals work to improve their contributions to society and are successful in acquiring additional knowledge and skill sets through mentoring (social capital), that success usually results in positive and productive enhancements within the family unit, workplace, community, and other affiliations. This study was designed to gather, analyze, and present data from a public policy perspective about outcomes of this research.

Definition of Terms

The term *at-risk-youth* is often used to describe students or groups of students who are considered to have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school. The term may be applied to students who face circumstances that jeopardize their ability to complete school, such as homelessness, incarceration, teen pregnancy, serious health issues, domestic violence, transiency, and other conditions such as learning disabilities, low test scores, disciplinary problems, grade retentions, and other learning-related factors that adversely affect the educational performance and successful learning attainment of students as described by Dang and Miller (2013).

Disenfranchisement is the removal or denial of rights and privileges inherent to a group or an individual. The taking away of the rights of a free person such as the right to vote or participate in basic societal opportunities.

Epoche is a Greek word, used by Patton (2000), meaning to refrain from judgment in perceiving things.

Hermeneutics is the research science of interpreting the context of an actual or lived experience.

Holistic mentoring is when a mentor combines real life experience, understanding of the basic functioning of the mind/body/spirit connection, compassion, firmness, focus, and knowledge of life with a protégé as described by Vibert (2014).

Inclusion is the act of including and/or the state of being included (acceptance and belonging) as described by Robson (2013).

Lived experience is the description of an individual's perspective regarding an encounter, activity, or action that only the individual can describe based on feelings, instincts, interactions, and personal behavioral responses.

Ostracism is a negative interpersonal experience in which people are ignored, shunned, and alienated by a group or society as defined by Nezlek, Wheeler, Wesselmann, and Williams (2012).

Mentee is a person receiving instructions and guidance from a mentor. This term is used interchangeably with the word protégé.

Mentoring is a relationship between a younger or less experience individual (protégé) and a more experienced individual (mentor) who provides an opportunity for employment, education, and social skills development as described by de Tormes Eby et al., (2013).

Protégé is someone under the patronage of another. A less informed person receives help, guidance, learning, training, and support from a more experienced and informed person.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief about his/her capabilities or capacity to produce designated levels of performance that exercises influence over events, which affect their lives as described by Bandura (1994).

Social exclusion is a process, which involves the systematic denial of entitlements to resources and services, and the denial of the right to participate on equal terms in social, economic, societal, cultural, and political arenas due to personal disabilities such as limited education, lack of employment skills, fractured communication practices as described by Whiteford (2013).

Social inclusion is the provision of constitutional rights to all individuals and groups in society, which includes: equal employment opportunities, voting rights, adequate housing, health care, education, and training as defined by Robson (2013).

SCT is the acronym for social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1989), which refers to the psychological model of behavior that emerged from the work of Albert Bandura (1989). SCT emphasizes that learning occurs in a social context and that much of what is learned is gained through observation.

Upward Mobility is the capacity or facility for rising to a higher social or economic position as described by Rubin (2014).

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of a study, which cannot be controlled by the researcher, but are an integral part of the process that supports the relevance to the research examination. Assumptions are possible occurrence that are dictated by basic human reaction when seeking knowledge and insight from experienced individuals. Leedy and

Ormrod (2010) noted, "Assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist" (p. 62). I assumed that each participant would respond honestly to interview questions. No screening of information prior to the interviews was required from participants as to the validity of their experiences. I assumed that participants would not confer or have discussions with each other prior to individual interview sessions. Further, I assumed that each mentoring program that participants experienced were similar in nature and context. Lastly, I assumed that during individual interview sessions each participant would discuss his or her lived experiences in detail and provide complete cooperation throughout the research study.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are elements of a research project that provide a specific perspective and parameters for the study. I was able to control delimitation during the study. For example, delimitations limit the scope and boundaries in that a description of the criteria for participation and the location where the research was being conducted was stated (Simon, 2011). In addition, according to the literature review, there are no formal nationwide mentoring programs for social excluded adults (Bradshaw & Mayhew, 2010; Brownlee, 2013; Merriweather & Morgan, 2013). Historically, mentoring has been available to youth, employed individuals receiving promotions or new to the workforce, and to aspiring students in the world of academia, but not inclusive of social excluded adults. Mentoring has been a developmental process since the days of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates and continues to be a viable practice among mainstream society (Millman, 2005; Ryder, 2013).

The scope of the study focused on the lived experiences of social excluded mentored adults, between the ages of 25 and 50, who resided in Benton Harbor, Michigan. I purposefully selected ten research participants based on their environmental, social, and economic backgrounds. The City of Benton Harbor has approximately 10,000 residents of which 76% live in poverty conditions, with a population composition of 90% African Americans, 4% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Native American and Asian (City data, 2014).

Research participants were exposed to living environments considered substandard to basic living conditions, which was a primary criterion for participation in the research project. Several years ago, a task force initiated by the governor of Michigan (Task Force Report, 2003) established mentoring programs for many social excluded adults in Benton Harbor, Michigan. This phenomenology study was an investigation of some of those individuals as well as other mentored adults with similar social-economic backgrounds (Sykes, Giovani, & Piquero, 2014).

Limitations

Limitations are deficits and weak points in a research study. One good example of a limitation is time. The timeline in which a research study is conducted yields data that reflects the circumstances and situations occurring at that specific time with similar circumstances occurring at a different time may yield different results (Simon, 2011). Typically, limitations cannot be controlled or avoided; however, explanations concerning their existence is meaningful and expected in a scholarly presentation of research data. With that said, there is the possibility of personal bias in which during a previous

professional obligation I interacted with mentored social excluded adults and witnessed the empowering effect of mentoring in the lives of those adults. My experience and exposure to that incident provided me insight as to the positive impact of mentoring for that group of social excluded adults. This bias did not influence the outcome or merit of this study due to the rich details that were provided by the research participants.

Epoche (A Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment) was the process I used to bracket or set aside my personal bias. In Chapter 4, I explained in detail the source of my bias and how I was able to refrain from judgment due to the rich data received from input by the research participants. By using epoche, I was able to rely on data provided by the participants, which adequately defined the essence of the mentoring experiences. Another limitation was the location of the study. Benton Harbor, Michigan is a city with an extensive history of poverty and poor government oversight. The study was limited by the lived mentoring experiences of the selected research group in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Significance of the Study

The gatekeepers of society (governments) have been empowered to ensure equitable opportunity and treatment of all its citizens. Empirical data suggests, that many factors such as culture, bias, economics or the lack thereof, lifestyles, mental health issues, politics, political affiliations, and life in general create conditions that cause a sizeable percentage (45.3 million in the U.S.) of the world's population to live in deplorable conditions, some of which are due to social exclusion (Bishaw & Fontenot, 2014; U. S. Census Bureau, 2015).

The adults selected for this study were exposed to some form of social exclusion such as lack of employment opportunities due to deficit skills, appointments to community leadership positions, improved housing, representation in community decision making and civic involvement (Bradshaw & Mayhew, 2010). Practical contributions from the study include recognition of an ignored and socially excluded segment of society, data that contributed to existing mentoring literature which will inform policy makers and organizations of ways to improve services for the socially excluded, and reinforced validation of mentoring and its significance in the workplace, for youth, and in academia with a recommendation to consider a fourth area of mentoring scholarship, the mentoring of social excluded adults. The issues of transferability and reliability were satisfied in that social exclusion of adults is a universal dilemma (Bohnke, 2010; Roberts & Pollock, 2011; Scutella, Wilkins, & Kostenko, 2013) and that mentoring has been a source of skills development throughout the world for centuries (de Tormes Eby et al., 2012; Ivey, Geber, & Nanni, 2013).

The study provides *recognition of the socially excluded*. This recognition will assist in the empowerment of a portion of the population which, can transition from a life of poverty to a life of inclusion and upward mobility (Oleksiyenko, 2013; Rubin, 2014). *Acknowledgment of existing and emerging* data provide references from existing literature and research data which, adds to the limited amount of literature regarding social excluded mentored adults (Merriweather & Morgan, 2013). *Validation of mentoring* reinforced the significance of mentoring as described in existing literature (Gong & Chen, 2014; Harris, 2013).

The social implication of the study was to give the social excluded segment of the population a voice (Creswell, 2013) as to their lived experiences and to gain an understand of the phenomenon mentoring, positive and/or negative, as conveyed by participants (de Greef, Segers, & Verte, 2012; Gong & Chen, 2014). The data I collected substantiated my recommendation in chapter 5 for further research studies to provide additional data to policy makers, funders, organizations, and communities to establish mentoring programs for social excluded adults. Such opportunities could be beneficial in assisting social excluded adults (who utilize acquired mentored skills appropriately) in becoming productive citizens, lessen the costs of government entitlement programs, improve neighborhoods, increase the number of skilled laborers, contribute to higher employment, increase consumer spending, and establish vibrant communities (Desimone, Hochberg, Porter, Polikoff, & Johnson, 2014).

Summary

Mentoring, as it relates to social excluded adults, is a fascinating phenomenon that may provide positive life changes and opportunities for economic advancement. Considering organizations such as the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, with a goal to ensure that social equity, inclusion, and justice are central to development acumen, policy, and practice throughout the world (UNRISD, 2015), the research study may contribute valuable data toward the support of UNRISD.

In this Chapter, I presented an introduction, the research problem, the research question, and other descriptive information to inform readers of the overall premise of the hermeneutic phenomenology study. In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed review of related

literature, and in Chapter 3, I describe the methodology, procedure, and processes that were utilized throughout the study. In Chapter 4 I present the research findings, which support the analysis of data, and in Chapter 5, I provide a culmination of information, which includes recommendations and conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

I researched and found a substantial amount of literature regarding the positive results of mentoring for youth, employees in the workplace, and students at every level of academia; however, there is a need to examine the lived mentoring engagement of socially excluded adults to understand their mentoring experiences. Social equity and mentoring theorists such as Chandler (2011), Dawson (2014), Ghosh (2012), Weinberg and Lankau (2011), concurred that future research is necessary concerning the positive aspects of mentoring and its transformative influence regarding marginalized groups. This chapter includes a synopsis of literature, literature search strategy, literature review, literature related concepts, profile of social excluded adults, literature related to the methodology, implications for social change, and the summary.

I consider the study to be relevant due to the emerging domestic and international interest in the reduction of poverty and social exclusion through programs such as mentoring (Krishnan, 2011; Madanipour, Shucksmith & Talbot, 2015). For the past decade scholars, researchers, and policy makers have advocated for economic and social inclusionary programs for underserved segments of society (Brenman & Sanchez, 2012; Kummitha, 2015). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to interview, observe, and give a voice to adults who have lived in poverty experiencing the harsh realities of social exclusion and eventually finding a pathway to an improved lifestyle through mentoring. By giving this group a voice, documenting their experiences, and presenting data to the scientific and political communities, improved and expanded social

policies, programs, and change may occur. I conducted interviews and made notations of facial expressions, hand gestures, and body movements of each participant as part of the data gathering process. This examination parallels the contemporary social equity literature urging a global remedy to advance equity among groups that have been or might be subjected to treatment which is restrictive, demeaning, prejudicial, and hostile (Jos, 2014).

Synopsis of Literature

In this chapter I provided an array of literature, which supports the transformative effects of mentoring and established the merit of the research question relative to lived mentoring experiences of social excluded adults. Cheatham, (2010), Chung and Kowalski (2012), Desimone et al., (2014), Ennis (2015), and Kram and Higgins (2012) provided empirical data that advocated the empowering effects of mentoring. Bungert et al., (2015), Dyer (2010), Gerovska-Mitev (2015), and Roberts and Pollock, (2011) provided descriptions of the effects of social exclusion. Bandura (2012), Clark and Zimmerman (2014), Dooley and Schreckhise (2016) and other theorists explained the attributes of the social cognitive theory. Doh (2014), Ferragina and Arrigoni (2017), and Matthews (2015) detailed the importance of social capital in societal protocol. I have included literature references regarding mentoring, social exclusion, social cognition, and social capital to show the relevance of each theory to the significance of the research study.

There were three groups described in literature that are considered to be the primary categories of mentoring scholarship. Anastasia, Skinner and Mundhenk (2012)

along with Borders and Cashwell (2014) described categories of mentoring scholarship as mentoring provided to at-risk youth, employees in the workplace, and to students by instructors/teachers in all areas of academia. Each group that comprises mentoring scholarship reported advancements in knowledge and skills development that may not have occurred without the one-to-one relationship with a mentor who provided targeted and precise guidance in the delivery of training available through mentoring. Other theorist who discussed and described the categories of mentoring scholarship include Arulmani (2010), Chagnon (2012), Chung and Kowalski (2012), Colley (2010), Dang and Miller (2013), Dawson (2014), Duntley-Matos (2014), Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014).

The ills of social exclusion affects those who were born into a life of poverty or who, by unfortunate economic circumstances, were relegated to a life of diminished resources and a substandard existence. Krishnan (2015) and Spyrou (2013) indicated that the devastation of social exclusion has the potential of lasting a lifetime. On the other hand, intervention by a positive source, such as a mentor, could provide a pathway to an improved and economically enriched existence (Atkinson & Marlier, 2010; Bayram, Bilgel & Bilgel, 2012; Bishaw & Fontenot, 2014; Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Grant, Jack, Fitzpatrick & Ernst, 2011).

Social cognition as described by Bandura (1977; 1989) in his social cognitive theory illuminated the process of the human cognitive system in receiving, comprehending, and translating input from the five human senses into useful data resulting in positive and/or negative behavior. The primary conduit of social cognition is efficacy. According to Bandura (2015), efficacy is the mental process that manages how

individuals reaction to environmental and social influences. For example, an informed and confident person's actions might be the complete opposite of a person with less confidence and confronted with demanding challenges. Bandura (2012) suggested that no matter what station in life a person occupied, the realities of life can be improved or diminished based on the positive or negative level of personal efficacy.

Social capital as explained by Bourdieu (1971) is an acquisition of life skills and experience that positions a person to be valuable, influential, and accepted into mainstream society (Adler & Kwom, 2002; Cho & Kang, 2017; Zhang, Zhou, & Lei, 2017). Social exclusion, which is a state of deprivation caused by living in poverty, alienates individuals from society. Examples of alienation includes not having sufficient income to feed one's family, lack of education thereby limiting employment opportunities, and insufficient communication skills to speak appropriately during social, business, and personal interactions. Shinn (2010) stated that alienation created by poverty becomes a way of living and a barrier when trying to survive in a world system that demands social etiquette and economic independence. Social capital is the opposite of social exclusion in that social capital gives access to mainstream society because a person with social capital possesses a combination of technical, economic, and societal skills that allow him/her to make personal contributions considered to be an indication of economic and social vibrancy (Humphreys, 2007; Wright, 2017).

I directed this study toward examining the experiences of individuals who may have had their lives changed and enriched by mentoring. The changes and enrichment for the mentored individuals would translate into productive outcomes that enhanced

family structures, the community, and overall living conditions. Data were collected to describe the lived experiences prior to and after mentoring was provided to the research participants.

Literature Search Strategy

During the literature review, I searched for peer-reviewed journals, articles, books, conference reports, dissertations, and secondary information regarding mentoring and social exclusion. Initially, I focused the hermeneutic study on mentoring and low-income families; however, there was difficulty in locating literature to support that combination of interest. I discussed my research study with a Walden University librarian along with a student librarian at Michigan State University regarding the difficulty in locating literature. My discussions with both librarians resulted in my conducting research based on a mentoring and social exclusion amalgamation, which produced an array of substantive and grounded literature. There were three classifications of literature within the review process: peer-reviewed articles, books, and conference reports within the past five years that supported contemporary sources as well as the relevance of the phenomenology study. In addition, seminal historic literary sources defined and provided clarity of foundational elements of the theoretical framework and aggregate context of the study.

I used several search engines and library databases for the literature review. Search engines included Google, Walden Google, and Yahoo. I accessed databases through electronic documents, books, and secondary information from Walden University Library, Michigan State University, and Andrews University. I retrieved

literature from several databases, which included ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, Thoreau Multiple, Psychology PsycArticles, ERIC, Science Direct, and SAGE Primer.

Key terms for the literature review included: *academia, at-risk-youth, phenomenology study methods, disadvantaged, disenfranchised, exclusion, exclusion and health, low income, low income and mentoring, mentoring, mentoring and scholarship, mentoring and theory, ostracism, poor, poverty, poverty-index, social and exclusion, social exclusion and adults, socially excluded adults and youth, theory and mentoring, underprivileged, underemployed, unemployment, universal and social exclusion, upward mobility, upward mobility and exclusion, workplace and mentoring,* and *youth and mentoring.*

The review of literature was instrumental in my gathering an array of data regarding every aspect of the study and the methodology that I intended to use for the research examination. During the literature search, I gathered empirical data about the theory of mentoring, social cognitive theory, the worldview on social exclusion, social capital, and the overall potential of mentoring marginalized groups. As I gathered literature, I made copies of each article and placed that information alphabetically by topic into three-ring binders for easy reference throughout the study.

Ennis (2015) along with Laiho and Brandt (2012) described the advancements of disadvantaged and socially deprived youth. The deprivation associated with the disadvantaged youth aligned with the backgrounds of the research participants, which indicated the possibilities of inclusion of older marginalized members of society into

mentoring programs. There was a lack of literature related to social excluded adults, other than references by Pierce (2031), Pitts, Sanders-Funnye, and Lukenchuk (2014) who described how economic deprivation typically affected minority groups. Within the literature review, researchers like Anastasia, Skinner, and Mundhenk (2012), along with Colley (2010), Ennis (2015), and Krishnan (2015) offered recommendations for additional research regarding mentoring and dismantling of the social exclusion paradigm. Based on information gathered during the literature review, this study may provide data that may have a significant impact on creating mentoring opportunities for social excluded adults.

Literature Review

I used the literature review to select peer-reviewed articles, books, journal documentaries, and conference reviews that provided confirming and contrasting empirical data on social exclusion, mentoring, social human cognition, and social capital as related to social marginalized groups. Xu and Payne (2014) provided a stark contrast of social capital by describing the debilitating effects of social exclusion; however, the explanation included the potential of mentoring that could offset the effects of poverty through skills improvement and personal development. Bandura (2012), Ferragina and Arrigoni (2017) described human cognition and social capital as catalyst in creating and facilitating human development that leads to social advancement. Anastasia, Skinner, and Mundhenk (2012), Cardin and Ripken (2014), along with Robinson and Reio (2012) provided supportive data about the positive transition of marginalized groups, such as

disadvantaged youth, from exclusion to purposeful and productive lifestyles resulting from participation in mentoring programs.

Social Exclusion Theory

The attributes of a social excluded individual or family are specific. Arulmani (2010) defined social exclusion as the estrangement of an individual or group of people within a society from the resources necessary for survival and development available to the rest of society. Arulmani (2010) indicated that social inclusion has emerged as a national and international social justice and development agenda item with the realization that emphasis on social inclusion came because of social exclusion, which negatively affects almost every society and culture.

Riva, Montali, Wirth, Curioni, and Williams (2016) examined the long-term effects of social exclusion and determined that individuals and groups exposed to extended social exclusion created reflexive reactions described as the inability to recover from affected psychological needs and feelings of alienation, unworthiness, helplessness, and depression. Bernstein and Claypool (2012) indicated that chronic social exclusion produces chronic psychological and physical illnesses, pain, and anxiety. Yur'yev, Varnik, Sisask, Leppik, Lumiste, and Varnik (2011) concluded that social exclusion significantly influenced suicide mortality and that social exclusion could be considered a high-risk contributor to suicide, especially in Europe. Bohnke (2010) noted that in the current economic climate, being poor represents more than having little money, which causes the poor to be unprepared to participate socially, culturally, and politically. Being poor places individuals and groups at high risk because of social exclusion and in non-

monetary situations as well. The non-monetary conditions include poor health due to lack of access to health care, inadequate nutrition due to lack of proper food choices, and life-threatening living conditions because of improper housing, high crime neighborhoods, and homelessness. Learning new skills and abilities through mentoring has proven to be a remedy for many struggling with the confining elements of social exclusion.

Theory of Mentoring

My descriptions of information from the literature review about mentoring theory provided the backdrop for the study, which included details of the universal influence of mentoring as established in the context of mentoring scholarship. Anastasia, Skinner, and Mendhenk (2012) along with Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Polychronious, and Kostopoulos (2014) provided insight into the theory of mentoring, which included the three areas of mentoring scholarship, skills development for youth, employees in the workplace and in academia enhancing instructor-student relationships.

Mentoring is an effective method of skills development and cognitive enhancement. Kram (1983) identified the four stages of mentoring as initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Each stage is about certain aspects of mentoring and its characteristics. During the initiation stage the mentor (teacher) and the protégé (learner) interact through cross-communication and work tasks. During the cultivation stage, emotional bonds are established and help solidify the newly formed mentor-protégé relationship, resulting in an increase of interactions and more substantive discussions. Protégés become self-sufficient and desire to work autonomously in the

separation stage, creating a decline in the reliance segment of the relationship. The redefinition stage is a type of graduation for the protégé, in which development and learning culminate into self-awareness and self-confidence by the protégé. During the final stage, the mentor's role becomes that of support and counsel as required by the redefined protégé.

A mentor during the mentoring process provides information that is beneficial to the protégé. Anastasia, Skinner, and Mundhenk (2012), defined mentoring as the pairing of a youth with a non-parental adult who provides support and guidance by way of counseling and serves as a role model. Borders and Cashwell (2014) indicated that mentoring had been recognized as a critical component in leadership development and that effective mentoring is essential to the growth and success of aspiring students and business professionals. Dawson (2014) noted that after more than three decades of mentoring research, no one has converged on a unifying definition of mentoring due to the multifaceted nature of individual and group mentoring.

Figure 1 below, shows how the mentoring process is supported by the social cognitive process as described by Bandura (2015). As a mentor provides knowledge to a protégé in a skills development situation, the protégé's cognitive system processes the new information through the sensory process of sight (eyes), sound (ears), repetition (mouth), and movement/writing (hands). Comprehension and understanding of new knowledge and skills by the protégé occurs within the learning (mentoring) and mental (cognitive) functions.

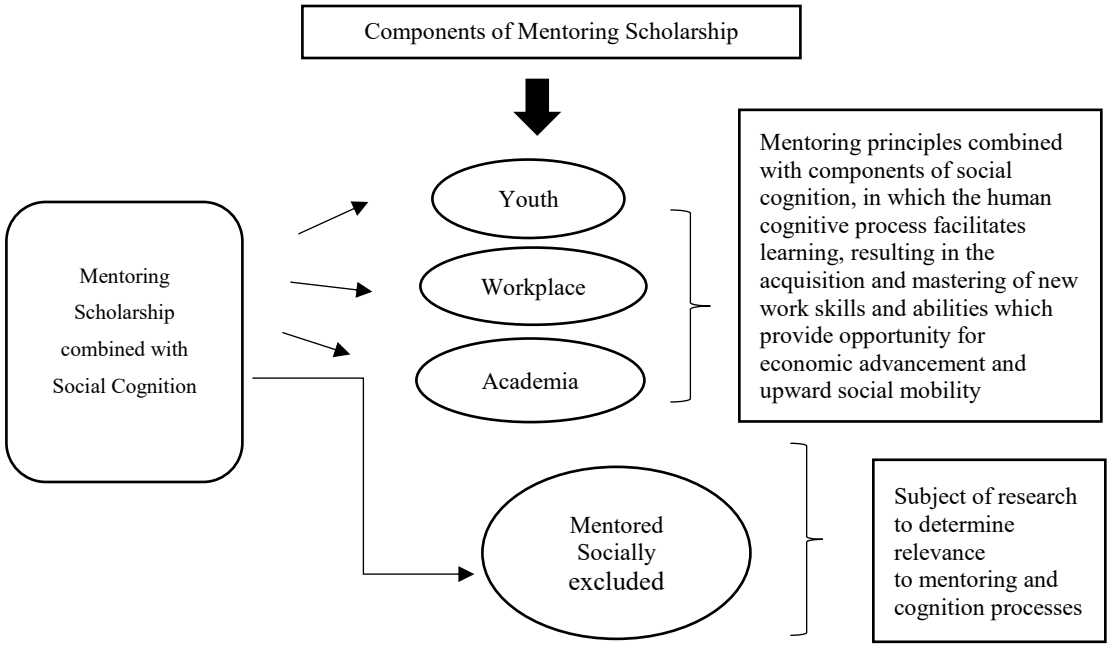

Figure 1. ***Mentoring process in relationship to social cognition.***

Note: About mentoring scholarship. Adapted from "Definition and evolution of mentoring," by L. T. Eby, J. E. Rhodes, and T. D. Allen, 2007, In T. D. Allen & L. T. Eby (Eds.), **The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: A multiple perspectives approach** ***p. 15. Published by Oxford, England: Blackwell.***

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's (1977; 1989) social cognitive theory was selected to assist in explaining the cognitive process associated with mentoring. Mentoring is a cognitive process that transforms and empowers a protégé who acquires new skills and knowledge (which usually results in a positive life changing experience) to establish personal self-awareness, self-confidence, and positive self-efficacy as described by Bozionelos et al. (2016). According to Bandura (1989), the basic principle of social cognition is self-efficacy, which affects thought patterns in self-aiding or self-hindering episodes; whereby the more intense people perceive their self-efficacy the higher their goal of attainment; whereas, less personal efficacy results in lower goal achievement.

Bandura (2015) explained that when people believe in themselves and their ability to perform successfully, their self-efficacy exists and functions at its highest level. Whereas, the opposite is true for those with low self-esteem and who perform at marginal levels due to a low level of self-efficacy, fear and self-doubt. In addition, Bandura (2012) indicated that self-efficacy had a direct influence on motivation in which individuals with positive and vigorous self-efficacy possessed thought patterns that promulgate decision-making and viewed challenges as opportunities to display intellect, skills, and abilities in a confident manner. Those who possessed thoughts of inadequacy, lack of skills, and fear of failure approached life and challenges with a defeatist and self-doubting attitude.

In contrast, Ng and Lucianetti (2016) viewed self-efficacy as positive in some aspect of individual cognitive development. When the increased or advanced cognitive learning was expressed by employees in the workplace, the results created tension and competitive attitudes among coworkers and administrators. The creation of tension by the individual displaying the high level of self-efficacy would be a lessening of the positive effects of self-efficacy. Ng and Lucianetti (2016) raised an interesting point that self-efficacy played a dual role in group dynamic in that positive self-efficacy promotes goodwill and optimistic results when individuals perform at a high level of decorum; thereby, bringing recognition of exemplary performance and above-average personal achievement. In such a case, positive self-efficacy could be viewed by peers as negative. The negative reaction could be caused by envy or concern that fewer opportunities (for the peers) would be available due to the high level of performance by the individual(s) displaying positive self-efficacy.

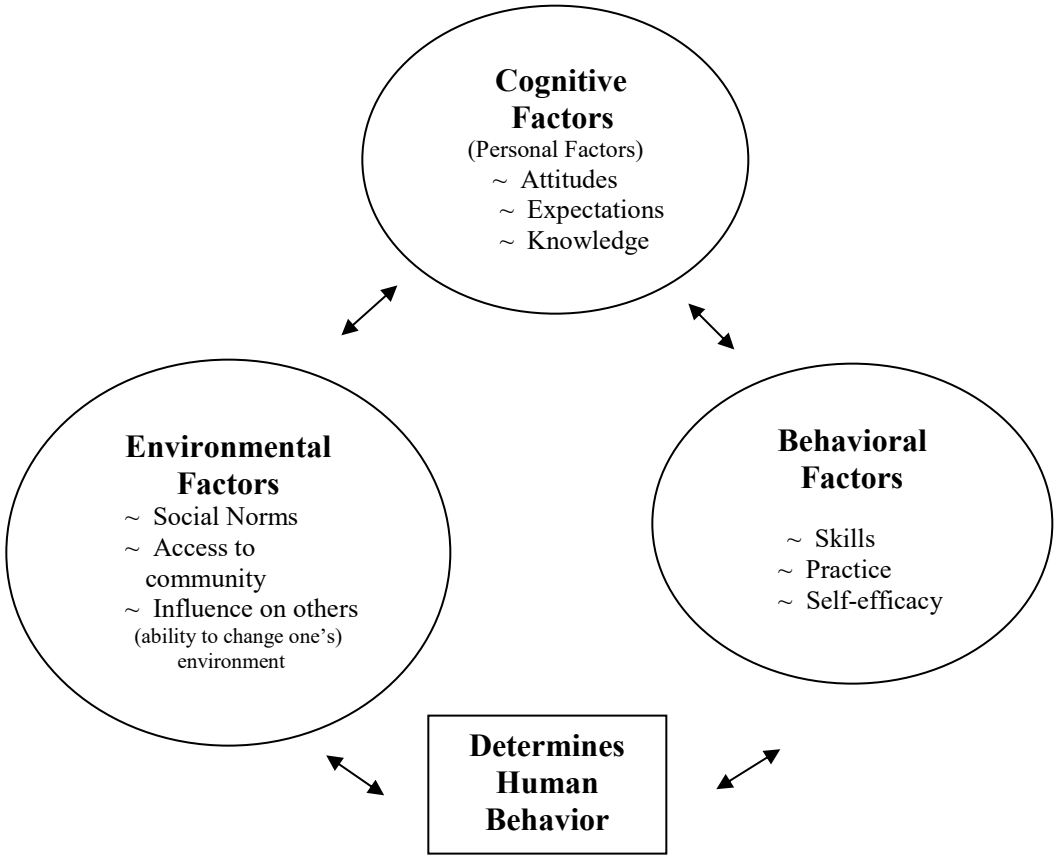

Figure 2. ***Bandura's triadic reciprocal model.***

Note: Data for triadic reciprocal model. Adapted from "On Deconstructing Commentaries Regarding Alternative Theories of Self-Regulation," by A. Bandura, 2015, **Journal of Management, 41*****, p. 1044. Copyright 2015 by Stanford University.***

Denler, Wolters and Benzon (2014) supported Bandura's (1977:1989) theory of social cognition regarding the importance of the environment in determining behavior. Bandura (2012) expressed that by informed and measured forethought, self-reflection, and self-regulatory processes, people exert substantial influence over their own outcomes and the environment broadly. Thus, self-efficacy in terms of the mentored social excluded adult could become the relevant factor in the success or failure of mastering

useful concepts and utilizing mentoring principles for self-actualization and personal accomplishments.

In later literature by Clark and Zimmerman (2014), the authors commented on Bandura's (2012) expansion of the research regarding his social cognitive theory, which led to the processes that illuminated self-efficacy referred to as triadic reciprocal determinism as depicted in Figure 2. In Clark and Zimmerman's (2014) article about Bandura's work, the authors indicated that Bandura (2012) emphasized self-efficacy as a distinct cognitive process in human motivation in which self-efficacy is a person's self-reaction to behavior in performing a task successfully.

As depicted in Figure 2 above, three interactional subsystems facilitate the human cognitive process. One system is the basic *cognitive or personal factors* of knowledge, attitudes, and expectations. Clark and Zimmerman (2014) defined reciprocal causation as the co-mingling of thoughts, attitude, and actions. The way a person thinks is based on the accumulation of knowledge (thoughts), which influences a personal perspective (attitude) and creates a specific behavioral response (action).

Oppong (2014) referred to the subsystem containing *environment factors* as a primary influence and support of the cognitive process. Examples of environmental factors include social norms, acclamation of those around us (community, family, associates, acquaintances, etc.), and one's personal dynamics which contributes to the causation process in varying degrees. Oppong (2014) as well as Bandura (2012) indicated that social norms exemplify human values through behavior as influenced by family, friends, and community along with individual personal preferences. Bandura

(2015) explained that reaction by individuals to environmental influences vary from person-to-person contingent on personal needs. A few examples of individual reactions include obey or disobey societal laws, display of ethnic culture or identify with another culture, disbursement of civic duties or not, social or anti-social behavior, joining a church or a street gang, becoming a community leader/activist or resist laws and justice.

According to Schunk (2012), the subsystem of *behavioral factors* such as skills, personal development, and self-efficacy contributes to individual behavior and societal impact. One or more persons joining in a similar behavioral response can affect their surroundings in specific ways. The factors of this subsystem as explained by Bandura (2012) indicated that a person reacts in specific ways such as in the case of students attending an academic lecture, which is only effective if students attend the lecture, or a person near a hot stovetop, which he/she can only be burned if the stove is touched, or in the case of parents who normally do not praise their children until the children exemplify behavior worthy of praise.

Bandura (1986), described self-efficacy as a self-reflection, which is a significant feature of the social cognitive theory because understanding self-reflection helps one to understand the nature of a personal experience, make personal assessment of action reinforced by self-belief, routinely activates self-evaluation, and alters human thinking and behavior as needed. A person's self-efficacy is the motivation that dictates personal judgment, decision-making, rationale, and accomplishments, which distinguishes humans from lower forms of life.

In contrast to Bandura's (1977; 1989) social cognitive theory, Liviatan and Jost (2014) questioned why people engaged in social psychological processes that exacerbate societal injustices and inequities. In other words, why do people accept bias treatment, stereotypic characterizations, bullying, and other acts of societal disenfranchisement? Gill and Andreychik (2014) created the Social Explanatory Styles Questionnaire to address this question and other inequitable actions. Those who facilitated the administration of the questionnaire assessed basic social-cognitive phenomena described in the questionnaire that included: spontaneous trait inference, fundamental attribution error, and moral blame. Gill and Andrevchik (2014) reported that responses contained in the completed questionnaires indicated predictive validity in relation to the social cognitive phenomena that revealed why people and groups tolerated abhorrent societal ostracism. Those reviewing responses to the questionnaire indicated diminished self-efficacy, low self-esteem, lack of education, poverty, mental and physical abuses, and intolerance for cultural differences as reasons why people accepted being labeled, tolerated bias treatment, and allowed themselves to be bullied. Similar results as noted by Gill and Andrevchik (2014) was validated in an article written by Nezlek, Wheeler, Wesselmann, and Williams (2012).

Social Capital Theory

Bourdieu's (1971) social capital theory is significant to this study in that it provides an understanding of the rules of mainstream society, some written and many subliminal in nature due to a code of ethics understood by middle and upper ranks of society. Cho and Kang (2017) reported that some social capital theorists, such as Doh

(2014) and Wright (2015), suggested that when a higher level of social capital is obtained a higher quality of government exists. The term social capital was popularized by Coleman (1990), Putman (1993), Fukuyama (1995), and Doh, (2014) who described social capital as social structures like relationships based on trust, collaborative networks, and civic norms.

Matthews (2016) indicated that there was evidence that the increased use of the Internet through FaceBook and Twitter has influenced the spread of social capital. Sajurial, vanHeerde-Hudson, Hudson, Dasandil, and Theocharis (2015), stated that since the early development of the World Wide Web and Internet, information and communication technologies are transforming communications, communities, and society; thus, the rapid transformation had expanded the influence of social capital. Matthews (2016) suggested that the expansion of social capital had facilitated community development and stimulated influential relationships among neighboring countries.

Bourdieu (1971) considered social capital to be not only economic, but cultural, social, and symbolic in that it (social capital) was transitional in nature. Bourdieu (1971) indicated that contingent on a specific situation or circumstance, social capital could be converted into any type of influence based on the need and expertise of the individual in the position of power and influence. According to Bourdieu (1971) and Tampakis (2016), cultural capital comes in several forms, such as the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body as it adjusts to the demands of society, institutionalization as it relates to educational qualifications, and in the form of books, art collections, and performing arts via musical instruments and other artistic paraphernalia.

Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) along with Orlowski and Wicker (2015) recognized social capital as a powerful and effective catalyst in relationship building opportunities for those who possess the knowledge, skill, and ability to use personal influence tactfully and resourcefully. In the case of a mentored social excluded adult, having the ability to communicate, interact, and exhibit newly acquired skills allows him/her the opportunity for advancement socially and economically.

Combined Effect of Theories

The combination of the theory of social exclusion as expressed by Muddiman (2014), Killen, Rutland, and Yip (2016), Kram's (1983) mentoring theory, the social cognitive theory described by Bandura (1977; 1989), and Bourdieu's (1971) social capital theory; each of which I used to inform the study regarding the rationale associated with the lived experiences of mentored social excluded adults. Each theorist explained the nature of each theory and information from each theorist was used to gain understanding of the lived experiences as described by participants during the audio-recorded interviews. Data from the interviews and notes regarding observations of each research participant was analyzed and explained to provide an overview of each experience. I expect the data that has been provided from this study to create a desire among other researchers to initiate future research regarding mentoring experiences and opportunities of advancement for social excluded adults.

It is important to note, that I believe this study served as a mechanism to give voice to a group that has potential to contribute more substantially to their families, community, and the economy. Data were gathered to provide rich details about mentored

social excluded adults. I focused on this neglected group and collected a preponderance of data that may lead to the inclusion of social excluded adults as a significant group to receive mentoring opportunities. Investments by non-profit organizations, funders, and policy makers into programs for this alienated group could possibly yield a significant return of capital, both socially and economically.

The empirical data that I collected and analyzed may establish an approach and benchmarks for assisting marginalized groups in gaining skills and knowledge useful in dismantling paradigms of poverty and disenfranchisement. Although, my research may not provide a solution for every social excluded individual and family, it may be useful in providing access by those who take advantage of programs resulting from policy makers and organizations investing in meaningful training opportunities for the socially excluded. It was important to audio-recorded each interview so that I could capture rich details of each experience by listening to interviews several times to correctly catalogue data. The research participants appeared comfortable and enthusiastic while sharing each aspect of their mentoring experience.

I used the research question (What were the experiences of adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?) as a focal point for the interview sessions. From the research question, I designed several interview questions to guide each participant in providing in-depth and rich explanations regarding their mentoring experience from psychological and sociological perspectives. I encouraged each participant to describe his/her experience in as much detail as necessary so that as many specifics as possible could be captured and included in the interview summary to depict

the essence of the overall developmental learning process. As divergent information emerged from the interview responses from the participants, I asked additional questions, which were not included in the interview protocol questions. The additional input from the participants provided the in-depth data I was seeking throughout the research examination. I monitored and documented body language and non-verbal activities displayed by each participant. The non-verbal cues were indicators as to the level of satisfaction a participant received from an accomplishment or disappointment from experiencing a challenge or incomplete outcome. The non-verbal cues were also indicators as to the level of sincerity and passion each participant expressed regarding the personal impact of the mentoring influence in his/her life. During each session, the interview protocol guidelines helped to maintain continuity during each interaction. Notations were documented regarding any deviation from the interview protocol; however, a return to protocol was maintained throughout the research examination.

Figure 3 below is an overview of theoretical concepts. Information in Figure 3 is intended to show the correlation of each theory and the relationship of theories as to the contextual relevance of the study. My use of each theory provided information that assisted in understanding the mentoring phenomena as expressed and experienced by the research participants. I thought it important to provide the background of mentoring and social exclusion, both of which influenced the lives of the participants in structurally different ways. With the theories of social cognition and social capital, I provided details of how each affect the human thought process and influence social change and economic advancements.

Bandura's (1977; 1989) described in his social cognitive theory the mechanics of the human cognitive system and how an individual is influenced by his/her environment. My selection of the four theories (mentoring, social cognition, social exclusion, and social capital) was to provide guidelines and rationale to understand the research topic, assist in the analysis of the collected data, enliven the premise of the phenomenological study, and highlight the literature that supported the study.

Several interview techniques, such as behavioral, evidence-based, and task-oriented interviewing as recommended by Doyle (2018), were considered for the study. I selected the consistent laddering interview formulated by Korenini (2012). By using the consistent laddering procedure, I was successful in gathering rich in-depth data from each interview. The consistent laddering interview procedure is a qualitative semi-structured technique that repeatedly ask a form of "why" questions based on a previous response from the interviewee. The procedure of connecting responses from one question to the next was intended to form a hierarchy of responses giving the interview a context of continuity and consistency. This approach allowed me to establish parameters for individual discussion during the interviews and participants responded in a flexible free flowing manner, which accommodated the intent and data collection objective.

The following Figure 3 is a depiction of the relationship between the four theories and how each interface with the other. The theoretical framework is the basis for understanding the essence of the mentoring experience of research participants.

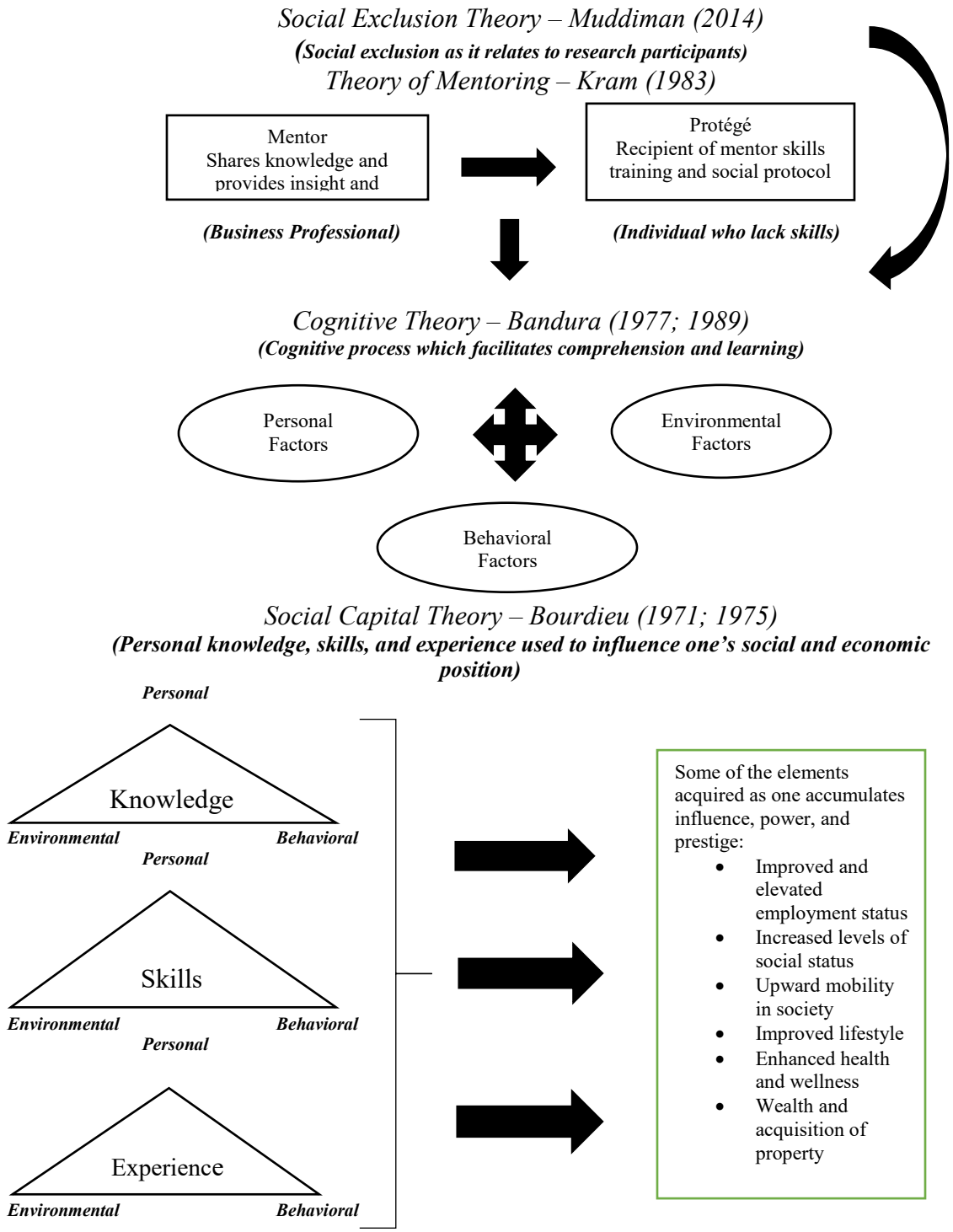

Figure 3. *Researcher's depiction of conceptual framework uniting theories.*

Note: Conceptual framework about theories. Adapted from A. Bandura (1977;1989), P. Bourdieu 1971), K. Kram (1983), and D. C. Muddiman (2014).

Literature Related to Concepts

Four concepts, social exclusion, mentoring, human cognitive process, and social capital dominated the centrality of relevance for this phenomenological study. The literature for each concept helped to clarify and substantiate the need to investigate the experiences of mentored social excluded adults and understand the context of social exclusion, mentoring, human cognition, as well as the impact of social capital in the lives of the research participants.

In Figure 3, the theory of social exclusion, as described by Muddiman, is the social ill which hinders personal growth and economic advancements due to the influence of poverty and lack of personal skills development. Mentoring has proven to be an antidote in offsetting the negative effects of exclusion, primarily for those who are youth, employed, and in academia. Once mentoring has been experienced by utilizing the principles of the social cognitive process an individual becomes a recipient and custodian of valuable assets known as social capital. The triangles in Figure 3 represents an individual being exposed to the three elements of Bandura's SCT triadic model. Social capital is influence and goodwill acquired through mentoring, experience, and skills development.

Social Exclusion

Bayram, Bilgel, and Bilgel (2012) examined the perception of social exclusion as it related to quality of life and interactions among a group of Turkish citizens. The results of their research indicated that material deprivation caused social exclusion and was directly related to the negative impact on citizens' environment and social

relationships, which affected their quality of life (Bayram, Bilgel, & Bilgel, 2012). There are tangible indicators of poverty that leads to social exclusion. A few of those tangibles include unemployment, substandard living conditions, poor health, lack of education, disproportionate levels of incarceration, and substance abuse (Bohnke, 2010; Suh & Heise, 2014). In addition, there are intangible indicators of poverty such as depression, thoughts of suicide, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, fear of dependence on others, fear of interaction with others, and controlling influences of addiction (Bungert et al., 2015; Riva, Montali, Wirth, Curio, & Williams, 2016). Bernstein and Claypool (2012) indicated that research regarding social exclusion suggests an increase in emotional and physical pain sensitivity, with other research describing exclusion as the cause of emotional and physical pain numbing.

Bell & Menec (2015) reported that although independence is highly valued in Western society, the emphasis on independence and the fear of dependence creates a downside to the ideals of independence, which leads to social exclusion for those fearing the thought of dependency on others. Hawkins and Chambers (2010) revealed that there is considerable evidence that men and women who live below the poverty level are at high risk of depression. Grant, Jack, Fitzpatrick, and Ernst (2011) concurred that, especially among women, the burden of poverty, parenting, and other social responsibilities lead to depression and in many cases drug addiction. Regarding social deprivation, Brownlee (2013) stated that social deprivation is a persistent lack of adequate opportunities and the lack of support from members of society who seek a wholesome and productive lifestyle. Shinn (2010) reported the detriment of social

exclusion in the United States and Europe about homelessness and poverty-related living conditions. Krishnan (2015) concluded that social exclusion is a global multi-dimensional occurrence that warrants an extended inclusionary attitude in society.

Profile of a Socially Excluded Individual and Family

Being poor can lead to a diminished capacity of means that precludes social cohesion with mainstream society (Bohnke, 2010). Seccombe (2011) provided information regarding interviews of individuals describing their poverty laden and social excluded existence. One example was that of Dee and Clare, a mother and daughter who lived in years of physical and mental abuse by the husband and father of their family. Dee had married at age 18 to escape a childhood of physical and sexual abuse. After finding herself in a similar situation in her marriage, she remained there with her child Clare because she had no money or means to leave the volatile living situation. Finally, after years of torturous treatment, she and her daughter were rescued by a church group and friends. Dee had deep remorse for having exposed her daughter Clare to so many years of dysfunction and abuse. Both Dee and Clare struggle daily to heal from their past (Seccombe, 2011).

Shinn (2010) expressed that those who experience social exclusion usually feel isolated and live in an environment of hopelessness, fear, and in some cases abuse. Seccombe (2011) described the consensus of mainstream society that the poor, particularly welfare recipients, are lazy, undisciplined, and do not aspire to any lofty pursuit in life. Seccombe (2011) explained further that realistically, there is a social structure which explains poverty as the result of economic and social imbalances within

society which restrict opportunities for some people to advance socially and economically. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), the U.S. economy has changed consistently over the past few decades, resulting in the erosion of the purchasing power of minimum wage earners, fewer training programs to prepare the workforce for new technological opportunities, and ongoing periods of recession.

Theory of Mentoring

Mentoring can be a valuable and effective process for learning. Ghosh (2012) referred to mentoring as a long acclaimed human resource development tool used by a mentor to challenge a protégé to relinquish stationary cognitive rationale and embrace new realities for intellectual development and growth. The new realities translate into motivation for personal advancement and productivity. In contrast, Kumar, Iruayaraj, Jarmon, and Singhal (2013) described the negative effects of mentoring created by mentor-protégé mismatches where mentors resort to distancing behavior, arrogance, and demeaning attitudes toward protégés. No literature or definitions were located regarding the mentoring of social excluded adults.

De Tormes Eby et al., (2013) described youth development, teacher/student relationships in academia, and employer/employee relationships in the workplace as the three recognized areas of mentoring. According to Colley (2010) Merriweather and Moran (2013), the three areas of recognized mentoring opportunities (also referred to as mentoring scholarship) develop independently yet share a common purpose, a positive and significant learning experience.

Youth mentoring provides a learning atmosphere of instructions to build self-esteem, verbal, and writing skills as described by de Tormes Eby et al., (2013). In teacher/student relationship building, the mentor (teacher) guides and instructs a protégé (student) in each topic of learning (math, social sciences, literature, etc.,) to master comprehension, articulation (restating broadly what has been learned), and execution (appropriate use of acquired knowledge). In the workplace, mentoring is useful to protégés on how to network to advance their careers. De Tormes Eby et al., (2013) concurred that mentoring, in the capacity of youth, academics, and the workplace, has been deemed a process which provided life changing experiences for the protégé who applies the acquired skills to actual life situations.

Gong and Chen (2014) described mentoring as a multi-level opportunity, which empowers disenfranchised and marginal individuals to perform at higher levels of self-sufficiency. Bozionelos (2016). Laiho and Bandt (2012) reported that organizational agents view mentoring as a tool for transferring knowledge and increasing job performance for the benefit of the organization rather than an advantage to enhance career goals of individuals. Zasloff and Okurowski (2012) described mentoring as a partnership between experienced professionals, inexperienced youth, and adults that perpetuates friendship, knowledge, advice, counsel, and skills training for those who lack the ability, experience, and rationale to advance in personal and career goals without assistance. Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014) reported their research revealed eight themes for mentoring from 12 universities in three regions of the U.S. Those themes included open communication and accessibility, goals and challenges, passion and inspiration,

caring personal relationships, mutual respect and trust, exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modeling.

Social Cognitive Theory

The human cognitive system is a fascinating process. Learning and the acquisition of knowledge is managed through cognitive sensors which cause individuals to form their own personal likes, dislikes, make decisions when conducting business, decide where to live, work, dine, and how to interact with family, friends, and new acquaintances. According to Clark and Zimmerman (2014), there are several articles and reviews in health and medical literature that provide discussions on how elements of the social cognitive theory can assist in aid to individual for the prevention of health problems and ways to better manage chronic disease.

A study by Dooley and Schreckhise (2016) revealed information about the Youth Development Program (YDP), a component program of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), that utilizes the social cognitive theory where instructors found ways to lessen the dropout rate in seven school districts in the impoverished Mississippi River Valley in southeast Arkansas. The assessor indicated that students who participated in the social cognitive based program were less likely to drop out of school compared to a group that did not participate in the component program.

Other research by Dooley and Schreckhise (2016) revealed that by using components of the social cognitive theory, youth enrolled in mentor/protege programs experienced increased self-efficacy that prompted desire to accomplish higher level goals by using concepts acquired during the mentoring relationship. Newly acquired

knowledge from the mentoring experience also helped youth cope with the stress of challenges associated with successful achievements of personal goals and objectives.

Theory of Social Capital

The theory of social capital has become embedded in society as a way of life. Adler and Kwon (2002) reported that the social capital as a concept had become increasingly popular in a range of business ventures and social interactions. Social capital has been defined as the goodwill that engenders social relations. When a person utilizes his/her social capital the influence of words and/or knowledge creates action that can affect a situation in a positive or negative manner. Adler and Kwon (2002) indicated that the use of social capital can promote a worthy cause, influence a political situation, empower individuals and groups, provide remedy for a complicated and perplexing condition, and be a force in advancement toward an improved social status.

Oh and Bush (2016) reported that collaborative governance is being viewed through the lens of social capital in that public, private, and nonprofit organizations are working collectively in achieving public policy goals. This type of collaboration may assist in the facilitation of policy makers and service providers promoting ways in which to provide amenable services to social excluded adults, such as mentoring programs, once knowledge of social exclusion as expressed in this research study become available for perusal.

An example of social capital can be made by using an adage that is familiar to many. The adage is a phrase of proverbial wisdom linked to Lao-Tzu, Maimonides, Mao Zedong, Native Americans, Italians, and the Bible. The saying, “Give a man a fish, and

you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime" (Internet, 2017). This proverb could be used to define both the theory of social exclusion and the theory of social capital.

With reference to social exclusion, giving a man, woman, boy, or girl a fish as food to prepare for nourishment could be equated to current subsidy provisions such as federal public assistance programs. Individuals and families are given monetary and food provisions due to a lack of income and assets to sustain themselves, in other words assistance is given as a temporary remedy for short-term sustainability. Unfortunately, empirical data indicated that temporary assistance (being given a fish) has become a way of life for many and the mindset of being given in most cases food, medical assistance, and shelter has hindered members of society rather than encouraging a movement to self-sustainability and personal accountability as reported by Gaiter (2017), Spalding (2012), Whittle, Palar, Ranadive, Turan, Kushel, and Weiser (2017).

Conversely, being taught to fish is much like the basis of mentoring programs. The mentor, like a skilled fisherman, has knowledge and skill in areas that can be transferred, through sessions of teaching and guidance, to a protégé (learner). The transfer of knowledge and information can translate into social capital for the protégé, which could lead to opportunities of advancement and upward mobility as described by Destin and DeBrosse (2017) along with Ossenkop, Vinkenburg, Jansen, and Ghorashi (2015). Learning new skills and technology, especially a social excluded group, could translate into social capital that might conceivably transform a life of substandard living

to a lifestyle of economic enrichment giving access to enhanced opportunities in mainstream society.

Literature Related to Methodology

The research participants, selected by purposeful sampling, were a group of mentored social excluded adults residing in a small Midwest city, Benton Harbor, Michigan. The phenomenology design for this study was enhanced by a hermeneutic approach using empirical methodology, which focused on the psychological and sociological context of the participants' lived experiences as noted by Creswell (2013). Maxwell (2013) referred to the phenomenology design as a real entity and not simply an abstraction or plan. Robson (2011) indicated that the phenomenology research design was flexible rather than fixed and inductive rather than following a strict sequence. Rudestam and Newton (2015) noted that the phenomenology design allow researchers to be more spontaneous and flexible in exploring phenomenon in a natural environment. Simon and Goes (2011) stated that the phenomenological worldview centers on the belief that all perceptions and constructions are grounded in a perspective of time and space. Rudestam and Newton (2015) indicated that research questions in qualitative research should be designed to be revised, reformulated, and facilitated by sub-questions, if necessary, due to the emerging nature of a qualitative study.

The phenomenology design is a flexible, inductive, and reflective process, which is the primary reason I selected the design for the study as recommended by Maxwell (2013). In addition, I used the design to facilitate a flexible data collection process that was *participant-sensitive* and instrumental in creating the least possible threatening

atmosphere when conducting interviews using the open-ended questions as a guide in assisting participants in framing their responses.

Relevance of Study to Implications of Social Change

I considered this research relevant when examining the status of the U.S. economy, high levels of unemployment, increasing numbers of homeless citizens, escalating costs of social subsidy programs, and the constant demands for a qualified and skilled labor force. From the perspective of positive social change, the United States government is expected to maintain its formidable economic and global influence as described by Perlberg (2013). To maintain the powerful position of the United States, political and business representatives must strategically provide constant improvements and upgrades, both in technology and human resources. Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Polychroniou, and Kostopoulos (2014) described ways in which the political activists are considering alternatives to reduce homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion in alignment with enhancing the social and economic position of the United States. One aspect of social change, as recommended by Fullick-Jagiela, Verbos, and Wiese (2015), is to decrease the number of individual and families dependent on government subsidies through opportunities of learning in which mentoring could be a conduit for such change. Another possibility for positive social change is to provide mentoring for social excluded adults utilizing nonprofit organizations to administer mentoring programs supported primarily by philanthropic and corporate contributions.

Mentoring as a Possible Antidote for Effects of Social Exclusion

According to a 2014 report by Matz, mentoring programs are the oldest form of community-based interventions dating back to the turn of the nineteenth century. With the passage of time and repeated applications by mentors, segments of society namely disadvantaged youth, students of all ages, and employed individuals, have benefited from the personal development opportunities provided by mentoring as indicated in articles by Ennis (2015), Gong and Chen (2014), along with Opengart and Bierema (2015). As mentoring has gained momentum and popularity, Ghosh (2012) and Wolfe (2014) explained the value of mentoring to those who become involved in this learning process, which produces meaningful and beneficial outcomes for both the protégé and mentor. It has been suggested by St-Jean and Mathieu (2015) that mentoring could be beneficial for other segments of society as well, namely social excluded adults.

Kahle-Piasecki (2011) indicated that mentoring programs exist for new teachers, youth-at-risk, and in higher education settings for faculty and students. Allen (2006) stated that, "mentoring goes beyond teaching knowledge, skills, or the mere passing on of information; it is a complex, nurturing, developing, and empowering relationship that requires mutual learning, sharing, and understanding" (p. 37). Opengart and Bierema (2015) along with Svara, Watt, and Takai (2014) suggest that mentoring could be a channel for intellectual growth and development, which might possibly be a remedy for struggling social excluded adults seeking exoneration from poverty.

In addition, struggling cities like Benton Harbor, Michigan with large populations of low income, uneducated, undereducated, social excluded adults could benefit from

mentoring programs that provide skills and access to social capital giving access to improve lifestyles and communities as suggested by Ferragina and Arrigoni (2017) when referring to benefits to improve the status of low-income members of society. These improvements could positively affect the lifestyles of mentored adults' children, spouses, and other family members creating an empowerment paradigm shift in generations of poverty as described by Tauson (2013), Vibert (2014), along with Wilson, Jaques, Johnson, and Brotherton (2016).

Summary

This chapter allowed me to inform the phenomenological study as to the plight of social excluded adults, the importance of the developmental process of mentoring, and the value of social capital. The review of my literature research provided empirical information regarding the influence of mentors in the lives of protégés and established a basis in which to examine the mentoring experiences of the research participants. The history of positive social change through mentoring of youth, employees, and students of all ages has a plethora of literature authenticated by empirical data regarding the change-agent effects of mentoring. With my use of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach the examination of the lived mentoring experiences of social excluded adults was possible and provide data for scrutiny by social scientists, policy makers, and community service providers regarding this research.

Seminal researchers such as van Manen (2014), Moustakas (1994) each attested to the value of a phenomenological study in the development of descriptions regarding the essence of lived experiences, which was also supported by M Applebaum (2013), Simon

and Goes (2011), and van Manen (2010). I gathered data regarding the impact of mentoring as experienced by research participants with themes and categories being created from audio-recorded interviews. The categorical data that I collected should be instrumental in shaping the understanding and essence of the lived mentoring experiences. Data from this research should prove to be useful in future studies relative to the positive effects of mentoring for social excluded adults from a nationwide perspective. In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of research methodology with specific explanations of the phenomenological design, the hermeneutic approach, participant selection, data collection procedures, the role of the researcher, measures to ensure reliability and validity, ethical considerations, confidentiality procedures, and a summary of the methods that facilitated the qualitative research process.

Chapter 3: Research Method

My purpose for this phenomenological study was to examine the mentoring experience of social excluded adults. The hermeneutic approach I used was to gain an understanding of personal perceptions and assessments of mentoring as described by adults residing in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Creswell (2013) noted that a phenomenological examination is best for research that is intended to explore a phenomenon, provide complex detailed information to understand the phenomenon, give audience to a neglected segment of society, empower individuals to share their personal experiences, and to reveal understanding of an issue using a flexible literary format. Rudestam and Newton (2015) indicated that the focus of the hermeneutic phenomenological research is to describe what a person says he/she experienced, the language the person used to express the experience, an in-depth description of the experience, and the meaning of the human awareness (understanding) of the experience.

My choice of the hermeneutic influence within the study allowed for interpretation of both verbal and non-verbal communication of each interview. This allowed me immediate insight and understanding of the experience and the opportunity to discuss and clarify the context in which the experience was being described, which narrowed the focus of the data gathering process resulting in no conjecture or confusion. The phenomenological study was informed by one principle research question regarding the mentoring experience of social excluded adults. The research question was, “What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, to mentoring programs in Benton Harbor, Michigan?

According to Boon and Farnsworth (2011), social exclusion creates a living environment of devastation and dysfunction. Shinn (2010) described social exclusion as a by-product of poverty. Bohnke (2010) and Gerovska-Mitey (2015) defined poverty as the inability to provide financially for oneself, which reduces living to substandard levels of existence affecting many individuals and families. Fullick-Jagiela,Verbos, and Wiese (2015) referred to mentoring as a multidimensional process that provides information and guidance to individuals with academic, social, and employment deficits. Mentoring has been instrumental in assisting youth, employees, and students in improving social, academic, and work-related skills.

Understanding the perceptions and practices of mentored social excluded adults will provide insight into improved lifestyles made possible through the tenets of mentoring relationships (Borders & Cashwell, 2014; Bozionelos et al., 2016; Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014). My collection and reporting of data by way of this research study regarding mentoring experiences of the social excluded provides other researchers, policy makers, and service providers with empirical details that could be useful in expanding current mentoring opportunities. This chapter includes an explanation of the research methodology, role of the researcher, instrumentation, overview of the data collection process, data analysis strategy, ethical issues that are addressed, and the research design.

Research Design and Rationale

The central theme of this study was mentoring, described by Weinberg and Lankau (2011) as a teaching concept instrumental in conveying skill building techniques from an experienced individual referred to as a mentor to a less informed person called a

protégé. Ennis (2015), Ilevbare (2011), and Kahle-Piasecki (2011) described mentoring as a method of transferring knowledge and information to enhance individual skills and ability from one person to another such as from a mentor to youth, employees, and students. The research design for this study was hermeneutic phenomenology, a philosophy and method for human research investigation as described by Heinonen (2015). Guignon (2012) indicated that the hermeneutic research tradition of phenomenology allows for the description of human phenomenon. Other types of phenomenological studies such as ethical, existential, experimental, and transcendental seek out different aspects of a phenomena. Specific descriptions of each type of phenomenology is provided later in this section.

Heinonen (2015) described two main aspects of the phenomenological methodology: epoche (a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment used by Patton, 2000, p.484) and reduction. Epoche is the process that deals with freeing (called bracketing) oneself from assumptions and personal bias about a matter. Heinonen (2015) referred to reduction as elimination of any information that might distract from the authenticity of an actual lived experience. To ensure that I used epoche in the research process, a detailed description of my prior experience with social exclusion and social excluded adults is included in Chapter 4 of the study. In addition, I selected comments from several interviewed participants, which are included in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 to authenticate the relevance of the mentoring experience and its influence in the lives of the participants.

My review of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches resulted in the selection of the qualitative inquiry as the appropriate methodology for the dissertation study. The quantitative examination involves a system of numeric outcomes, which could exclude specific details of the actual mentoring experience indicated by research participants as stated by Olesko (2015). The mixed-method inquiry includes both statistical and description of occurrences, which is not required to illuminate the mentoring experience. Neither the quantitative or mixed-method processes aligned with the problem statement, the purpose of the study, or the research question. The problem statement described the lack of data regarding mentored social excluded adults. The purpose of the study was to provide a venue for a marginalized group to express their experience. The research question, which accentuate the context of the study was, "What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?" My choice of the qualitative examination process, as described by Sadan (2014), allowed for the use of semi-structured, opened-ended interview questions during personal audio-recorded interviews with the participants. I determined this process to be the most reasonable and efficient procedure in which to gather appropriate data for the study.

The hermeneutic phenomenology design as developed by Heidegger (1962) and Husserl (1907) was a philosophical movement which evolved through research by Heidegger (1962). Creswell (2013) described hermeneutics as the theory and method of interpretation. My interpretation of data from interviews were listed as themes, topics, and categories. Words and phrases that were repeatedly used by participants during the

interview process were manually coded as themes, topics, and categories and later imported into a NVivo qualitative software analysis program.

Guigion (2012) indicated that the original premise of phenomenology, which can be referred to as a research method, philosophy, or an approach, was to maintain the natural state of a phenomenon exercising common sense in understanding the nature of the phenomenon. Phenomenology focuses on taking nothing for granted concerning cognitive rationale and recognizing the essence of a matter. Hermeneutic inquiry as it relates to phenomenology is a circular structure. As I apply it to the study, I begin with the general knowledge of what something means and rely on that understanding to interpret the essence of the phenomena as recommended by Guigion (2012). I considered the mechanics of hermeneutic phenomenology as ideal for the focus of this study. I selected it (hermeneutic phenomenology) as the best method of understanding the mentoring experience of the social excluded adults who participated in the research study.

I considered other types of phenomenology for the study such as *ethical phenomenology,* which deals with themes like freedom, responsibility, and choice. E*xperimental phenomenology,* a process that goes back and forth in an attempt to understand and create a solution to a challenge based on what is occurring at a specific time with a specific situation. E*xistential phenomenology, which* is about human existence and disregards epoche and transcendental ego; and *transcendental phenomenology,* which focuses on consciousness and the meaning of living through

conscious and deliberate actions. None of these approaches were appropriate for the purpose and objectives of the research study.

As described by Heinonen (2015), a hermeneutic phenomenological study requires the collection of data and analysis of data provided by participants to understand the meaning of the phenomenon under study. In contrast, a narrative, grounded theory, or case study approach respectively provides a biological reference of cause and effect, discovery of a theoretical explanation, details of a cultural-sharing group, and study of a specific case within a contemporary setting. None of these approaches were necessary for this study because the study does not require that type of data. The hermeneutic process enabled me to assess and determine the value of individual perceptions of mentoring and the commonality among participants because of their experience. In addition, the phenomenological design of hermeneutics allowed me to strategically use the research question and the interview process to inform the study in that emerging information that occurred during the interview process was later used to gather additional data that may not have been revealed using other phenomenological approaches.

Role of Researcher

The role of the researcher requires diligence, insight, and patience. Diligence was necessary in order for me to gather appropriate data that yielded a meaningful outcome of the research study. My diligence was useful when some of the participants were slow in responding to certain questions or appeared shy or nervous at the beginning of an interview session. I acknowledged my personal bias and previous knowledge of social excluded adults in Chapter 4. I avoided misinterpretation of collected data from

interviews, observations, field notes, and every aspect of the data collection process by adhering to my interview protocol.

As described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), I was deliberate in establishing a pleasant and relaxed relationship with each participant. This relationship was critical in order for me to have a meaningful interaction of trust and respect between myself and the research participants. Because I was careful in conducting each interview appropriately, the outcome of the interview process yielded in-depth details of each mentoring experience. The combined interactive process resulted in a richly informed phenomenological study.

My qualitative examination included interviews, observation of behavior, and the review of documents. Creswell (2013) explained that a tangible instrument (other than the researcher) may be used for the qualitative process with the qualitative instrument being selected, with permission, from the research of a similar study or designed by a researcher using open-ended questions. The option of creating an instrument for my qualitative study was of utmost importance. The creative flexibility that I was able to use to design several instruments was an exceptional opportunity that allowed for innovation and specifications that addressed the unique characteristics of my study and allowed for flexible engagement of each participant during interview sessions.

Research Methodology

I began this study after receiving approval from my dissertation committee and the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). My IRB approval number is 2018.02.0613:06:02-06’00.’ My methodology was primarily based on recommendations

from Creswell (2013), Maxwell (2013), Rudestam and Newton (2015). From these sources, each theorist provided details that helped me develop a fluid and appropriate procedure to gather rich data for this phenomenological based and systematic qualitative examination of mentoring experiences including a summation of findings and recommendations presented in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

I conducted the study using a hermeneutic phenomenological design based on the theoretical framework consisting of the theory of mentoring by Kram (1983), in which I described the significance and value of mentoring as well as the three areas of mentoring scholarship: youth, employees, and students. My inclusion of Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory was to describe the mechanics and importance of the human cognitive system. I included the theory of social exclusion described by Muddiman (2014), and the theory of social capital as presented by Bourdieu (1971) to provide details of environmental challenges experienced by the participants as well as advancements they made after receiving new knowledge from their mentors. Together I used the four theories to provide a logical pattern of principles to assist readers in understanding the relevance of mentoring as described by the participants, how the human cognitive system is used by individuals to process the influx of knowledge, and the social implications for individuals regarding the benefits of social capital, especially mentored social excluded adults.

I conducted a field test prior to the audio-recorded interviews as recommended by Turner (2010). Maxwell (2013), Rudestam and Newton (2015) described a field test as a small-scale pretest that allows a select group with expert knowledge of the population to

review the data collection instrumentation prior to the research study. I requested the assistance of three experts and a local educator knowledgeable of the Benton Harbor population to conduct the field test.

The test group provided feedback as to the content clarity of the participant consent form and interview protocol. I knew that clear and concise questions and guidelines were required to ensure a well administered study. The four experts provided helpful feedback, which was used to fine-tune the interview process resulting in a comprehensive data gathering process of the research study.

Qualitative research is descriptive and interpretive (Tuohy, Cooney, & Dowling et al., 2013). It focuses on understanding the essence of a phenomenon. There are several methods available to establish the context of a research study such as ethnography, case studies, narrative, and hermeneutic phenomenology. I selected the hermeneutic phenomenological design because of the emphasis on illuminating the everydayness of the human experience as expressed by Guignon (2012). Patton (2002) stated that the first steps in collecting pertinent data is to describe the setting that is being observed, state the activities to take place in the setting, describe the people who will participate in the activities, and the meaning of what maybe observed, and obtain data from the perspective of those being interviewed. The following sections describe components of the methodology, which include setting, sampling selection, population, sample size, saturation, recruitment, participation, and instrumentation.

Setting

I conducted the research study in Benton Harbor, Michigan a small Midwest city located 186 miles west of Detroit, Michigan and approximately 100 miles from Chicago, Illinois. Benton Harbor has a population of approximately 10,000 residents, of which 90% are African Americans, 5% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic and 1% Native American and Asian (City Data, 2014). The median income for a family of four is approximately $17,500 and the city is located near Lake Michigan, covering 4.3 square miles in diameter (City data, 2014).

During the late 1800's and until 1960 Benton Harbor had a history of financial and economic vibrancy as the largest fruit producing and tourist location in the Midwest. In later years, the population began to decline due to downsizing of tourism, increased unemployment, racial tension, and deficient local government leadership (Consolidated Plan, 2016-2020; Reedy, 2013). These factors contributed to the movement of major industries and businesses from Benton Harbor to more progressive and profitable locations (Benton Harbor, 2016). The decline of the economy and escalation of crime and unemployment established Benton Harbor as a city with a high volume of government entitlement subsidies and staggering public welfare dependency (City Data, 2014). This led to an influx of federal and state programs attempting to revitalize the once vibrant and economically productive community (Consolidated Plan, 2016-2020; Reedy, 2013).

Sample Selection

I used purposeful sampling to select 10 participants for the study. According the Patton (2000), purposeful sampling is the process of choosing individuals who have direct knowledge of a problem or a phenomenon. I selected four organizations (nonprofit and faith-based) that provide mentoring programs for social excluded adults to be partners in the study. The responsibility of each partner organization was to distribute recruitment information. The organizations did not select individuals to participate in the research study. According to IRB guidelines, a letter of cooperation was not required for the partner organization, since their sole responsibility was to post flyers and provide recruitment literature to interested individuals.

Qualifications for individuals to participate included participation or having participated in a mentoring program, economic status of a social excluded individual based on poverty index and/or low-income criteria as established by the nonprofit and faith-based organizations, agree to sign a participation consent form, and agree to participate in an audio-recorded interview session. I contacted each qualified person who expressed an interest in participating in the study and sent him/her information by email or United States postal service.

Giorgi (2009) recommended that 10 participants were adequate for a phenomenological study. Each potential participant who qualified and agreed to participate received a consent form, description of the study, and an approximate date when the study would convene. I continued the selection process until 10 individuals, who qualified, agreed to the terms of participation.

Population

The selected population for the study was a group referred to as social excluded adults who had received some level of mentoring to enhance their cognitive, social, and employment skills. Social excluded adults are individuals who are economically deficient and are challenged in maintaining a lifestyle that exceeded poverty level. Krishnan (2015), Riva, Montali, Wirth, Curioni, and Williams (2016) each discussed circumstances which dictated how individuals and families survived while living at poverty level. The age range for participation in the study was adults between 25 and 50 years of age.

Sample Size and Saturation

Dworkin (2012) stated that qualitative research methods differ from quantitative in that qualitative methods are concerned with providing an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon versus quantitative which makes a generalization to a large population of interest. The qualitative method does not require hypothesis testing, as does the quantitative process. Dworkin (2012) indicated that a person using the qualitative method would experience collecting data which are inductive and emergent resulting in information that is descriptive of relationship and the essence of a lived experience. Patton (2000) stated that a qualitative study could be conducted using a small sample size. Maxwell (2013) noted that samples for qualitative studies are usually much smaller than samples used in quantitative studies because there is a point of diminishing return. Diminishing return means that as a person conducts a qualitative study more data does not necessarily lead to more information and one occurrence of a piece of data, or coded

information, is all that is necessary to ensure that data becomes a part of the analytical framework. Mason (2010) also concurred with Maxwell (2013) regarding the size of a qualitative study.

Francis et al., (2010) noted that research studies using semi-structured interviews should be based on the number of participants required for data saturation. According to Dworkin (2012), the elusive aspect of selecting sample size based on saturation is that there is no agreed upon method of establishing when data saturation has been reached. Glaser & Strauss (1967) introduced the concept of saturation to the qualitative design describing it as the level during the interview sessions when no new data are being discussed.

Creswell (1998) recommended a minimum of five and maximum of 25 as the standard for a qualitative sample size. Morse (1994) suggested selecting not less than six participants keeping in mind the labor intensity of a qualitative study and that analyzing a large sample is time consuming and expensive. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended a qualitative sample size to the point of redundancy, such as in purposeful sampling, in which the size is determined by the information required to substantiate the purpose and context of the research study. Based on these recommendations, I selected 10 individuals who qualified to participate in the study. I understood from Patton (2000), that sample size adequacy is subject to peer review, consensual validation, justification of the topic, expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon, sound judgment, and saturation.

Recruitment

My recruitment for research participants was facilitated by utilizing purposeful sampling. I selected four organizations (nonprofit and faith-based) as partner to display and distribute recruitment poster and advertisements about the research study. I provided information regarding the nature of the study and participation expectations of individuals who were interested in being involved in the research along with enrollment details. If an organization was unable or unwilling to become a partner, I had a prepared list of several other organizations that could be contacted which provided mentoring services to social excluded adults.

I provided each of the ten selected participants with a participation consent form, details of participation requirements, a few examples of interview questions, and a disclaimer that involvement was voluntary with the option of discontinuing participation at any time during the study. When I received a signed consent form from a qualified potential participant agreeing to an audio-recorded interview session, I sent that individual a confirmation email or letter via the United States postal service acknowledging his/her acceptance, an identification number to be used to refer to each participant to protect their identity, a date the study would commence, and the date of his/her personal interview. Partner organizations were not involved in the selection process nor had any knowledge of who was selected to participate in the study. As stated before, I was the one involved in the contact and selection of research participants. The only role of the partner organizations was to post, distribute, and provide displays of recruitment information.

Participation

I began each audio-recorded interview session by engagement with the participants so that he or she would feel comfortable and an atmosphere of trust could be established. I assigned identification numbers (P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, etc.) (P=Participant) to conceal the identity of participants when referring to him or her in the dissertation study. I interviewed participants in a secure (interview area had a door with lock capabilities) and secluded (on upper floor of library with no other rooms) conference room located at a local public library. After each audio-recorded interview, participants were emailed or mailed a verbatim copy of their responses for their review to verify the content of the recorded information and that interview statements were factual. The process of validating their verbatim interview responses is referred to as member checking.

In my using the hermeneutic process for the study, which is flexible and emergent, participants were provided the opportunity to review a transcript of their actual interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) along with Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that member checking consisted of having participants validate the audio-recorded interview. Member checking ensured that the tape-recorded interview statements were accurate. The interview statements were stored in a locked file in my home. Partner organizations were not privy to research data only a copy of an executive summary of the research results.

Instrumentation

I used several documents and methods to gather data for the study. Rudestam and Newton (2015) indicated that the researcher is the principal verbal, visual, and cognitive

instrument of the research study; however, tangible tools such as an interview form or a written interview protocol are helpful. Creswell (2013) stressed the importance of appropriate support documentation apparatus and offered a compendium of qualitative data collection approaches. In consideration of Creswell's recommendations, I created several data collection instruments that were approved by Walden University IRB department (IRB approval number – 02-05-18-0188284). The consent form document was selected from a group of forms available in the Walden University Guidelines (2014), which I revised to accommodate my research study.

The interview protocol document that I designed was used to document the name, identification number, and other personal information about each participant along with a section that listed each interview question and a concluding statement describing the final stages of the interview process (Appendix A). I recorded each interview to ensure that the entire interview was captured for my review, interpretation, and analysis. I used the research question, interview protocol, and interview questions to guide the interview process for consistency and contextual balance of each interview.

The interview protocol instrument (Appendix A) included the date, time, and place of the interview, the interviewee's member identification number (P-1, P-2, P-3, etc.), an introductory statement, a list of the interview questions, and a concluding statement of the interview process. I recorded the interviews and made notes of non-verbal activities such as body language. I mailed (email or postal service delivery/regular mail) interview transcripts to each participant with instructions to send a return email or regular mail verifying the factual content of the interview or any changes required. I

included information in the email/regular mail message that verifying responses were to be returned to me within three business day via email or by mail. I indicated that a verification of interviews were to be sent to me by email or a regular mail within 3 business days and if not received I would send an email or call as a reminder of the return deadline. I concluded the verification details by stating that if no response was received by day 4 that the audio-recorded session would be considered valid. After the email and/or regular mailing of information was validated and returned, the interviews were manual coded and then imported into the NVivo qualitative analysis program to be compared for similarities and/or differences and reported in Chapters 4 and 5.

Data Collection

Patton (2000) stated that data collection for a specific experience or event, using the qualitative methodology, could be facilitated by interviews and observations. I used open-ended semi-structured interview questions for this study that allowed direct interaction with the participants, which included making notes of specific non-verbal actions and reactions during the interview sessions. I used the audio-recorded process to capture details of each interview and made note of body language in order to be specific when describing the results of each mentoring experience. My goal was to capture and report the specific descriptive characterization of each participant as well as gestures to support the intensity or lack thereof regarding the lived experiences.

Kumar, Irudayara, Joko, and Singhal (2013) indicated that observations typically are indicative of positive or less than positive reactions by a participant regarding a personal experience. Maxwell (2013) defined observation as the process of describing

the setting, behavior, and event, while interviewing to acquire an understanding of the actions, attitudes, and goals of the participants. Maxwell (2013) also described the data collection process as gaining permission, developing a meaningful technique in which to record interview information digitally and on paper, storing data, and finding remedy for ethical and validity issues.

I arranged for individual audio-recorded interview sessions to allow participants to describe their mentoring experience. I relied on several open-ended semi-structured interview questions along with the primary research question to serve as guidelines during the individual audio-recorded interview sessions. While I engaged a participant in an audio-recorded conversation initiated by questions, I documented his/her mannerism, attitude, body language, and reactions during the interview. Creswell (2013) referred to observational notes as being descriptive and reflective. Descriptive in that my written record of the observation provided insight into the essence of the experience whether the participant was passionate about an encounter or disappointed in the results of an aspect of the experience. My reflective notations indicated an insight regarding the phenomenon based on a participant's response and associated body language, which could indicate a building of confidence or disappointment in the possibility of not being successful in accomplishing a desired goal.

For example, when I asked a participant to describe a challenge he/she encountered during engagement with the phenomenon (mentoring), based on the verbal description of the challenge and associated body language I made notation as to whether the participant showed sadness in his or her eyes, wrinkles in the brow, and slumped

shoulder that might be indicative of a less than pleasing outcome. On the other hand, if his/her body language during the explanation was the lifting of hands, raised eyes, and adulation as to the result of overcoming the challenge, those actions would express a satisfying outcome. I made notes of actions expressed during the verbal explanations and asked follow-up questions, so the participant could elaborate on his or her reactions during the explanation. This follow-up provision provided additional rich in-depth details, which were included with the audio-recorded interview responses.

I notified each participant of an assigned specific time and date for his/her interview. I held interviews at the local public library and a few other locations in the downtown area of the city with easy access by public or private transportation. Because the public library was scheduled for unexpected repairs several days, I planned for a few interviews to be held at other private locations in Benton Harbor, Michigan. I interviewed two participants at their homes and three participants were interviewed in a conference room located at a local medical facility. I met the participant at the door of the facility and directed him/her to the conference room where the audio-recorded interview was to take place. After an exchange of introductions, the participant and I sat down at the conference table and began the interview. I reviewed the contents of the participation consent form and the interview protocol for clarity, understanding, and further explanation of any words/terms that the participant may not have understood. Once the participant indicated he or she understood the procedures and I made a test run of the audio recording equipment, the interview commenced.

At the end of the interview, I asked each participant if he or she had any additional comments. Next, I informed him/her that the transcript of the actual audio-recorded interview would be emailed or mailed to each participant and that the transcript was to be returned to me by email or regular mail within 3-days with a note verifying that details of the interview were valid. I further explained if a verified or revised transcript was not received by the deadline that on day 4 a follow-up email or telephone call would be made to the participant making a final request for a verification, in which any non-responses would be treated as verification that the transcript was valid as written. At that point, I would manually code the interviews and import the coded data into the NVivo qualitative software analysis program.

Data Analysis

My data analysis was the concluding segment of the data collection process. I directed every component of the research study toward the meaning and revelatory essence of responses from each research participant. Creswell (2007), Rossman and Rallis (1998) described data analysis as a review of collected open-ended interview responses generated by interview questions. During my data analysis I assessed perceptions, interpreted input, and determined conclusions from the information provided by research participants during interviews.

Moustakas (1994) recommended a phenomenological analysis based on the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method as reported by Creswell (2013), which was the basis for my analysis of data collected from the study. Moustakas (1994) described six components for this analysis process:

- Include a description of experience with the phenomenon to reveal any researcher bias. This is to provide a full disclosure of the researcher's perspective so that the focus of the study is directed toward participants.
- Develop a list of significant statements from interview responses of the participants' experience with the phenomenon.
- Create meaningful units by placing significant statements into themes, categories, and topical groups.
- Design a matrix using the research questions and responses to describe what participants experience with the phenomenon referred to as a textual description.
- From the matrix create a structural description of how the experience affected the participant include the setting and context in which the participant experienced the phenomenon.
- Write a composite of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants including the textual and structural descriptions.

My data analysis for the study commenced with the review of audio-recorded interviews and a manual coding of interview responses. I had each participant agreed to an audio-recorded interview session. Each participant was asked to complete a member check of the manual transcriptions to ensure accuracy and factual content of his or her interview.

I reviewed each recorded session several times and manually coded the data for emerging themes, categories, and topics which were consistently stated by all participants during the interview sessions. Emerging theme are words or phrases used by participants

to describe certain aspects of the mentoring experience. I placed the emerging themes into categories or cluster of words with similar meaning that provided rich details of the mentoring experience. For example, members of the research group (participants) expressed that he or she learned how to feel comfortable speaking to others, became comfortable writing a summary of something they learned, or gave feedback to a mentor about a project assignment during the mentoring training. I placed speaking comfortably as a theme which was placed in a category labeled communications. I put the category of communication into a broad group labeled as a topic, which was described as improved interpersonal skills or self-confidence achievement. After I completed the review of each audio-recorded interview and no additional themes, categories, or topics emerged, saturation had been reached and no further interviews were held. The manual process was completed, and manual information was imported into the NVivo analysis program.

The NVivo software analysis provided an array of themes, categories, and topics from interview responses that were to be compared to the manual coding (QSR International, 2016). The data that I imported into the NVivo program were compared, assessed, and transferred to several different NVivo functions such as a word tree, found in Figure 4, which highlights the words most frequently used by participants to describe the mentoring experience. Both audio-recorded statements of each participant as well as notes regarding mannerisms and reactions were assessed by the NVivo process for inclusion in the final study analysis.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016) qualitative research data interpretation is not a literal interpretation of the language of interviews but is a

conceptual analysis of the themes and properties as experienced by the research participants. I interpreted data manually and systematically after assessing the beliefs and actions associated with the phenomenon of mentoring as conveyed by participants. Marshall and Rossman reported that qualitative interpretations are not only impelled by the repetition of key words and phrases, but additionally the interpretations are concepts of meaning attached to the words and phrases as presented similarly in comments by each participant.

The culmination of data from interviews, observations, and the NVivo qualitative assessment program were prioritized for inclusion in the final dissertation report. A matrix of responses using the manual and NVivo analysis provided an overview of data gathered from the mentoring experiences. From the matrix, a composite of the phenomenon as experienced by participants was created completing the analysis.

The data analysis provided the foundational rationale for Chapters 4 and 5. I placed high priority of conducting meaningful interviews as well as maintaining accurate documentation of observations as paramount in presenting this scholarly dissertation presentation. I understand that data are to be creditable and transferable in order to present an authentic report of the essence of the phenomenon that could provide a pathway to new discoveries regarding the phenomenon and dictating the need for continued research and examination.

Validity and Reliability

I was careful to conduct this study as an examination of a phenomenon which may be unfamiliar to many and had little or no supporting literature; therefore, I

understood that issues of trustworthiness could threaten the relevance of the study. Shenton (2004) indicated that trustworthiness was a focal point when considering validity and reliability of a research study. To avoid questions and concerns of trustworthiness, I provided supporting empirical data about the phenomenon that has been substantiated by literature as it applies to other social groups that appeared in peer-reviewed articles by Chagnon (2012), Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014) and many other theorists as noted throughout this section. For instance, the phenomenon under study is mentoring. Borders and Cashwell (2014) along with Dawson (2014) reported that mentoring is an age-old practice that has been utilized to assist youth, employees in the workplace, and students involved at every level of academia. There is a myriad of literature about these three groups - youth, employees, and students as stated by Bozionelos et al., (2016), Chagnon (2012), and Kram (1983); however, there is a void of literature regarding the mentoring of social excluded adults. This study was intended to provide details of the lived experiences of mentoring as presented by several social excluded adults residing in Benton Harbor, Michigan. The study was conducted utilizing acceptable research protocol as recommended by scientific researchers such as Dawson (2014), Eller, Lev, and Feurer (2014), Fullick-Jagiela, Verbos, and Wiese (2015). Any reference or concern about issues of trustworthiness should be negated as readers review the completed dissertation study.

Maxwell (2013) described validity of a qualitative study as the correctness and credibility of the examination as to its contextual content, explanations, interpretations, recommendations, conclusion, and summary. Rudestam and Newton (2015) emphasized

the importance of conveying the *thick description* of a study, which includes a description of participants' behavior as well as the context that gives that behavior meaning. Although validity and reliability have maintained an importance in traditional empirical research, many qualitative researchers, such as Rudestam and Newton (2015), now focus less on the historical link of these two constructs and recommend alternate constructs such as *credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.*

To enlarge on the alternate constructs, I have provided a description of each in this section. Patton (2000) indicates that c*redibility* in a qualitative study refers to providing the readers meaningful, honest, straightforward, and concise findings presented in a neutral context without researcher bias. Creswell (2013) noted that d*ependability* is interchangeable with the term reliability in that strategies and procedures are consistent with acceptable scientific methodology. According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), *transferability* is emphasizing how collected data and findings from one study can be replicated in other studies and transferability is providing a blueprint or strategic guidelines as to each component part of a study in terms that can be replicated by other researchers. According to Maxwell (2013), c*onfirmability*, also referred to as conformability, is when a research study follows scientific protocol in presenting the data, findings, and conclusions of a research examination. Maxwell (2013) further stated that *confirmability* is an important aspect of empirical research so that long-standing procedures are maintained and respected for universal scholarly consistency.

The strategies and procedures that I used to present this study are based on the constructs described in this section. Data I collected during the study reflects credibility

in that supporting literature about the merits of mentoring are included along with examples of how mentoring has been instrumental in affecting the lives of similar social groups and examples of experiences described by the research participants. Dependability was addressed in the study by relying on processes and procedures that have been utilized historically in a qualitative study as described by Davies and Dodd (2002). Several of my procedures as described by Davies and Dobb (2002) include the interview process for collecting data, the theoretical framework to assist in understanding the logic of responses by the research participants, and the use of methodology dictated by the qualitative design, which denotes the significance of the lived experience relying on thick rich contextual data.

My strategy regarding the transferability and confirmability of this study was impelled by the hermeneutic approach of descriptive and interpretative data collection. The tools I used to gather data were selected to confirm that data are authentic and not my thoughts and convictions. Also, I understood the importance of using methods that could be easily duplicated by other researchers seeking similar knowledge of a phenomenon. My research design, theoretical framework, research question, and the literature retrieved from the literature review provide a logical framework into understanding the nature of collected data, data analysis, findings and conclusion. My goal was to present a substantive, scholarly, and reputable study within the context of trustworthiness, validity, and reliability.

Ethical Procedures

I focused on the protection and confidentiality and involvement of participants in the research study as extremely important. According to Maxwell (2013), the way access is gained with involvement of participants and their knowledge about a phenomenon requires astute communication and interpersonal skills. Hamersley and Atkinson (2007), referred to the relationship building as reflexivity in which, the researcher becomes a part of the social world of the participant resulting in the researcher's personal investment in the study and being influenced by the study.

My creating an ethical, measured, and appropriate rapport with research participants was critical for the positive flow of information and outcome of the study. My review of ethical guidelines as presented in the Walden University dissertation guidelines regarding the Institutional Review Board standards (Walden University Guidelines, 2014) and the Belmont Report (1979) provided a foundation for the principles by which my research was conducted.

I planned to adhere to the Belmont Report (1979) recommendation that *respect, which is the dignity and polite treatment one person gives to another,* be shown to participants; therefore, I provided to each participant written and verbal *full disclosure* of the nature, intent, and procedural format of the research study. I established guidelines within my interview protocol to maintain respect for individuals associated with the research as well as the acknowledgement and guarded oversight of autonomy to protect those with diminished autonomy, if applicable. Autonomy is the act of self-government and the ability to display independent moral judgment. My research participants were

afforded respect regarding their input and assurance that he or she could discontinue their participation at any time.

Equitable treatment was recommended. To ensure equitable treatment, or treatment that was fair and unbiased, I was careful to treat each participant in a manner that afforded them the opportunity, through open-ended semi-structure questions, to provide explanations of their mentoring experience. I held interviews at the local public library conference room and several other locations in downtown Benton Harbor, which were safe and protected environments. I provided confidentiality for each participant by using an identification code system. Each participant was given an identification (ID) code at the beginning of the research study (code symbols were P1, P 2, P 3, etc. / P = Participant) and any reference to the participant was by their designated ID code.

The Belmont Report indicated that j*ustice (impartiality and fairness)* was a primary factor for individuals participating in a research study. Each participant I selected received just treatment throughout the study. I distributed the same information to every participant. The research process was described, participants were given an opportunity to review and adjust to research guidelines, and explanations were given to each participant inquiry prior to individual interviews.

During the study *confidentiality (discretion and privacy)* was strictly maintained. The research study was conducted at the highest level of decorum and all involvement was maintained at a perfunctory standard of confidentiality. Notes and data were placed in a secured and locked area in my home office. Every aspect of the research and personal information was maintained without exception. No case of suspected

unreported abuse was mentioned. If such had occurred, I would have immediately contacted the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Adult Protective Division 24-Hour Hotline at 855-444-3911. During the interview process I found no need to initiate the procedure for alleged elder abuse. All data from the research study as well as any subsequent data were placed in a locked file for at least five years according to Walden IRB guidelines.

Personal and Professional Relationship

In a qualitative design, the participants are essential due to the foundational nature of their input as the core impetus of informing the research study. I provided utmost care and consideration to each participant to establish a creditable and authentic relationship. Maxwell (2013) described the relationship between the researcher and participants as a complex and changing entity. Marshall and Rossman (1999) considered the relationship building aspect of research as negotiating entry into the lives of others. As mentioned earlier, the way a researcher engages each participant is critical for a scholarly and enriching study versus a surface and lackluster examination of a phenomenon.

I established a friendly and comfortable relationship with each of the participants prior to the interview sessions. My emails and telephone contacts were used to create an amenable interaction. I was careful to maintain a professional atmosphere during the interviews. It was important that a certain level of authority be maintained when conducting the study so that I did not treat the participants as mere acquaintances. Scantlebury (2005) cautioned that a friendship-based relationship between the researcher and participants could undermine the professional vibrancy of the study. I established a

structured format for participation to prevent disruptive occurrences. Participants were expected to arrive on time for interviews, commit to the research process by answering questions as completely as possible, show respect at every level of the data gathering process, and I mentioned regularly that their involvement in the qualitative examination was necessary and relevant.

Summary

In summary, the qualitative phenomenological design I selected allowed participants the opportunity to provide rich in-depth explanations of their mentoring experience. My choice of a hermeneutic approach allowed for interpretation of personal perceptions as recorded during interview sessions. My data gathering methodology of audio-recorded interviews captured the essence and provided understanding of the mentoring experiences of social excluded adults in the City of Benton Harbor, Michigan. My data analysis of interview responses and observations of attitudinal and physical deportment provided insight into the psychological and sociological aspects of each participant, which was intended to satisfy the intent of the research design to extract meaning from participants' social behavior, values, and worldview of their mentoring experiences.

My summary in Chapter 4 encompasses the results of the study, which includes the researcher's bias, collected analyzed data from interviews, observations, and secondary supportive documentation. The field test I conducted provided guidelines for assessment of each interview. The emergent themes, categories, and topics from

interviews were the foundational data for transition into Chapter 5 highlighting the study's discussions, recommendations, and conclusion.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of social excluded adults who had received training through a mentoring program. Social excluded adults are those individuals deprived of opportunities in society due to lack of education, skills, and knowledge. I used a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design to explore the essence of the mentoring experiences. The research design I selected was centered on a hermeneutic interpretation of the participants' input, allowing me to create themes and categories, which established a data rich context of the lived experiences. One research question informed the study: What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?

In Chapter 4, I described the components of the demographics, field test, data collection procedure, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness as it relates to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I included an explanation regarding variations in the initial research strategy that were necessary due to emerging criteria. I concluded Chapter 4 with a culmination of research results and the introduction to Chapter 5.

Demographics

The population for the study was a group referred to as social excluded adults who have received some level of mentoring to enhance their cognitive, social, and employment skills. Social excluded adults are individuals who are economically deficient and are challenged in maintaining a lifestyle that exceeds poverty level

(Krishnan, 2015; Riva, Montali, Wirth, Curioni, & Williams, 2016). The age range for participants in the study was adults between 25 and 50 years of age.

I conducted the research study in Benton Harbor, Michigan a small Midwest city located 186 miles west of Detroit, Michigan and approximately 100 miles from Chicago, Illinois. Benton Harbor has a population of approximately 10,000 residents, of which 90% are African Americans, 5% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic and 1% Native American and Asian (City data, 2014). The median income for a family of four is approximately $17,500 and the city is located near Lake Michigan, covering 4.3 square miles in diameter (City data, 2014).

Field Test

Immediately following IRB approval, I conducted a field test prior to the start of the data collection procedure. The field test is a small-scale pretest that allows a select group with expert knowledge of the population to review the data collection instrumentation prior to the research study (Maxwell, 2013; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I selected three experts and a local educator knowledgeable of the Benton Harbor, Michigan population for the field test which included: the director of a community development organization with 13 years of experience; an adult education manager with 10 years of experience, an experienced social worker with 5 years mentoring experience; and a third-grade educator with 3 years of teaching experience.

Each expert reviewed the participant consent form, interview questions, and interview protocol. The educator focused on the consent form and applied a Lexile Level assessment to determine the appropriate reading level for the consent form. Lexile

measurement is a tool used by educators to determine how difficult a text is or the required level of reading ability necessary for comprehension (Ardoin, Williams, Christ, Klubnik & Wellborn, 2010).

There were four recommendations from the expert reviewers: (a) adjust reading level of consent form from a twelfth-grade reading level to a third to fifth grade level, (b) reduce the number of forms, (c) use either the word participant or volunteer on each form not both and, (d) reduce consent form from three pages to one page.

Revised Instrumentation

Three of the four recommendations were implemented regarding the data collection instrumentation. The reading level of the consent form was adjusted from twelfth-grade to fifth-grade level. The forms were reduced from a set of five to a set of three. The new set of forms included the notification of interest requesting demographic information such as name, address, date of birth, email address, and approximate year of mentoring; a copy of the interview protocol; and the consent form. The third recommendation implemented was the word participant or volunteer, the word volunteer was eliminated from forms. The fourth recommendation was denied because the consent form was approved by IRB for use in the study. The university IRB form approval code is 2018.02.0613:06:02-06'00.'

Data Collection

I selected four nonprofits as partner organizations to assist with the study. The role of each partner was to post bulletins that provided details of the study and requirements for participation. The organizations placed bulletins in general areas of

their offices near front door entrances, restrooms, and in public announcement locations. The primary responsibility of each partner was to promote the study through advertisements. Persons interested in participating in the study had no direct contact with the organizations' administration or staff. I was responsible for direct involvement, recruitment, and distributing research sign-up forms. The notifications to partner organizations and the recruitment process began after I received IRB approval.

Twenty-three adults who met the participation criteria contacted me to participate in the study; some by telephone, several by mail, and the majority by email. Giorgi (2009) and Creswell (2013) recommended that 10 participants were adequate for a phenomenological study. As recommended, I selected 10 of the 23 volunteers. I have provided a breakdown of the gender and age of each participant:

Table 1

Research Participation

Participant	Gender	Age
1	Male	67
2	Male	64
3	Female	54
4	Female	47
5	Female	52
6	Female	53
7	Male	33
8	Male	70
9	Male	42
10	Female	30

Note. Total number of research participants. Adapted from "Coding from NVivo qualitative software program," by QSR International Software System, 2016.

Although the age criterion was 25 to 50 years of age, older mentored social excluded adults exceeded younger adults in volunteering to participate. Thus, the age range was extended from 50 to 70 years of age. Due to time constraints, I selected participants from the group that volunteered within the designated recruitment period. The participants were equally distributed; however, the equal distribution was a coincidence and not a planned occurrence. Creswell (2013) cautioned that the qualitative process is emergent in which the initial plan and/or strategy should not be tightly prescribed because after entering into the research study shifts in the strategic plan may occur.

Interviews

Each participant was vetted and assigned an identification number (P1, P2, P3, etc.) for confidential purposes. A specific day and time was selected for an audio-recorded interview regarding his/her mentoring experience. The ID numbers were the reference point for the participants to avoid use of his/her name during the interview as well as in the research study report. I completed the audio-recorded interviews with each participant in four days. Interviews were scheduled daily at 10:00 am, 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. On an average, each audio-recorded interview took approximately 45 minutes. The interview protocol was an excellent tool because it provided continuity for each interview. During each interview, I reviewed the interview protocol, interview questions, and consent form reminding each participant that his/her involvement was voluntary, and termination of the interview could occur at any time if he/she felt uncomfortable or did not want to continue. There were no terminations.

Data Saturation

As I transcribed each audio-recorded interview I also manually coded each interview indicating themes, topics, and categories. My goal for the scrutiny of repeated descriptive phases was to determine when saturation had occurred. Francis et al., (2010) noted that research studies using semi-structured interviews should be based on the number of participants required for data saturation. The elusive aspect of selecting sample size based on saturation is that there is no agreed upon method of establishing when data saturation has been reached (Dworkin, 2012).

After review of the eighth audio-recorded interview there was indication of data saturation. To be assured of saturation, I interviewed the ninth participant and received data that had not been mentioned in previous interviews. I then interviewed the 10th participant and found a return to similar explanations as in interviews from P-1 to P-8. To ascertain whether saturation had been reached, I scheduled two additional interviews (P-11 and P-12) and was convinced after review of those last two interviews that the saturation level had been met with P-10. Data from P-11 and P-12 were not included in the data for the study. Interviews from P-11 and P-12 were not validated because the reason for the last two interviews was to ascertain that saturation had been reached, not to add data to the original 10 selected participants' input.

Evidence of Saturation

Rudestam and Newton (2015) described saturation as a process of searching each coded category within each interview until no new information yielded additional meaning, called the point of redundancy. Creswell (2013) stated that saturation occurs

when a model or the subject of a research examination is fully developed. When using open coding, the researcher finds several emerging properties or categories that adequately describe the essence of the phenomenon being examined, which is what occurred after I reviewed the interviews of P-11 and P-12. Each of the properties that emerged during the manual open coding of data from P-1 to P-10 (except for P-9) were referenced or described in the interview data of participants P-11 and P-12. When no new properties or categories emerged in interviews by P-11 and P-12, I was convinced saturation had been reached as described by Creswell (2013) and Rudestam and Newton (2015).

Member Checking

I prepared verbatim transcripts of each audio-recorded interview for the member checking procedure and emailed the transcripts to each research participant, except P-8, who did not own a personal computer. I personally delivered P-8's transcript to him at his home. Four verified transcripts were returned in 2 days. On day three, I telephoned the remaining six participants and requested a return of the verified transcripts. Four returned their verified transcripts on day six, one requested a verification by telephone and a return of the signed form by mail. The final verified transcript was not received until a week after the scheduled return deadline. The reason for the delayed returned transcript was because P-9 had emergency eye surgery. P-9 assured me verbally that the content of the transcript was accurate, and that the transcript would be signed and mailed to me. All transcripts were approved for submission into the research study report. Once

transcripts had been verified, I began the manual coding of themes, categories, and topical words (Patton, 2000).

Manual Coding

Table 2 below shows how I applied manual coding to create themes and categories of data from the research audio-recorded interviews. Open coding is where themes emerge from the raw data and are later placed into categories and hierarchy of meaning (Khandkar, 2015). I used open coding to determine the breakdown of textual data and to quantify the meaning and essence of the lived experiences. The mentor codes indicate terms that the participants used to describe a mentor based on his/her experience. The protégé codes were terms used to describe the attitude and behavior of participants during the interview process.

Table 2

Manual Coding Framework

Theory of Mentoring		
Mentor Code	**Protégé (Mentee) Code (Descriptive Behavior/Attribute)**	**Ten Interview Questions That Relate to Theory/Codes**
Visionary	Has ability to improve social status	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Educator	Has potential to learn	1-9
Instructor/Guide	Willing to be mentored	1-9
Challenger	Accepts constructive criticism	2, 3, 6,
Counselor	Seeks advise as needed	1, 4, 5, 8, 9
Confidant	Has trust relationship with mentor	5, 7
Skills Developer	Acquires skills from mentor	6, 9
Friend	Develop favorable relationship	3, 7, 8, 9
Supporter	Receives feedback and encouragement	All
Validator	Accolades and certificate of completion	All

Social Cognitive Theory		
Cognitive Code	**Protégé (Mentee) Code (Descriptive Behavior/Attribute**	**Ten Interview Questions That Relate to Theory/Code**
Cognitive/Personal Factors		
Attitude	Becomes self-aware and self sufficient	3, 5, 6,7, 8, 9
Expectations	Ask questions of mentor – expected answers	2, 3
Knowledge	New skills/communication & interpersonal	5-9
Environmental Factors		
Social norms	Appreciation for own culture and others	5, 7, 8
Access to community	Interaction improved and increased	8,9
Influence with others	Gains friends/opportunity/economic increase	5,7
Behavioral Factors		
Skills	Acquire new ones/improved old ones	2,3, 5-9
Practice	Confidence and self-esteem	2,3, 5-10
Self-efficacy	Proficiency in social interaction/performance	7, 8, 9

Note. Components from manual coding. Adapted from "Manual coding." by J. A. Creswell, 2013, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Table 2 presents two of the 4 coding modules; the other two theories were social exclusion and social capital.

Information in Table 2 represents how the interview questions correlate to each theory (mentoring, social cognitive, social exclusion and social capital) and in turn the interview responses revealed emerging themes and categories of how mentoring was experienced by the ten research participants. Outcomes from the manual coding were imported into NVivo analytical software program and the results of that coding are presented later in this chapter.

Data Analysis

After manually coding each response, I imported the manual analysis of the 10 interviews into the NVivo Pro 11 software program. I created nodes within the software that collected and gathered data from each imported interview and placed the interviews

into themes and categories. As a result, the NVivo analysis was comparable to the manual coding outcomes.

Following is a breakdown of how data were analyzed. The four theories included in the theoretical framework represented data concepts. Categories were considered as broad topics within each theory (concept). The themes are attributes of each category. The components of the coding are as follows:

- Concepts: mentoring theory, social exclusion theory, social cognitive theory, and social capital theory
- Categories: advancements, challenges, community, communication, development, education, efficacy, employment, jobs, money, skills, social, and status
- Themes: academics, benefits, confidence, etiquette, grammar, high school completion, and intelligence

Coding from the NVivo Pro 11 analysis provided several graphics representing an analysis of data from each audio-recorded transcribed interview session. Member-checking was used to verify data from each interview.

Interpretation of Table 3

Table 3 shows a comparison of the emerging themes from the manual open coding process and data from the NVivo diagnostic assessment of emerging themes. The emerging properties of the manual open coding were similar to the NVivo diagnostic assessment, which served as validation that both the manual evaluation and the NVivo diagnostic captured the same identifying factors of the research examination.

Table 3

Manual and NVivo Coding

Theoretical Concepts (Mentoring, Social Exclusion, Social Cognition, and Social Capital)							
Mentoring		**Social Exclusion**		**Social Cognition**		**Social Capital**	
Manual	**NVivo**	**Manual**	**NVivo**	**Manual**	**NVivo**	**Manual**	**NVivo**
Advancements	Acquired skills	Bad thoughts	Negative	Alert	Brain	Advantages	People
Challenge	Belief	Expelled	School	Balanced	Equal	Benefits	Money
Communications	Better	Habits	Things	Communicate	Talk	Career	Jobs
Community	Community	Jail	Confinement	Dedication	Work	Development	Mind
Confidence	Confidence	Kicked out	Left out	Education	Education	Finances	Buy
Education	Learning	Jury	Judgment	Efficacy	Confident	Friendships	Talk
Employment skills	Work skills	Racism	Treatment	Good health	Healthy	Influence & investments	Connect
Social skills	Wisdom	Shy	Quiet	Improvement	Brain	Power	Power
Life changes	Valuable	Homeless	Poor	Read better	Communicate	Value	Person

Note. Comparison of manual and NVivo coding. Adapted from "NVivo Qualitative Software System," by QSR International. (2016). Retrieved from: http://www.qsrinternational.com/product.

Across the top of the table are the components that make up the theoretical framework: theory of mentoring, social exclusion theory, social cognitive theory, and social capital theory. The intent was to show a relationship between the framework, research question, and the emerging themes from the interviews as indicated by the results of the manual and NVivo coding. The premise of the research study was to investigate how social excluded adults experienced mentoring. Each of the theories were used to establish categories of behavior that might help explain how the social excluded adults experienced mentoring. The theory of mentoring was necessary to provide the fundamentals of the mentoring process. The theory of social exclusion was included to

give background of the social and economic environment of the social excluded. The social cognitive theory provided the process humans used when learning and receiving information. The social capital theory explained how the acquisition of knowledge and training is advantageous and influential allowing the recipient of the newly acquired knowledge and skills to elevate his/her lifestyle to align more adequately with mainstream society.

The second level of the table identifies the column of information in the subsequent rows beginning at level three to eleven. Level two specifies themes that emerged from the manual open coding process and the column labeled NVivo are themes that emerged from the NVivo diagnostic process. For example, column one second row indicates *Manual* and the second column indicates *NVivo.* The words below *Manual* and *NVivo* are the themes (properties) that emerged from each process*: Advancement* under *Manual* and *Acquired skills* under *NVivo.* In *NVivo* a word tree (Table 4) revealed synonyms (alternate words) associated with *Advancement*, so the property *Acquired skills* described A*dvancement* in the life of the participant in work skills and/or communication skills. In some instances, the theme in both the manual process and NVivo emerged as the same word. The parallelism described here was used in the other theoretical categories as well: social exclusion, social cognition, and social capital. Table 3 represents the culmination of categories, themes, and topical descriptions that emerged from research interviews.

The coding process in a qualitative study has been referred to as the heart of qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2013). Maxwell (2013) indicated that the data

analysis is the mysterious aspect of a qualitative study. Mysterious in that it is unknown what the collection of data will yield until the analysis process is completed. Analyzing the interviews revealed the nature of the phenomenon (mentoring). Table 3 represents the description, classification, and interpretation of data, which is the process of aggregating the visual data into categories, themes, and topical classifications (Creswell, 2013). Coding allows the researcher to create an overview of contextual relationships that provide answers to the research question, which informs the research study, thereby arriving at empirical data which defines the essence of the phenomenon.

Saldana (2009) recommended seven areas to consider when coding a qualitative research study. I considered each of these as I manually coded data from each interview:

- Be organized – coding requires maintaining accurate data as it relates to the word, phrase or sentence being coded
- Exercise perseverance – coding is a tedious task
- Deal with ambiguity – coding requires more than general knowledge about the information being coded
- Be flexible – coding is a cyclical process that may require several iterations of coding
- Be creative – the person coding must think visually and in metaphors as to the appropriate description of a word, phrase, or sentence
- Be rigorously ethical – maintain scholarly integrity
- Extensive vocabulary – coding requires knowledge of a broad range of words to select the most accurate code category

Figure 4. NVivo word tree.

Note. Accumulative phrases and words from research interviews. Adapted from "NVivo Qualitative Software System," by QSR International, 2016. Retrieved from: http://www.qsrinternational.com/product

The NVivo diagnostic program analyzed the content of each interview that was imported from the manual coding process. From the imported data the NVivo process gathered similar words from each interview and placed the words with the greater amount of usage into the tree amalgamation. The most prominent in the word tree display above are those that appeared repeatedly in each of the 10 interviews. The NVivo word tree summary (Figure 4) was compared to the manual accumulation of terms that appear in Table 3.

The Results

There were seven themes with four subthemes that emerged from the raw research data. Each theme and sub-theme correlated with the research question, "What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?" The emerging themes and subthemes are supported by comments and responses audio-recorded during each participant's verified interview. A hierarchy was created that represents the structural and textual descriptions of the study and participant responses validating the descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). The emerging themes have been placed in alphabetical order for presentation purposes only. The themes are not ranked in any order. All are key components of the lived experiences.

Emerging Theme 1: Advantages

Advantages are defined as any action or inter-action between the mentor and protégé that resulted in providing information and the receipt of information that improved the understanding and knowledge of the protégé. This could include ways to inter-act with a new acquaintance, how to have a successful job interview, and how to communicate with others appropriately (de Greef, Segers, & Verte', 2012).

There were two subthemes associated with advantages and they were employment skills and social skills. In most mentoring assignments the mentor is tasked with the responsibility of introducing ways and techniques for a protégé to improve his/her employment and social skills. Social excluded adults have in common the need to acquire knowledge and develop abilities to improve the way he/she conduct their daily lives. The knowledge and abilities maybe primarily employment related or a

combination of employment and personal deportment. Mentoring has been a means in which youth and adults have changed their trajectory from a downward spiral of substandard living to one of upward mobility and positive social status.

Following are some of the interview responses regarding employment and social skills.

Employment Skills:

P-1. **"**Yes, I would say so…the experience (mentoring) allowed me to get gainful employment."

P-3. "I knew that mentoring was a powerful learning opportunity. It helps you to understand things better when you have someone or some relationship that you can relate to help you improve. It helps you see yourself and ways you can improve with the help of a knowledgeable person."

P-6. "I learned that I could do better. I gained confidence in myself and I think everybody should have the opportunity to experience that. The support from people that really seemed to care about you learning and growing and offering to help you every step of the way. I loved that."

P-7. "I learned how to take down and put up walls in a timely manner. Rather than just any kind of way. I learned that coordinating my effort was much better than just hap-hazard doing a job."

Social Skills:

P-4. **"**The mentoring opportunity helped me learn how to interact with others, to know appropriate protocol for different situations, and how to be confident

when speaking."

P-5. "The mentoring experience gave me a sense of confidence. That I could do it."

P-6. "It gave me more confidence about doing things. It made me feel better about myself."

P-7. "Yes, it helped me mentally, physically, and spiritually."

P-10. **"**The more I engaged the more confident I felt."

Emerging Theme 2: Challenges

Challenges were from the social exclusion background of each participant. The challenges were roadblocks or obstacles that participants experienced prior to mentoring. The challenge of not having enough money to eat or live adequately. Not having money to afford health insurance or reliable transportation. Lack of education to apply for a good paying job and not having the skills to perform the job. The challenges continued in the areas of poor health, lack of confidence, a need for knowledge of social etiquette, racial profiling, racism, and sexism (Bradshaw, & Mayhew, 2010).

P-1. "The challenges were to show up each day no matter what was going on around me. I had to stay focused. The experience made a change in my life in that I was able to make the kind of money that helped me to take very good care of my family. I was able to help my mom financially."

P-2. "I was out of school for 4 or 5 months as a result I had short comings with my math and in English because I got kick out most of my senior year."

P-2. "I got back in and finished high school, then I joined the Navy. I was

treated bad by the Navy officers."

P-4. "The disadvantage was that it was mandatory and finding time each day to meet with the mentor, even though there may not have been enough time to complete other responsibilities."

P-5. "The challenge for me was stepping outside of my comfort zone."

P-6. "The main challenge was being prepared every day to participate. Knowing that you had to have all your materials completed and ready for review was a lot of work and a big responsibility."

P-7. "What was not so good about it was trying to find the time to participate every day. I have so many responsibilities, it was difficult to find time each day for the mentoring program."

P-9. "I really did not experience much of an advantage. My mentor pointed out a lot of my deficiencies; without giving me any suggestions or recommendations on how to correct the deficiencies. I did not look forward to going to mentoring."

Emerging Theme 3: Cognitive

Cognition is the learning, reasoning, and understanding process that humans experience from birth, throughout life and ceases at death. All learning occurs using the five senses – sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Below are comments from participants regarding the cognitive process during his/her mentoring experience (Bandura, 2012; Cho & Kang, 2017).

P-1. " I was the same person, but I was more knowledgeable and did not mind

sharing my knowledge with anyone."

P-2. "Then I met a Chief Petty Officer, a karate instructor, he took me under his wing. He asked me to come join the Karate Team to teach me self-control."

P-3. "I learned a lot and noticed that I improve in many ways; more confident, spoke in groups more willingly, and enjoyed participation in large group activities."

P-4. "The most valuable benefit of the mentoring was having a source where I could get advice about things I did not learn in college."

P-6. "But when you get a chance to improve yourself and you start to work at it and you can see a positive change in yourself it makes you happy and you feel so much better about yourself. It makes you feel there is nothing that you cannot do."

P-7. "I learned that coordinating my effort was much better than just hap-hazard doing a job."

P-8. "I now start conversations and share with people ideas and thoughts I have or about things I have learned. It has opened new friendships for me."

P-9. "That experience gave me the incentive to mentor the correct way. That determination has helped me mentor some young people within the organization where I am employed."

P-10. "I gained the skill of being comfortable when I speak in front of people. I became confident, especially after hearing my

mentor's story of where she was at one time and her success in improving herself to where she is today. She inspired me to realize, yes, I can do this too!"

Emerging Theme 4: Community

Several defining factors are evident in a community that is productive, wholesome, progressive, and has vitality – most of the residents, if not all, reflect these attributes. To reflect wholesomeness and productivity each member of the community is responsible for preparing and educating themselves to be the best he/she can be. Thus, mentorships promote community as a key element of the mentoring training (Fullick-Jagiela, Verbos, & Wiese, 2015; Plante & Truitt, 2016).

P-1. "Yes, I invested in work, because I was able to mentor other people who gained skills and supported the community. I paid it forward. I was helped and in turn I helped others."

P-2. "I kept my focus – channeled my life in a way that I became productive."

P-3. "Because of my mentoring, whenever, we go into the community to do outreach or events I contact other churches to join our effort. In doing this we gain new friends and learn from others and share our knowledge with them as well."

P-4. "When I became comfortable communicating with people on a professional level my mentor began inviting me to attend civic organizations where she was a member and to community activities. My mentor even encouraged me to become a part of committees that were

established at the school. I ended up sitting on a panel where I represented both as a school official and as a parent."

P-6. "I have always worked in my community, but with the training I felt I could even be better and give more. I worked with Harbor Habitat for Humanity. Everyone working in that program have a bond. When you build something from nothing it is wonderful."

P-7. "It motivated me to want to do more in my church and to show young people some of the skills I had learned. I now am committed to doing mentoring in my church and neighborhood."

P-8. "Yes, I feel we need a lot of help in this community and mentoring is a way to help. Also, we are not always talking about money. We can invest in friendships and relationships that can prove to be meaningful. Helping people see how much value they are and what they can still contribute to their families and community."

P-9. "Yes, it has helped me be relentless about helping young leaders in a positive and supportive manner. I want the people that I mentor view it as an opportunity for growth. An opportunity to hear and learn from another person's experience. I was determined not to make any mentee feel bad about their shortcoming, but to work hard to overcome them. I help in my community, at work, and volunteer for community events."

P-10. "I have always had a passion for my community and to give back. I

felt once I became involved in the mentorship and then began to work many avenues opened to me to become more involved in my community."

Emerging Theme 5: Confidence

Confidence is the knowing we each possess about who we are and what we can accomplish. Confidence is believing in oneself and demonstrating that belief in words and actions. Two subthemes emerged that support the premise of confidence: efficacy and self-awareness. The following comments from interviews, collaborated by each participant, described the empowering effects of confidence, efficacy and self-awareness (Bandura, 2015; Destin & DeBrosse, 2017).

P-3. "Mentoring has taught me many creative ways to tackle a challenge. Through my mentoring experience I have grown tremendously in natural situations as well as spiritual ones."

P-3. "Mentoring caused me to look at myself in a more positive way. Rather than being fearful of a new experience. I embraced opportunities to learn by being creative and using the creative talents of others working with me. I learned to look at situations that seemed impossible as situations that could be overcome with the right techniques and planning. I learned to provide clear communication when interacting with family, friends, and business associates."

P-4. "As I mentioned earlier, I went from being a server in a fast-food restaurant to the classroom. The mentoring opportunity helped me learn how to

interact with others, to know appropriate protocol for different situations, and how to be confident when speaking. I was a bit immature when I began my teaching career; however, I learned how to be a profession through my mentoring experience."

P-5. "The mentor must feel confident that they have something to offer the mentee and sincerely wants to be a mentor."

P-6. "I was surprised how it made me feel so much better knowing that I was able to learn or be reminded of things I knew before but had forgotten how to do certain things. It was good to know that no one could label you to just lay down, but we had the opportunity to rise and learn and grow and there were people supporting and helping you to be better. So, it was a nice change from just being bumped to the side. Now there was a chance to learn and be better and the people working with you really wanted you to be successful. I gained confidence in myself and I think everybody should have the opportunity to experience that."

P-7. "Yes, I showed off a bit – when I saw that I could handle a job so well and feel confidence I the way I was performing. Then to have others admire my skill and my attitude was rewarding. I felt good about myself and interacted better with family, friends, neighbors, and those I worked with every day. I developed patience and confidence."

P-8. "Yes, some people think that when you get older you do not have the desire, drive, or skill to do things. You don't put forth the effort to learn

new things. So, mentoring is a way to let people have access to skills they think they may have and it provides opportunity for people to better themselves at any age."

P-9. "I did not feel I received any advantages. It was more like a beat-up session for me. When it was time for a mentoring session the first thought in my mind was, what did I do wrong this week? The mentoring was more of a hinderance and my confidence was shot."

P-10. "I gained the skill of being comfortable when I spoke in front of people. I became confident, especially after hearing my mentor's story of where she was at one time and her success in improving herself to where she is today. She inspired me to realize, yes, I can do this too!"

Emerging Theme 6: Mentoring

Mentoring has been proven to be a powerful tool to provide instructions for learning. The kinetic effect mentoring has on both the mentor and protégé with life changing results is an opportunity more should be allowed to experience. The following are a few descriptions of mentoring and its effect on the participants of this study (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014; Ennis, 2015).

P-1. "The mentoring experience made a change in my life in that I was able to make the kind of money that helped me to take very good care of my family."

P-2. "Mentoring helped save my life!"

P-3. "I knew that mentoring was a powerful learning opportunity. It helps you

to understand things better when you have someone or some relationship you can relate to help you improve."

P-4. **"**Because of my relationship with my mentor, I felt everyone should have such a rewarding experience. Mentoring afforded me the opportunity to overcome personal deficits that now allow me not to sit quiet while others speak. I am now the selected speaker for others and this type of empowerment should be afforded to as many as possible."

P-5. "Those experiences with that mentor and the fact that I got to tag along on quite a few of those meetings with the nonprofits and businesses we worked with – gave me a lot of exposure to the community that I may not have received in another position. And because of that exposure people come to me now for assistance knowing that I have the expertise and connections and knowledge because of that mentor exposing me to such a wide range of experiences."

P-6. "It helped to motivate me, and I tried motivating others too, especially in the age range you are talking about 25 to 50. People in that age group still have things they can learn and contribute. They need to live and make money and learn to be the best they can be."

P-7. "The mentoring program made me aware of the value of contributing to not only my family but learn from others around me and to become involve and make positive contributions to community as well."

P-8. "So, this mentoring has helped me be open to new things, ideas, and people. It helps how you speak to others and how you speak to them. So, it makes a big difference. It was important for me to have that. Sometimes we have skills, but we are slack in those skills. So, I have been able to improve on my skills from where I was before the mentoring began."

P-9. "It seriously made me question myself, feel uncomfortable, and made me hate coming to work. I found myself saying, "Please let me get sick today. Which is sad, because earlier on I was told that the mentoring would help me with career development, help me be better, do my job better, etc. None of that happened. In fact, it was like the military…we will break you down and then try to build you back up. I was broken down but was never given anything to build up my self-esteem or discussion of what potential I possessed."

P-10. "Mentoring is very important. It can be helpful for people at any age, especially the age group you are representing in your research study, adults 25 to 50 years of age. It can be helpful to people who lose a job and have no idea what steps to take to get training for a new job or how to complete an application for a new position. Mentoring teaches how to do things correctly and many people need that kind of guidance. Mentoring could provide that kind of valuable insight."

Emerging Themes 7: Memorable Quotes

Participants involved with this research provided outstanding comments regarding their lived experience.

P-1. "I was the same person, but I was more knowledgeable and did not mind sharing my knowledge with anyone."

P-2. "Mr. P-2, you only have one chance, and you can't even take that. When I heard that, I was so hurt. I turned to mentoring…it saved my life."

P-3. "Mentoring is powerful and quite effective."

P-4. "I allowed myself to get to know the person – realizing she was there to help me. Mentoring was one of the highlights of my life."

P-5. "My mentoring turned into a very strong friendship, which surprised me."

P-6. "There had been programs before, but we as a group were never allowed to participate. We want to better ourselves like others do and before now we were not even told about this type of training."

P-7. "Everyone should desire to be mentored or to mentor someone. You can never know enough. It is good to have challenges and successes because it builds your character, your faith and your confidence. Mentoring is a worthwhile investment."

P-8. "A person who is your mentor must have patience with you. If you happen to make a mistake or do something wrong the way that person helps you through those kinds of challenges can make or break the mentoring relationship. I have a very patient and tactful mentor and I am

learning a great deal from him. Mentoring and learning through mentoring is a process and my mentor is artful in mentoring me."

P-9. **"**I would not want one to experience what I did with mentoring. It was unpleasant, demeaning, destroyed my self-confidence, and caused me to hate my job. That should not be what a person experienced with mentoring. I made a positive difference when I had the chance to be a mentor."

P-10. "I was at a point where I was starting my career and did not know which direction I wanted to go so I felt having a mentor would be very helpful. I sought out the mentor. I selected her. The most valuable benefit of my mentoring experience was honest advice. Nothing sugar-coated. I felt that has really helped me in my career as I move forward."

Observations and Interpretations

About P-1

During the audio-recorded interview sessions, I made notations of the facial expressions and body language of each participant. Passion, jubilation, and confidence were displayed by eight of the participants. Two interviewees displayed other characteristics. P-1 had an austere demeanor throughout the interview. Although he described the experience as worthwhile and meaningful, he lacked the enthusiasm and sense of accomplishment usually associated with reaching the levels of financial stability and social acceptance that he described.

My overall assessment of P-1 is that he is an example of a social introvert. Zelenski et al. (2013) suggest that introverts have less of a capacity for enjoyment and have less of a need to show levels of pleasure or well-being. P-1 was withdrawn saying as little as possible and displayed a preference for being coy rather than expressing openness and peaceful calm (Spadlin, Cuttler, Bunce, & Carrier, 2017). P-1 and P-9 were the only participants who I chose to ask additional questions to encourage dialogue about their lived experience.

About P-9

P-9 expressed the deep, hurtful, and disappointing memories associated with his mentoring experience (Bungert et al., 2015). During the first 20 minutes of the interview, he avoided eye-contact, kept his arms folded, and did not smile. It appeared he was re-living the pain and was still distraught about the way the mentor interacted with him and caused him immense emotional discomfort.

P-9's experience is an example of a mentoring opportunity that was mishandled with inappropriate behavior displayed by the mentor (Eby, Butts, Durley & Ragins, 2010). According to P-9, he felt he was the subject of discriminating actions by his supervisor. "The mentor maintained good and positive relations with my co-workers. I felt as if I was singled out for the kind of negative attention I received." I asked whether his interview was conducted by more than one person?" P-9 responded, "There were three managers on the interview committee including my supervisor." I asked if he thought the interview session was conducted appropriately? "Yes, I thought everything was handled according to interview protocol." After P-9's interview, he was hired and

learned that the organization needed to increase the number of males in several departments, which may have been the primary reason he became an employee. He stated that he over-heard someone refer to him as "the token male of HR (Human Resources) department."

There may have been various reasons why P-9 experienced the trauma and anguish during his mentoring experience; however, he stated several times that he was determined not to allow the negative outcomes to diminish his belief in the value of mentoring. "That experience gave me the incentive to mentor the correct way. My determination has helped me mentor some young people within the organization where I am employed."

Descriptions of this type of exclusion was found in the literature review. Miliora (2002) discussed the emotional pain and mental deprivation that erodes self-esteem and could create a sense of uselessness. P-9 indicated, "I did not receive any real value from the mentoring experience. In fact, it seriously eroded my self-confidence and self-worth." Rosen, Milich, and Harris (2011) described how most people want to be accepted and to receive recognition being valued and respected. Some social psychologists described the desire of being included as a fundamental human need shared by individuals of all ages (Rosen, Milich, & Harris, 2011). Miyauchi (2012) referred to social exclusion as an unpleasant, unhealthy, and undermining experience.

P-9 described his social exclusion experience (associated with his mentoring experience) in this context: "When it was time for a mentoring session the first thought

in my mind was what did I do wrong this week? The mentoring for me was more of a hinderance and my confidence was shot."

Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins (2010) expounded on the role of a protégé in a negative mentoring environment in that the protégé could provide constructive feedback to the mentor or seek out a different mentor. Kahle-Piasecki (2011) suggested matching a mentor and mentee (protégé) through the cognitive style personality variable defined by Tennant (1988). The basis of the cognitive style is how an individual interacts socially such as in left brain/right brain analogy.

Both P-1 and P-9 experienced certain aspects of the theoretical concepts. Each were exposed to the learning environment of mentoring. P-1's exposure was more positive than P-9; however, the social cognition theory was applicable in both instances. P-1's self-efficacy was enhanced, and his self-esteem was heightened by his mentoring experience even though his personality characteristics remained constant as a social introvert (Bandura, 2012). P-9 had a negative experience with self-efficacy but his will power was not diminished because of other positive elements in his environment from others who witnessed the injustice of his mentoring situation and provided him positive support (Bandura, 2015). P-9 experienced social exclusion when placed in a mentoring situation at his place of employment. None of his co-workers were invited to participate in a mentoring program at the employment site, where P-9 had allegedly been labeled something other than a qualified member of the staff (token staff member). P-1 gained social capital through his mentoring empowerment, whereas, P-9's social capital was a

result of his diligence and self -empowerment of providing positive and effective mentoring opportunities to others (Hawes & Rocha, 2011).

P-2 through P-8 and P-10

The remainder of the participants (P2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) each had similar experiences and responses to mentoring, social cognition, social exclusion, and social capital. The attributes and positive influence of mentoring as described by Kram (1983), supportive theorists, and social scientists was validated by the interview responses of each participant, including P-1 and P-9. Mentoring is worthwhile, meaningful, valuable, and can be advantageous to any age group up to and including adults 70 years of age as substantiated by data provided by research participants. The social cognition process (human agency) is the same for everyone (Ng & Lucianetti, 2015). Bandura (1989) described the cognitive process as a self-system that serves as a repository and conduit for decision-making, actions, and cognitive interpretations by individuals. The self-system is managed by the level of input from learning and experience along with influences from environmental and biological criteria. A diagram of the system of triadic reciprocal causation can be found in Chapter 2 of this study.

Social exclusion was the primary factor among each of the participants that created the need for mentoring (Bradshaw & Mayhew, 2010). The many references to social exclusion throughout the study indicated that the undermining and destructive effect of that social ill (exclusion) was successfully neutralized by mentoring. With the assistance of the social cognitive process newly acquired knowledge and tactile training was activated in each participant (except P-9) transforming and empowering the research

participants in new and improved ways (Bandura, 2012). This transformation and empowerment included the advantages of social capital, which provided the participants with influence, improved communication skills, and social status allowing for employment advancement, economic stability, and opportunities for upward social mobility (Svara, Watt, & Takai, 2014; Wilson, Jaques, Johnson, & Brotherton, 2016).

Each research participant described how he/she acquired knowledge during their mentoring experience, which was expedited by social cognition and social capital:

P-1. "Without the mentoring I could not have learned how to do such exact and precision work."

P-2. "Mentoring kept me focus – it guided my life in a way that I became productive."

P-3. "Once I opened myself up to the mentoring process. I learned a lot and noticed that I improve in many ways; more confident, spoke in groups willingly and enjoyed participation in large group activities."

P-4. "I did have much experience coming into the teaching profession from working in a fast food operation, so receiving input from someone with experience was welcomed and appreciated. The mentoring experience provided me with tools to help resolve issues in the classroom."

P-5. "I believe wholeheartedly that if it had not been for mentoring I would not hold the position I have today without that mentoring. The mentoring experience gave me a sense of confidence. That I

could do it."

P-6. "I learned that I could do better. Many times, you go along exposed to the same thing and you feel that is all you can do. But the mentoring training gave me a chance to see that I could do better."

P-7. "The most valuable benefit I received was the teamwork. The mentor helping me, me helping others and all the mentees working together in the class to do our best."

P-8. "A person who is your mentor must have patience with you. If you to make a mistake or do something wrong the way that person helps you through those kinds of challenges can make or break the mentoring relationship."

P-9. "I would not want anyone to experience what I did with mentoring. It was unpleasant, demeaning, destroyed my self-confidence, and caused me to. hate my job. That should not be what a person experience with mentoring. I made a positive difference when I had the chance to be a mentor."

P-10. "Mentoring is very important. It can be helpful for people at any age, especially the age group you are representing in your research study. It can be helpful to people who lose a job and have no idea what steps to take to get training for a new job or how to complete an application for a new position. Mentoring teaches how to do things correctly and many people need that kind of guidance."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility was established in three significant ways (Shenton, 2004). First, the phenomenological design provided a research standard for the collection of data through audio-recorded interviews. Secondly, participants for the interviews were purposefully selected indigenous individuals from a geographical area known for its history of poverty-level low-income living conditions, which were substantiated by both historical and empirical sources (City Data, 2014; Consolidated Report, 2016–2020; Reedy, 2015). Lastly, the member-checking process for each transcribed interview validated the sources of raw data that was coded manually and by state-of-the-art qualitative software. Each participant validated his/her qualifications verbally and each signed a consent form providing written verification of meeting the criteria allowing for participation in the research study.

As each interview was recorded and reviewed the content of the interviews provided responses that were in line with the research question regarding the description of mentoring experiences from the perspective of social excluded adults between 25 and 50 years of age. At the end of the data gathering process, credibility of the study and its purpose was established.

Transferability

The subject of the study (mentoring) is a traditional method used in academia, the workplace, and among youth requiring guidance and structure (Sykes, Gioviano & Piquero, 2014). The transferability factor will seem obvious to anyone or group desiring to learn about the far-reaching effects of mentoring, especially mentoring of non-

traditional students and older members of society desiring to learn new skills and technological nuances. Because transferability is providing a blueprint or strategic guidelines as to each component part of a study in terms that can be replicated by other researchers, ideally this study is well suited as foundational for future research.

To ensure transferability, the research study was conducted based on oversight of the dissertation committee, university guidelines, qualitative policies, and the sixth edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, all requirements of a qualitative research study.

Dependability

The research study was designed and conducted using basic qualitative factors (Creswell, 2013). Data were collected from individuals with actual knowledge of and experience with the phenomenon. The interviews were an invigorating process and the data received revealed extraordinary outcomes of fractured lives finding hope and ways to upgrade their way of living and surviving. The merits as to how this study was conducted and the context of the data collected will provide evidence of the dependable nature of the study, which could be replicated using the same principles as presented. The true measure of dependability may be found in the committed interest of anyone finding and pursuing the merits of this study.

Confirmability

Caution and care was maintained throughout the study so that the empirical integrity and universal principles of qualitative research were respected and maintained. This study will withstand the scrutiny of a peer-review examination because each aspect

has been filtered through the knowledge, advice, and recommendations of research scholars, academic experts, and university guidelines. This study conforms to qualitative design protocol with a hermeneutic emphasis on context and explanations (Creswell, 2013).

The interview protocol and participant consent form provided continuity during the interview process that interviews and interaction with the participants were handled in a precise manner. Tools used to gather data and code emerging themes, categories, and concepts were consistent and did not vary from interview to interview. Diligence was the rule of thumb in administering governing strategies of the research study so that a consistent and data rich study could be presented to the scientific community.

The literature and empirical data supported the research study regarding mentoring and its success as a learning tool. Mentoring instills and promotes positive change in individuals requiring additional training in the areas of employment, communication, and over-all self-improvement. Personal change that occur after mentoring garners positive deportment, enhanced communication skills, confident and competent interpersonal skills, and creates improved lifestyle. Not only did the participants speak to the positive changes in their lives, their enthusiasm, coinciding body language, poise, and resolve were physical evidence that their mentoring experience had created life changes, which were substantial and fortified enough to withstand the test of time and challenges.

The next chapter will be the finality of the research study report. In Chapter 5, I explained how the literature accentuates the themes and results of the ten interviews. I

provided details and insights into the interpretation of findings, an atypical interview, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications of social change and the conclusion of this phenomenological examination.

Adjustments to Initial Research Strategy

It was necessary to expand the age range of eligible participants because older residents of the city readily volunteered versus the anticipated group I thought would participate. The goal was to gather data from social excluded adults and that goal was satisfied even though the age range was expanded to accommodate the study (Creswell, 2013).

Researcher Bias

In using the phenomenology design, it was imperative that I maintained a non-judgmental mindset throughout the research study (Creswell, 2013). Care and caution prevailed in presenting data in its original and authentic context. Self-assessment was a key ritual that was constantly in the forefront of my thinking as I preceded each day with gathering data for the study. One underlying thought that helped me to avoid personal bias and interjecting personal involvement in the study was a prior experience.

In 2003–2010, I was the executive director for a nonprofit community development organization established by the governor of Michigan after several civil disruptions in the City of Benton Harbor (Task Force Report, 2003). The goal of the organization was to provide self-help, mentoring, and adult education to the residents in preparation for employment and responsibilities such as voting and participation in the community development of the city. I witnessed the empowering effects of mentoring

and adult education. I saw individuals between the ages of 25–50 turn away from throwing rocks and burning building to becoming neighborhood block club leaders and entrepreneurs (Reedy, 2015); however, there were no tangible data of that extraordinary transformation (Consolidated Plan, 2016–2020).

While conducting this study, I relied on the thought that because the phenomenon of mentoring occurred then (while I was a community development director), it was just a matter of seeking out individuals involved in the 2003–2010 City of Benton Harbor transformation and document results of their mentoring experiences. Those individuals, as well as other proteges, could provide data regarding social excluded adults experiencing personal transformations that may have been substantial and that create systemic change within the City of Benton Harbor. With this prior knowledge of the effectiveness of mentoring among social excluded adults, there was no need to impose my personal bias or influence within the context of this research study.

Summary

The phenomenological examination using hermeneutics was a productive process which provided rich illuminous data describing the lived experiences of mentored social excluded adults. The research question, which informed the study, created a foundation through a series of semi-structured open-ended interview questions that allowed for a free flow of responses from each of the ten participants regarding their experiences. From the responses emerged seven themes: advantages, challenges, confidence, community, education, mentoring, and memorable quotes. The four subthemes were employment and

social skills as they related to education along with efficacy and self-awareness as these each related to confidence.

The research study supported the literature and empirical data regarding mentoring and its effectiveness as a learning tool (Ghosh, 2012). Mentoring instills and promotes positive change in individuals requiring additional training in the areas of employment, communication, and over-all self-improvement. Personal change that occurred after mentoring garnered positive deportment, enhanced communication skills, confident and competent interpersonal skills, and resulted in improved lifestyles. Not only did the participants speak to the positive changes in their lives, their enthusiasm, coinciding body language, poise, and resolve were physical evidence that their mentoring experience had created lifestyle changes, which were substantial enough to withstand the test of time and challenges.

The next chapter will be the finality of the research study report. In Chapter 5, I explained how the literature accentuated the themes and results of the ten interviews. I provided details and insights into the interpretation of findings, an atypical interview, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications of social change and the conclusion of this phenomenological examination.

Chapter 5: Interpretation, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter includes an interpretation of findings, which includes the psychological, sociological, and socioeconomic perspectives that emerged from the study, along with a summary of findings, limitations of the study, explanation of an atypical case, recommendations, implications of social change, and the conclusion. The purpose of the study was to examine how social excluded adults in a small Midwest city experienced mentoring. Social exclusion is a lifestyle that is created by poverty, unemployment, underemployment, lack of work skills, limited social skills, and existence in a substandard living environment (Bradshaw & Mayhew, 2010). The research question that informed the study was: What were the experiences of social excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?

Interpretation of Findings

My research was conducted using a qualitative approach. The phenomenological design with a hermeneutic introspection yielded an abundance of thick rich data explicit in defining the essence of the lived experiences of the research participants. Seven themes and four subthemes emerged from the data that are supported by the theoretical framework and literature. I gathered data by using an audio-recorder during face-to-face 45-minute interviews. Interviews were scheduled to be held at the Benton Harbor Library; however, on several occasions alternate interview locations were selected. Additional details on the interview locations will be discussed later in this chapter.

I scheduled 10 audio-recorded interviews for the study. The data I collected by the eighth interview indicated that saturation had occurred, because no new data were being described by participants during the interviews. In order to be certain that saturation had been achieved, I conducted another interview (P-9) and new data were received. Because new data were received I proceeded with interview 10 and no new data were received. I was not completely convinced that saturation had been reached, I conducted interviews 11 and 12, at which time it was obvious that the study was at the level of saturation because no new data were revealed or discussed. I reviewed the audio-recorded interviews 11 and 12 for verification of saturation; however, I did not return them to participants 11 and 12 for verification because interviews 11 and 12 were not validated through the member-checking process and were used only to assure saturation. Data from interviews 11 and 12 were not included in the interview summary.

Seven themes and four subthemes emerged during the interview sessions and were supported by the theoretical framework and literature. The seven themes were: advantages, challenges, community, confidence, education, mentoring, and memorable quotes. The four subthemes were: Employment and social skills which aligned with education along with efficacy and self-awareness which aligned with confidence.

Theme 1: Advantages

In Chapters 1 through 3 of this study, mentoring is described as a tool of advantage, in which a mentor provides challenges and opportunities for learning to a protégé. In two of the four theories described in the theoretical framework, social

cognitive and social capital, both described the advantages of enhanced cognition and greater social capital received in the process of mentorship.

According to Destin and DeBrosse (2017), the advantages provided through mentoring have changed lives, increased cognitive responses, improved communication skills, enhanced interviewing techniques, and transitioned individuals from substandard conditions to those of prestige and influence. Each participant summarized the advantages of their mentoring experience in terms such as gained access, beneficial to me, I could read better, started asking questions, could talk around others, I felt confident, and mentoring changed my life. The experiences of the research group were similar and identical to outcomes of other mentored groups.

Theme 2: Challenges

The context in which the word challenge was used referred to habits, ways, and processes imposed on the participants during their period of social exclusion. Another use of the word challenge was describing the transition from old paradigms to new paradigms resulting from the lived experience of mentoring. For example, participants who typically had been withdrawn, shy, and introverted most of their lives found it challenging to learn how to use skills learned during mentoring that required courage to make suggestions, boldness to defend an opinion, and being forthright when asked to justify a decision or action. Participants in the study described challenge and/or challenges as both assets and liabilities contingent on the positive or negative encounter during their involvement in the mentoring experience.

All four framework theories support the role challenge plays in the improvement and self-actualization process of a protégé. The theory of mentoring provided the foundational merits of mentoring, which include educational, emotional, and spiritual reconstitution of a protégé. Ng and Lucianetti (2016) indicated that the social cognitive theory describes the process of cognition from the perspective of learning new concepts, retention of those concepts, and the appropriate use of new concepts behaviorally, psychologically and physically. Muddimann (2014) expounded on social exclusion and the social ills associated with that theory. Bradshaw and Mayhew (2010) explained how such social ills undermine groups in society, which hinders advancement by those groups into healthy and productive lifestyles. In direct opposition of social exclusion is the theory of social capital. Individuals who appropriately used the influence as describe in the social capital theory were able to negate the ills created by social exclusion. Each of the 10 research participants, except for one (P-9), described how elements of each theory was demonstrated in their lived experience with mentoring as the catalyst of their empowering and systemic positive life change.

Theme 3: Community

Each participant described a commitment or passion for their community. One participant indicated that she noticed as she changed for the better, things around her changed for the better as well. As indicated in the theory of mentoring, social cognitive theory, and the theory of social capital, when some individuals changed (positive or negative) those changes are reflected in his/her work, community, home, and

surroundings (Dawson, 2014; Svara, Watt, & Takai, 2014; Wilson, Jaques, Johnson, & Brotherton, 2016). P-6 indicated,

> "I have always worked in my community, but with the training I felt I could even be better and give more. I worked with Harbor Habitat for Humanity. Everyone working in that program had a bond. When you build something from nothing it is wonderful."

The data from the 10 interviews indicated resoundingly that mentoring could change mindsets for the positive and create attitudes of helpfulness and hopefulness.

Theme 4: Confidence

Confidence in oneself can make all the difference for a person who is aspiring to improve and change patterns in life to be more meaningful and productive (Bandura, 2015). The 10 participants spoke of how acquiring self-confidence made a major difference in the mentoring experience. Confidence levels were reported to have been elevated in each of the participants during the mentoring experience. When allowed to reflect and speak to the positive differences in their lives before and after mentoring each attributed their positive transformation to the acquiring of confidence and courage.

Theme 5: Education

The premise of mentoring is the educational outcomes that protégés receive during the experience. Four of the 10 participants completed their high school requirements through a G.E.D. program. Three had received BA degrees. The remainder of participants received high school diplomas. With exposure to new knowledge, skills development, and cognitive enhancements, participants reported that mentoring either

saved their lives or made such a drastic positive difference that their lives were changed permanently. Schunk and Mullen (2012) provided details of a conceptual model of mentoring that promotes self-regulated learning in which the protégé continues to enhance his/her newly acquired knowledge by seeking out learning opportunities as often as possible.

Theme 6: Mentoring

Mentoring was mentioned most frequently throughout the interview process**,** which was anticipated. Literature substantiated the life changing and empowering effects of this phenomenon (Borders & Cashwell, 2014; Chagnon, 2012; Dawson, 2014). In the same regard, each interview provided clear and concise data that mentoring is a valuable tool for the acquisition of personal skills development and learning.

The age group that participated in the study was varied (30 to 70). This is an indication that mentoring may be beneficial for any persons at any age seeking knowledge, training, and skills development. Additional research will be required to determine the extent of benefit potential mentoring may have for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Theme 7: Memorable Quotes

Due to the uniqueness of this study, the participants expressed several descriptive phrases that poignantly described the essence of his/her mentoring experience:

P-1. "The challenges were to show up each day no matter what was going on around me. I had to stay focused."

P-2. "Mentoring, it saved my life!"

P-3. "I recognized that mentoring could be a powerful learning tool for me and I was willing to seek out a mentor to assist me."

P-4. "I wanted something different for my life and my children lives. Now everyone in my family is going to college and getting some type of degree. I was the trailblazer. I cracked the ceiling for many family members."

P-5. "Mentoring is a very deliberate and intentional effort that when applied with sincerity, patience, and diligence are a worthwhile endeavor for both the mentor and mentee."

P-6. "Being a part of this mentoring program birth some new things in me. So now I just want to move forward in my home, my job, my community and never look back."

P-7. "Yes, it helped me mentally, physically, and spiritually."

P-8. "We need to get to the point of helping more people find value in who they are and what they can contribute."

P-9. "I did not receive any real value from the mentoring experience. In fact, it seriously eroded my self-confidence and self-worth."

P-10. "I was at a point where I was starting my career and did not know which direction I wanted to go so I felt having a mentor would be very helpful."

Sub-Theme 1: Employment Skills

Typically, the teaching of employment skills by the mentor for acquisition by the protégé is a primary focus of mentoring (de Greef, Segers, & Verte, 2012). The study supported this rationale. Nine of the 10 participants spoke at lengths about development

of employment skills during the mentoring experience and the benefits incurred by such an acquisition.

Sub-Theme 2: Social Skills

Social skills align with the theme education and are developed during mentoring (de Greef, Segers, & Verte', 2012). Social skills are competencies in communication and interaction with others. These skills are a requirement of mainstream society. Any one lacking in these skills are considered unsophisticated and lacking in etiquette and social graces (Destin & DeBrosse, 2017). The 10 participants had acquired sufficient social skills and conducted themselves with appropriate decorum during the interview sessions.

Sub-Theme 3: Efficacy

As described in Bandura's (1977; 1989) social cognitive theory, efficacy is the power to produce a desired result. During the interview sessions, efficacy was associated with confidence and resilience. Nine out of the 10 interviewees described efficacy/confidence as one of their most valuable acquired skills. Participants found that efficacy allowed access to other personality traits such as determination and courage (Bandura, 2012).

Sub-Theme 4: Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the knowledge a person has of themselves. Self-awareness is being in touch with one's feelings and knowledgeable about one's character and sense of self-worth as described by Bandura (2015). Eller, Lev, and Fearer (2014) indicated that one of the key assets of a mentor-protégé relationship is the opportunity to become aware of one's self through the assistance and guidance of a mentor. Responses and

explanations during the 10 interviews indicated that each participant exhibited self-awareness and appeared relaxed and comfortable (except for P-1 and P-9) discussing the essence of his/her mentoring experience.

Psychological Perspective

Mentoring has been a developmental process since the days of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates (Lucey, Agnello, & Hawkins, 2010). With the passage of time and repeated application, youth, employed individuals, and students of all ages have benefited from the personal development offer through mentoring. Contemporary philosophers and mentors continue to impart wisdom to novice, inexperienced youth, young professionals, graduate students, and seasoned professionals advancing to new levels of their profession (Desimone et al., 2014). The desire to be inspired, guided, and nurtured by skilled and intellectually accomplished individuals, referred to as mentors, is a common phenomenon; however, a segment of the population has not been included in the mentoring scholarship, namely social excluded adults (Robson, 2013).

From a psychological perspective, mentoring is a change agent which allows individuals who are exposed to its transformative practicum to become recipients of useful knowledge, skills, and cognitive processes that mitigate suppressed mindsets, behavior, and motivations (Walton, 2014). The transition of knowledge that occurs in the mentoring process was psychologically motivated (Pitts, Sanders-Funnye, & Lukenchuk, 2014; Rubin, 2014; St-Jean & Mathieu, 2015). In keeping with one of the four components of the theoretical framework, the social cognitive theory as postulated by

Bandura (1977; 1989) described in detail the psychology associated with acquisition of knowledge as it relates to the human agency. Bandura (2015) as well as other social scientists attributed the cognitive process of learning to the five senses which allows an individual to filter information from the environment through a psychological process. This learning process allows understanding of the world in which we live (Kuldas, Hashim, & Ismail, 2015; Newheiser, Merrill, Dunham, Hoosain, & Olsen, 2014).

Results from the research study support the psychological empowering effects of mentoring among a group of social excluded adults residing in a small Midwest city (Shultziner & Rabinovici, 2012). Nine out of the ten adults who were selected to participate in the study described ways in their audio-recorded interviews how mentoring had informed them, motivated them, and provided opportunities of advancement, influence, and social stability. Comments from participants in the study validated the enriching effects of mentoring:

P-1. "I look at how the mentoring brought me into the workplace. Without mentoring I could not have learned how to do such exact and precision work. I watched my mentor and decided that if he could do it, I could too. The mentor encouraged me to do a good job and be confident in what I was doing."

P-2. "My mentor gave me constructive advice that I followed and gave me a productive and successful life."

P-3. "My mentoring experience was very positive. I don't have anything negative to say about it. Once I opened myself up to the process. I learned

a lot and noticed that I improved in many ways. More confident, spoke in groups more willingly and enjoyed participation in large group activities."

P-4. "The mentoring experience provided me with tools to help resolve issues in the classroom. I did not have much experience coming into the teaching profession from working in a fast food operation, so receiving input from someone with experience was welcomed and appreciated."

P-5. "I sought advice and guidance when confronted with situations where I was unsure of how to handle and would receive immediate feedback from the mentor. This really was significant and made a big difference in how I handled many difficult and sensitive matters. Because you were able to self-correct right away, immediately."

P-6. "The support from people that really seemed to care about you learning and growing and offering to help you every step of the way. I loved that. It was good to know that in a learning situation it may not all come together at once, but you could practice and receive instruction and encouragement to do your best."

P-7. "Yes, it helped me mentally, physically, and spiritually. Mentally it helped me because when you have a lot on your plate (a lot of responsibilities) it means a lot for someone to step in and say it's going to be alright and show you ways to improve yourself. Mentally that helped me to settle down. Physically it helped me, because I was not able to perform certain duties. When the mentor gave me advice I was able to

find unique ways to deal with challenging situations. It helped me spiritually because I saw things like patience and consideration at work among my work associates. I learned perseverance in the mentoring program, how to get along with others better, how to interact and appreciate others. So mentally, physically, and spiritually, the mentoring program has helped me."

P-8. "It (mentoring) is teaching me to do a lot of things to repair a house. I am learning to repair things that I may need to repair in my own home at some point in time. By being mentored I can learn these things and then be able to do them on my own if necessary."

P-10. "I began to speak up and become involved in ways that I may not have considered prior to my mentoring experience. Some of the leaders at my job said they noticed a change, an improvement in how I spoke and presented myself."

According to Matz (2014), mentoring programs are the oldest form of community-based interventions dating back to the turn of the nineteenth century. As mentoring has gained momentum and popularity, its value to those who become involved has been nothing less than a process which produces meaningful and beneficial outcomes for both the protégés and mentors (Gong, Chen, & Yang, 2014; Wolfe, 2014). Turner (1999) described mentoring as a widespread developmental and supportive tool that commercial, educational, and nonprofit sectors utilize throughout the world. Kahle-Piasecki (2011) indicated that, mentoring programs assist new teachers, youth-at-risk,

and in higher education faculty and students. From the research data, mentoring is beneficial to social excluded adults as well.

Sociological Perspective

Sociology is the study of relationships. These relationships can include personal, secular, cultural, spiritual, and institutional interactions (Song, Liu, Shi, & Yat-sen, 2017). A personal relationship usually involves action by an individual with another person, friend, family member, or group (Arnett, 2016). Secular refers to dealing with worldly issues, such as the environment, employment, careers, and materialism. Cultural encapsulates things such as values, traditions, education, training, intellectual refinement, artistic appreciation, and social etiquette. Spirituality is about religion, faith, piety, devotion and all things relating to the spirit and soul of mankind. Institutions refer to organizations, corporations, businesses, government, banks, public and private domains including law firms and affiliations.

Socialization is necessary in establishing relationships. Cole (2018) defined socialization as a process, from birth to death, in which a person is taught the norms, customs, values of his/her culture and how society will affect him/her. Culture includes the life principles by which a person will live. For example, in socialization parents, caregivers, peers, teachers, and rules of authority mandated by laws and governances influence the way a person acquires knowledge, understanding, skills, behavior patterns, and how to react, function, and thrive as an individual. Berliner (2013) indicated that a republic is dependent on its citizens for governance and that an educated populous is required if ordinary citizens are to govern.

Examples of Appropriate Social Behavior

Appropriate social behavior can be demonstrated in a myriad of ways. Positive social behavior is an indication that an individual has been educated and trained regarding the nuances of acceptable social protocol (Cooper-Thomas, Matthias, Alan, & Saks, 2014; Epstein & Ward, 2011). Those who are less educated and unaware of proper social protocol tend to have lifestyles that are less productive and gratifying (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Brownlee, 2013). Demonstrating appropriate behavior in one's environment is an expectation of a productive and viable citizen (Cho & Kang, 2017).

Socialization is a process that is used to incorporate individuals into society through the guidance of parents, teachers, coaches, peers, and other personal associates (Cole, 2018). For example, appropriate social behavior could include, acts of cooperation such as a husband and wife working together to provide for their family or offering to help with a fundraiser to purchase new uniforms for the neighborhood baseball team. Acts of concern and compassion such as, coordinating a group effort to preserve a wildlife species or assisting the victims of an automobile accident by calling emergency assistance and remaining at the scene of the accident until authorities arrive (Roeser & Eccles, 2015). Luk (2009) stated that professional care is more than just providing physical assistance. In his reference to caring, he used nursing as an example of what society expects regarding care, which is to exhibit kindness, have a good attitude, and be competent in delivery of a service and assistance (Luk, 2009).

Communication plays a key role in socialization. Positive communication between individuals or in a group is an expectation of societal protocol. Showing

consideration, politeness, and understanding during business transactions, in the workplace, in academia, and in any public or private meetings are all acts of proper communication (Sileo, 2011; Socha & Beck, 2015). Having a mutual exchange of ideas and information, professional behavior when conducting business or mitigating a volatile situation, along with appropriate displays of love and affection all are within the parameter of acceptable social behavior (Arnett, 2016).

Examples of Fractured Social Behavior

Fractured social behavior is action that is inappropriate, disruptive, unreasonable, cruel, undermining, and disrespectful. There are many reasons for unacceptable social behavior; however, psychologists and other behavioral professionals attribute improper behavior to inappropriate socialization, absence of knowledge, lack of training, reaction to social stigmas/labeling, deviance, abuse, mental illness, and neglect (Byrd, 2015; Lenz & Hammerschmidt, 2016). Negative social behavior causes disruption to the societal continuum of productive and moral living. Every person has a specific cycle for his/her life. That life cycle is comprised of influences, choices, experiences, decisions, challenges, and successes promulgated by positive behavior and the avoidance of negative behavior.

Negative behavior can be displayed in many forms such as being deceitful, dishonest, cruel, impolite, racist, sexist, homophobic, bias, and vile. Those who choose to be deceitful, dishonest, cruel, and impolite may do so because he/she experienced similar actions and formed a mental retaliation to treat others as he/she had been treated (Seamark & Gabriel, 2018; Streit, Carlo, & Ispa, 2017). The retaliation response is

usually exacerbated by hurt, hate, fear, and unresolved insecurities (Eadeh, Peak, & Lambert, 2017; Gollwitzer & Denzler, 2009).

Behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobic, bias, and being a vile person is typically the result of one's culture, environment, and limited exposure and understanding of those who are the object of the negative behavior (Bradley-Geist, Rivera, & Geringer, 2015; Izaskun & Calvete, 2018; Nesdalea, 2007) It has been suggested by some psychologists that attitudes of racism, sexism, and bias are learned behavior and once acquired become enduring viewpoints of those who stereotype and resent others due to their ethnicity, beliefs, and heritage (Gines, 2014; van Ryn, 2011). Social excluded adults are primary targets of negative behavior due to their low-income and socially deficient status (Brownlee, 2013; Grant, Jack, Fitzpatrick, & Ernst, 2011).

Socialization is an interactive process between individuals and groups. The dynamics of this interactive varies based on the way each individual and member of a group has been socialized, in other words taught how to live, communicate, and interact with others. If a person or group has had vast exposure to knowledge, skills development, and training in appropriate personal decorum (how to conduct one's self), then that person is said to be properly socialized. If the opposite is the case, where a person had limited knowledge, skills, and training in which his/her culture provided limited developmental resources, then that person or members of such a group may demonstrate inappropriate behavior in society.

Sociologists analyze socialization as it relates to how relationships are created and what influences the development of relationships. The reason sociology and socialization

are significant to this study is that both define expectations of finding one's place in society (Aldoney & Cabrera, 2016; Nezlek, Wesselmann, Wheeler, & Williams, 2012). Acceptance in society is obtained when one's actions and behavior are congruent with the mandates of society, which is adherence to proper social protocol, civil duty, self-sufficiency, productivity, and maintenance of one's social-economic responsibility (Berliner, 2013).

Social exclusion is the result of failure to acquire and properly execute each of the elements of societal protocol (Atkinson & Marlier, 2010; Wright, 2017). However, with the assistance of such methods as mentoring, an individual can acquire acceptable behavior acumen, professionalism, and social status (Robson, 2013). These acceptable traits, usually referred to as social capital, allow an individual to become a productive and influential member of society (Destin & DeBrosse, 2017; Orlowski & Wicker, 2015; Rubin, 2014; Zhang, Zhou & Lei, 2017).

Indication of Socialization from Interviews

P-1. "I was introduced to other people. The things I were taught (during my mentoring experience) helped me to be successful. I was able to go out and tell others about the experience and what I was learning."

P-2. "When I returned to Michigan I did exactly what the captain (Navy captain) asked me to do. I went to the courthouse. They had me report to Riverwood. I went through the Riverwood program and then got me a job at Auto Specialties."

P-3. "I allowed myself to get to know the person – realizing she was there to

help me. So, I wanted to trust my mentor and form a good working relationship with her. Once the relationship began to form then trust was established. Then we both became open to the process."

P-4. "I was a new teacher so as a new teacher you must have a mentor to have success as a teacher. The school district where I taught, adopted a mentoring program where for the first three years of a new teaching assignment it was mandatory that the person be placed with a mentor."

P-5. "The challenge for me was stepping outside of my comfort zone. Being encouraged and almost forced to grow outside of what I was doing. My position at that time was a position I had never held before and it required me to be able to communicate, have a lot of confidence in what we did in providing direct services to community residents."

P-9. "I could not be myself around family, friends, neighbors, and work associates because I did not want them to know what I was going through (at work). I felt like everything I did was wrong, so I did not want to complain and then have people feeling sorry for me. So, I faked it until I was out of that negative situation (a negative mentoring experience). In the end I came out as the winner. I still have that position, people appreciate my skills and talent. I am a knowledgeable, supportive, and productive employee."

Responses from research interviews provided empirical support regarding the transformative and empowering effects of mentoring. Nine of the 10 participants were

able to escape the confines of a limited lifestyle due to lack of social exposure and knowledge for a more affluent and opportunity-laden existence. Social scientists refer to personal transformation experienced by the research participants regarding the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and social enrichments as social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Destin & DeBrosse, 2017).

Socio-Economic Perspective as it Relates to Social Capital

An example of social capital in relationship to socio-economics is when a concerned citizen contacts a group of neighbors to form a neighborhood watch committee to ensure safety and protection for the children, seniors, and residents of the community. The goal of the neighborhood collaborative effort is intended to protect the human resources as well as the personal assets of the community. The organizer of the group is considered to have influence, which is considered social capital since he (the organizer) had the skill and ability to encourage others to accomplish a task. Another example of social capital is when a governmental entity struggling with finances hires a professional with knowledge and experience to help improve the financial welfare of a city, the professional is considered to have social capital, which equates to having budgetary skills and knowledge to aid the city in recovery. Social capital can be defined as having influence, money, political savvy, and power. Following are social and political scientists who researched and supported the values of social capital.

Bourdieu (1971) extrapolated a multidimensional perspective of social capital referred to as the *geometric model of data* in which he quantified diverse species of capital as economic, cultural, social and symbolic. In conjunction with the model,

Bourdieu developed the "theory of fields" (small locus inside a global social space) to show the relational aspects of social reality (Bourdieu, 1971). In other words, social capital was not about economics alone, it (social capital) was contingent on the focus of an individual and the context of an action, which could be primarily about economics, cultural, social, or a symbolic representation (combination of species) that constitute a social reality.

Coleman (1965), the author of the 1966 Coleman Report and proponent of education as a threshold to social capital, inspired desegregation and court-ordered school busing to improve diversity in city schools. In 1975 Coleman conducted a follow-up to the Coleman Report and discovered that the intended solution of desegregation of schools had been undermined by "white flight," also referred to as residential segregation, where white families moved to suburbs and established their own schools thereby reinforcing segregated school systems (Kilgore, 2016). Coleman (1965) reversed his decision regarding school busing, which caused a volatile response from his fellow social scientists. In fact, certain members of his education affiliations attempted to have him expelled. Although, hurt and somewhat disillusioned by the rejection of his colleagues, Coleman (1965) remained resolute that education was the key to social capital and every student should be afforded the opportunity to his/her share of the societal wealth provided through education (Kilgore, 2016).

Putnam (1993), recognized as the most influential political scientists of the twenty-first century has been involved with research regarding institutions and their potential for social capital. Putnam (1993) began his research investigating institutional

social capital through the lens of regional governments in Italy. The premise of his work along with several younger supporters was that governments flourish with high volumes of civic engagement, which produce high levels of social capital. His book, "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy," described the civic engagement of northern Italy through community innovation, guilds, music, art, and social clubs generating greater social capital and prosperity, compared to southern agricultural Italy, which was less socially motivated and much less affluent (Putnam, 1993).

Over a period of 20 years, the Italy research by Putnam (1993) revealed how institutions produce substantially different results contingent on the social context in which the culture of the institution existed. In other words, social influence within and around an institution or government influenced the growth or lack thereof in the success of the institution/government. The term used by Putnam (1993) was that institutions, especially governments, are created to achieve purposes and not just agreements. Those purposes include providing jobs, training, education, research technology, opportunity for advancement, and satisfying lifestyles all of which equate to social capital. Putnam (1993) was convinced based on decades of Italy research that when members of a community trust each other commerce increases, there is monetary vibrancy, and democracy is at its best.

Attwell & Lavin (2007) indicated that at one time in our history it was the belief that a college degree was viewed as a ticket to middle class prosperity and that a college education could overcome the effects of disadvantaged origins. Even with the threat and affront to our middle class due to recessions, changes in technologies, and global

competition, being educated provides opportunities for advancement and upward mobility (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Destin & DeBrosse, 2017). Education is the social capital that allows for the free exchange of ideas, medical advancements, breakthrough in technologies, communication advantages with social media, along with increases in global competition and maintaining the United States of America as the prominent world class leader (Doh, 2014).

Summary of Findings

Using the Steric-Colaizzi-Keen Method of phenomenological analysis as recommended by Moustakas (1994) a summary of findings is as follows. An explanation of researcher's bias is included. A list of significant statements from interviews appear with descriptions of each theme. A textual description of data as it relates to coding of concepts, categories, and themes is found in Tables 2 and 3. The theoretical framework includes the four theories (mentoring, social cognitive, social exclusion, and social capital), which represent the conceptual constructs of the study. Categories were created in the NVivo analysis and appear in Table 3 along with emerging themes. Figure 4 represent the structural descriptions of how the experience affected the participants.

The research study supported literature that mentoring as an education tool is a viable option for those given the opportunity to acquire knowledge in this novel and unique way. Social excluded adults are members of society that have not had or who may not have been able to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills to acquire social capital (Plante & Truitt, 2016). Data from the research study provided empirical results that indicated social excluded adults have untapped potential that can be

shaped and structured through mentoring. The training and acquisition of knowledge could render the adults useful and productive in ways that bolsters their self-esteem and align these mentored adults with skills and abilities comparable to other trained professionals.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited based on the number of participants. 10 individuals were selected to provide data on the essence of his/her experience with the phenomenon mentoring. Semi-structured open-ended interview questions provided the parameters of discussion and dialog about mentoring. The scope of the study was limited based on the criteria and age requirements of the participants, even though the age requirement was expanded due to emerging data from the interview process.

The location where the interviews were scheduled to be held limited our access due to unexpected renovations; therefore, participants were interviewed in different locations that may or may not have affected the level of comfortability of each participant. Each interview session was held in a private and secure location; however, the change in the locations occurred the same day of the interview and participants may have had difficulty adjusting to the last-minute change.

The selection of Benton Harbor, Michigan as the location for the study may have limited the access of other individuals with more expansive mentoring experience from participating. The economic condition of Benton Harbor could have been more extreme than other areas and may not have provided a germane setting to conduct a realistic study.

An Atypical Case

Of the ten interviews, one was an atypical case. During the interviews, one participant (P-9) indicated that he had been demoralized during his informal mentoring experience (Shpigelman, & Gill, 2012). After having interviewed 8 of the 10 participants, I learned from P-9 that his supervisor had selected him to be involved in several informal mentoring sessions. As the only male who happened to be Latino in the entire department, he was concerned that none of his female co-workers had been offered a similar opportunity. After a month of scrutiny, his supervisor was questioned by her superiors as to the motive of her actions. Three weeks later she was transferred to another department and has since left the organization (Kumar, Irudayaraj, Jomon, & Singhal, 2013).

Although atypical of a normal mentoring training program, the experience of P-9 was a prime example that not all mentoring experiences are equal. P-9 was emotionally strong to withstand such a negative experience; however, this atypical case was indicative that negative mentoring experiences are possible (Eby & McManus, 2004; Kumar, Irudayaraj, Jomon, & Singhal, 2013). One other possibility is that the one atypical case may be an indication that perhaps one out of every ten mentoring experience are not successful (Kumar, Irudayaraj, Jomon, & Singhal, 2013; Williams, Scandura, & Hamilton, 2001).

Recommendations

The most significant aspect of this study was the empowering effects of mentoring through education of adults deficient in social, employment, and inter-personal

skills (Desimone et al., 2014). My opinion regarding the change in nine of the ten socially excluded adults who had been mentored is compelling enough to advocate mentoring be provided to as many social excluded adults who qualify through interest, willingness to commit to studious engagement in a mentoring program and agree to serve as a mentor for a period after completing his/her mentoring education. In addition, I implore policy makers, nonprofit organizations, community colleges, adult education providers, philanthropists, and funders to develop policies that will provide efficient and adequate ways in which to meet the needs of social excluded adults relative to mentoring opportunities.

It is recommended that further research be conducted to ascertain the need for such training within the expanded age group of 25 to 70 years of age. With older citizens living longer it is conceivable that many still are vibrant enough to begin careers later in life (Chenkai, Odden, Gwenith, & Stawski, 2017). Having a well-educated and trained populous is a valuable venture in that it can boost the economy, increase consumer spending, improve neighborhoods, and communities. Mentoring could also create new entrepreneurial opportunities for many who may not be employed. This could affect the economy in positive ways such as a reduction in the amounts of government subsidies, health issues, housing assistance, foreclosures, and bankruptcies.

Implications

The implications for social change is the opportunity to give voice to a segment of the population that is not currently being recognized for valuable contributions. Mentoring is usually centered on youth, the workplace, and academia; however, other

segments of the population can gain benefits from mentoring training, specifically social excluded adults. With the improvements in health technologies, the possibilities of a mature and skilled group of citizens contributing to the economy and the workforce seems to be a worthwhile venture.

Conclusion

Mentoring is the foundational concept of this study. The merits of mentoring and the untapped potential of its empowering effect on protégés is a valuable commodity. This study yielded results that reinforce the possibilities of creating an entire segment of older mature adults with skills and knowledge beneficial for building stronger and vibrant neighborhoods, cities, and economies. I was impressed with the caliber of participants that agreed to be interviewed. Nine of the ten were informative, knowledgeable, enthusiastic about their mentoring experience and seemingly had improved their lifestyles in significant ways.

Although the age range was 25 to 50, several who volunteered were older. The actual range of age was 30 to 70. The participants were an impressive group and I completed the study more hopeful of bringing attention to untapped potential that would be worthy of further investigation and investment. In summary, this examination into the lives of social excluded adults who were recipients of skills development and training received through the tenets of mentoring are fine examples of ingenuity and resourcefulness at its best.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date:
Time of Interview: **Time Interview ended:**
Place:
Identification Code of Interviewee: P-1 **(Participant-1)**

Introduction Statement:
Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. Our talk will be recorded. I will explain anything that you do not understand during this interview. Please tell me about your learning (mentoring) experience based on the following questions.

Review of Protocol

I have agreed to talk with Ms. Hunt about my learning (mentoring) experience. Ms. Hunt read and explained each section of the protocol to me before beginning the interview. My initial at each section is an indication that I understand the guidelines and questions in this study and of my free will discussed details of my learning experience.

_____
Signature of Interviewee

Research Question:

"What were the experiences of socially excluded adults, between 25 and 50 years of age, with mentoring programs?

Interview Questions:

1. Why did you participate in a learning (mentoring) program?
2. What were the advantages and challenges of your experience?
3. What were the most valuable benefits received from your experience?
4. How did you learn about the mentoring opportunity?
5. Did this experience improve your lifestyle? Please explain improvements and give examples.
6. What knowledge and skills did you acquired? Please be specific and give examples.
7. Were there changes in your thoughts and actions toward family, friends, neighbors, and work associates?
8. Did mentoring help to improve your community relationships and connection with the community? If yes, explain. If no, why not?
9. Did you have an increased desire to work and invest in your community? If yes, explain. If no, why not?

10. Is there anything else you would like to express regarding your mentoring experience?

Conclusion of Interview

Thank you for your responses, your time, and the audio-recorded interview. Please keep in mind that responses will remain confidential. Some data may be included in the final research report; however, your name and identity will not be revealed. I will only refer to your information by the identification number (ID) you were assigned at the beginning of the research study. Do you have any questions? A summary of your interview will be emailed to you. Please review it and email it back to me within 3 business days with any corrections, deletions, and/or additions. If I do not receive a response from you within 3 business days after receiving the interview summary, I will follow up with another email to you and a telephone call. If still no response from you I will consider it an indication that you validate the summary of information as expressed in your audio-recorded interview and I will process your interview for the final report.