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Understanding the Other: Mentor Ethnocultural Empathy and Relationship Quality and Duration in Youth Mentoring

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Understanding the Other: Mentor Ethnocultural Empathy and Relationship Quality
and Duration in Youth Mentoring

by

Miriam Miranda-Díaz

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Social Work and Social Research

Dissertation Committee:
Thomas Keller, Chair
Junghee Lee
Maria Talbott
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Portland State University
2024

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Abstract

Given the positive youth outcomes associated with participation in mentoring programs, there is growing interest to explore factors associated with mentoring relationship quality and duration in formal youth mentoring programs. In comparison to the majority of volunteer mentors, many young people participating in formal mentoring programs are of a racial-ethnic minority group and tend to be economically disadvantaged. This study investigates factors associated with these socio-cultural background differences between mentors and mentees. More specifically, this study investigates the association between a mentor's level of ethnocultural empathy, as reflected in empathic perspective-taking and acceptance of cultural differences, and the quality and duration of the mentoring relationship. Further, the study investigates whether this association is moderated by a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial concordance within the match, and income concordance within the match. The study sample and data are from a larger mixed method longitudinal study (The Study to Analyze Relationships (STAR) project) primarily focused on analyzing reasons for match closures. A total of 354 mentor-mentee dyads were included in this study. The primary analyses consisted of bivariate, multiple, and logistic regressions, and of an event history analysis using Cox regression with the survival function.

Based on the core study findings, mentor ethnocultural empathy, particularly empathic perspective-taking, is an important factor positively associated with a mentor's perception and experience of the strength (quality) of the mentoring relationship. This association remained consistent even after introducing the moderator of mentor

race/ethnicity. When introducing the moderator of racial concordance in the match, mentor ethnocultural empathy also remained positively associated with the quality of the relationship as reported by the mentor. Interestingly, when examining the same relationships from the youth perspective, mentor ethnocultural empathy, specifically empathic perspective-taking was moderated by the indicator for cross-race vs same-race matches. For youth in cross-race matches, this relationship was positive, when compared to youth in same-race matches. This study underscores the complexity of mentoring relationships and the need to further explore and examine mentor-mentee relationship dynamics. The implications of these findings for future research and practice are discussed to address potential needs surrounding cultural sensitivity/humility, equity, and social justice, as well as with mentor recruitment, screening, training and with providing ongoing support to yield positive bonds with mentees that can foster better quality mentoring relationships.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends: thank you for the unconditional love and support. I especially dedicate this dissertation to my brother, Alejandro “Alex” Miranda-Díaz, for instilling in me a love for knowledge and learning, and for always encouraging me to pursue my academic dreams. I miss you every day, big brother. To my daughter, Alex, thank you for reigniting in me the inspiration and commitment that this PhD is about someone and something greater than me, te amo hija. This dissertation is also dedicated to my grandparents and ancestors, whose strength I would call upon when I felt like I could no longer endure the weight of this journey. I also dedicate this dissertation to everyone who fought and to those who will continue to fight so that an immigrant, first generation, Latina (Mexicana) such as myself can access higher education and obtain a PhD in this country. La lucha sigue.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of Problem

Youth mentoring programs continue to expand in numbers, and throughout the years they have become more diversified (Garringer et al., 2017). However, given the different mentoring models and the bloom in mentoring programs, it remains somewhat difficult to truly assess the scale of the field (Garringer et al., 2017). Although it may be possible to assess the impact/effectiveness of specific programs on youth outcomes, what remains challenging is assessing the impact/effectiveness on youth outcomes across the entire field, with aggregate findings still remaining relatively modest (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008).

Mentoring is defined as taking “place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee’s development” (MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015, p. 9). Empirical evidence suggests that youth who participate in mentoring programs benefit from this support including in the areas of *social-emotional, behavioral, and in academic outcomes* (DuBois et al., 2002; DuBois et al., 2011; Higley et al., 2016). Although mentoring and mentors positively contribute to the development of youth, this may not always be true for all youth, especially for youth with shorter lasting relationships. Youth more likely to have early ending relationships are those who are experiencing the following challenges and/or engaging in risky behaviors:

- Substance use/abuse (Kupersmidt et al., 2017)
- Experiencing past/present trauma (“emotional, sexual, or physical abuse,” Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 211)
- Youth who are “at-risk” for gang involvement or involved in the juvenile justice system (Kupersmidt et al., 2017)
- And youth who are in stressful environments, whether at home and/or at school (Raposa et al., 2016)

Similarly, there are certain mentor characteristics that are associated with the duration of mentoring relationships. For example, in a particular research study, mentors with higher incomes, and who had prior mentoring experience tended to have longer lasting mentoring relationships (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Conversely, female mentors, mentors of color (mentors who identified as Asian), and younger mentors were more likely to experience an early match ending (Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

But why does the duration of the mentoring relationship matter? Of great concern is that a great number (one-third to a half) of mentoring relationships end early (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017). The duration of the mentoring relationship matters because early relationship endings have been associated with negative outcomes in youth (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2017; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). For example, in a study of school-based mentoring conducted by Grossman et al. (2012), youth who had an early match ending and were then re-matched with a different mentor “fared worse than their control group peers” (p. 51). In a different study, youth in relationships that came to an end early (within 3 months of the inception of the mentoring relationship) experienced a reduction in their level of *self-worth* and in

scholastic competence (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Conversely, youth in relationships that lasted longer (12 plus months) had a rise “in their self-worth, perceived social acceptance, perceived scholastic competence, parental relationship quality, school value, and decreases in both drug and alcohol use” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 208).

It is evident that in order for mentoring relationships to flourish and go through their stages of a “beginning, a middle, and an end” (Keller, 2005a, p. 86), enough time must pass that will allow mentors and mentees to form strong bonds (Rhodes et al., 2006). Time, however, is not the only factor that contributes to strong bonds. A number of research studies have demonstrated that the quality of the mentoring relationship is often associated with specific mentor attributes and skills (Spencer, 2012). For example, “empathy, authenticity, and positive regard” (Spencer, 2012, p. 303) from the mentor are important for the formation of a strong attachment. Furthermore, trust (Rhodes et al., 2005) and mutual engagement/empathy and empowerment (Liang et al., 2002) have also been linked to quality mentoring relationships. Although examining these mentor attributes is important, another issue that needs additional investigation and which is of great interest to me are differences in backgrounds between mentors and mentees, and how these differences factor in the dynamics of the mentoring relationship.

It is no surprise that within mentoring programs (particularly formal mentoring programs) there is a large number of youth (and their families) who are often economically disadvantaged and/or of a racial-ethnic and language minority group. Likewise, it is no surprise that most volunteer mentors tend to be privileged and of the dominant White culture (Garringer et al., 2017; Raposa et al., 2017). To date, a large number of youth of color in formal mentoring programs continue to be paired with

mentors who are White (Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012; Peifer et al., 2016; Spencer, 2006) and typically of a higher socioeconomic status than that of the youth and their families. For example, in a study that used data from the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to study mentoring trends, findings revealed that for the year 2015 alone, approximately 77% of all mentors were White (Raposa et al., 2017). Furthermore, in a 2016 national survey conducted by MENTOR, where information was captured on 413,237 mentees and 193,823 mentors in the United States, findings revealed that a great number of mentors in this sample also were White (53%), and the majority of youth were youth of color (Garringer et al., 2017).

However, the findings regarding the implications of race in youth mentoring relationships continue to be inconclusive. For example, some studies have concluded that: (a) there are no differences in same-race versus cross-race mentoring relationships (as it relates to specific youth outcomes), or (b) race may (or may not) have an impact on the relationship, but only in combination with other factors (e.g., race as a pairing criteria, interests, and gender; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes et al., 2002). Furthermore, in a qualitative study investigating the causes of premature relationship endings, Spencer's (2007) finding that mentors' "low-awareness of personal biases and how cultural differences shape relationships" (p. 344) was particularly interesting because some participants reported that differences in background was a factor that led to tension in the mentoring relationship (Spencer, 2007). Therefore, it is recommended that programs provide to mentors the needed and adequate forms of supports/trainings that will enhance or develop in them the skills to be able to navigate such differences (Sánchez et al., 2017; Spencer, 2007).

Overall, it is evident that: (a) specific mentor characteristics/skills have been associated with quality mentoring relationships, (b) quality mentoring relationships and the duration of the relationship could be interdependent, and (c) early mentoring relationship endings are not uncommon and these early endings can be harmful to youth (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2017; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). Therefore, determining what mentor characteristics/skills can produce quality and long-lasting relationships is of utmost importance, particularly when there continues to be such dissimilarities in economic, and racial-ethnic and cultural backgrounds and perhaps in lived experiences between mentors and mentees, and when findings regarding race in mentoring relationships remain unclear.

Additionally, I am especially interested in how racial-ethnic and economic background differences (and perceptions regarding these differences) influence the quality and duration of the mentoring relationship. Mentors are vital in shaping and guiding the mentoring relationship (Keller, 2005a), and researchers recommend that programs find venues to better support mentors with knowing how to steer or bridge cultural differences (Sánchez et al., 2017; Spencer, 2007). I find it important to first know what mentors bring to the relationship regarding their perceptions and beliefs about the backgrounds of the mentees that they intend to mentor. One way to be able to capture this information is by examining mentors' level of ethnocultural empathy, meaning empathy toward individuals of a different racial and/or ethnic background from that of one's own racial/ethnic background (Wang et al., 2003).

Development of the Study

For this study, I used secondary data from a larger mixed method study (Study to Analyze Relationships [STAR]), a longitudinal study conducted to better understand causes of mentoring relationship endings. Participants in the larger study, which included mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians, were recruited from four major Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) programs in Oregon, California, Colorado, and Arizona. It is important to underscore that although the primary sources of data for this study are secondary, I am very familiar with the STAR project because I was a Graduate Research Assistant on the project.

My interest with the development of this study is related to the work that I did while being a Graduate Research Assistant on STAR. I was involved with the STAR project since I started the doctoral program and had the opportunity to participate in the different phases of the project—from baseline data collection to the ending of the project. Although the study concluded in 2017, for some time after the study ended, the STAR research team continued to hold biweekly calls to discuss opportunities for analyses and publications from the larger study. This experience and my research interests are what prompted me to conduct this dissertation study. Although the use of secondary data may pose methodological concerns around the “how, when, where, and by whom the data were collected” (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 408), as well as its accuracy and reliability, because of my involvement in the larger project, I was able to seek guidance and clarity from the research team when I had questions or concerns about the data (Singleton & Straits, 2010).

Framework/Model

In addition to my literature review, the framework that serves as the foundation in informing my study is Rhodes' (2005) *A Model of Youth Mentoring*. This model outlines the processes by which mentoring leads to positive youth outcomes. At the core of what is driving these processes is for there to be *mutuality, trust, and empathy* in the relationship (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Once this has been established, there are three main domains in which mentoring contributes to the development of youth: *cognitive, identity, and social-emotional* (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006). These domains then lead to better youth outcomes (e.g., academics, behavior, and emotional wellbeing; Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). This model, however, proposes a set of moderators that can influence the foundation (mutuality, trust, and empathy), the processes, the domains, and ultimately youth outcomes. As outlined in Rhodes' (2005) model, some of the moderators in-between the foundation of the relationship and the developmental domains include: (a) the history the youth has with prior adults in (previous attachments), (b) the quality of the mentoring relationship, (c) the length of the relationship, (d) social competencies, and (e) family and community context (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006). My study is guided by this framework and based on what is known in the literature regarding:

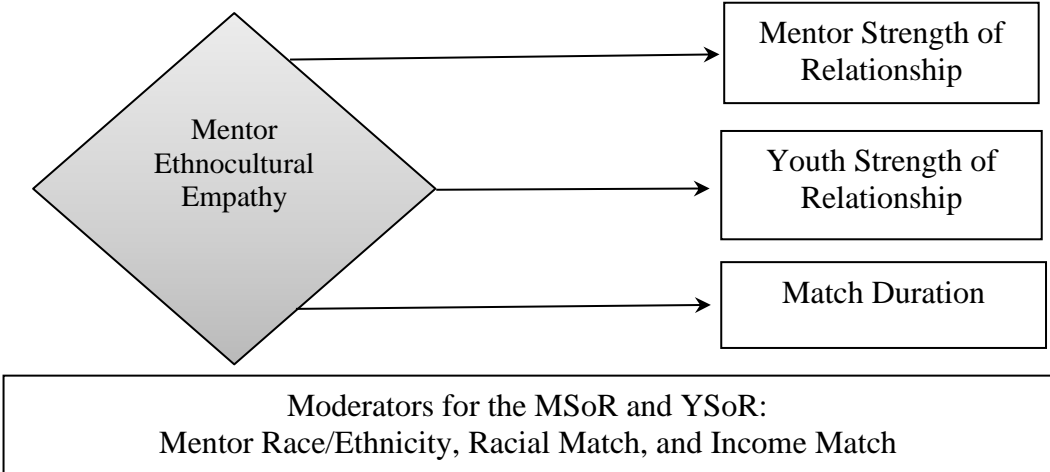
- What factors lead to quality mentoring relationships.
- The length of the relationship and the implications on youth.
- Race and economic differences in backgrounds between mentors and mentees.

The framing model, and the focus of this dissertation study is how mentor ethnocultural empathy predicts the quality and duration of the mentoring relationship, moderated by

mentor race/ethnicity, racial match status (same or cross-race match), and income match status (same or cross-income match). For a visual of the dissertation study framework/model, see Figure 1.

Figure 1

Dissertation Study Framework/Model



As previously noted, mentors and mentees tend to have very different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Few studies have explored how the beliefs that mentors have regarding these differences are linked to the quality of the mentoring relationship. This is important because study findings have indicated that parents/guardians of program youth have expressed concerns with the dissimilarities between their child and the child’s mentor, particularly because these differences (in culture/socioeconomic status) sometimes placed strain on the mentoring relationship (Spencer et al., 2011). This secondary data analysis is grounded in the importance of

examining the impact of race/ethnicity, culture, and social class on mentoring relationships (Deutsch et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2014).

Purpose and Research Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to investigate how a mentor's attributes such as the mentor's level of Ethnocultural Empathy predicts the strength and the length of the mentoring relationship, and if this association is moderated by a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match. The two overarching research questions are: (a) To what extent is mentor ethnocultural empathy associated with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? and (b) Under what circumstances does mentor ethnocultural empathy have a greater association with indicators of mentoring relationship quality?

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.
 - Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.
 - Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.
- Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.
 - Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.
 - Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.
- Ethnocultural Empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for white mentors than for mentors of color.

- Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for white mentors than for mentors of color.
- Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.
 - Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.
- Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.
 - Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.
- Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will last longer.
 - Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will last longer.
 - Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will last longer.

Relevance to the Social Work Profession

Social workers have the ethical responsibility to advocate for social justice and social change, to be culturally sensitive and/or competent, and to have in mind the best interest of individuals and communities (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008). These ethical considerations are applicable to social work research and practice, including having a better understanding about the dynamics within mentoring relationships; particularly because it is not uncommon for mentoring relationship success stories to become the single story when discussing youth mentoring. Conversely, stories

of youth who are harmed by mentoring relationships tend to go unnoticed (Rhodes et al., 2009).

Therefore, it is important to address and identify the harm that low quality mentoring programs can cause to service users and to provide guiding ethical principles that programs and mentors can implement as part of their practice (Rhodes et al., 2009). Rhodes et al. (2009) recommended five ethical principles applicable to youth mentoring that are informed by the American Psychological Association's (2002) *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*. These guiding principles recommended by Rhodes et al. (2009) are:

- “Promote the welfare and safety of the young person (*Beneficence and Nonmaleficence*)” (p. 453).
- “Be trustworthy and responsible (*Fidelity and Responsibility*)” (p. 454).
- “Act with integrity (*Integrity*)” (p. 455).
- “Promote justice for young people (*Justice*)” (p. 455).
- “Respect the young person's rights and dignity (*Respect for People's Rights and Dignity*)” (p. 456).

The findings of this study make contributions and recommendations to the social work profession and mentoring field. Cultural competency/sensitivity is important in social work, youth mentoring, and in human services, and ethnocultural empathy as a construct closely relates to cultural competence/sensitivity. One of the contributions of this study is that ethnocultural empathy could serve as a quality and a tool in better understanding the relational process between mentors and mentees, specifically the beliefs that mentors have of mentees from a different ethnic/cultural background. By programs exploring ethnocultural empathy in prospective mentors, they might be able to

better screen or prepare mentors prior to entering the mentoring relationship, with the ultimate goal of better bridging cultural differences between mentors and mentees in order to yield stronger and longer mentoring relationships.

Furthermore, chief among the reasons for identifying factors that yield stronger and longer relationships is the high number of mentoring relationships that end early, and the detriments that premature endings can have on youth (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2017; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). This study, to an extent, answers under what circumstances ethnocultural empathy has a greater association on the quality of the mentoring relationship through the moderators examined. The focus of this dissertation study closely aligns with two of the Grand Challenges for Social Workers—*Ensure healthy development for all youth* and *Eradicate social isolation* (Grand Challenges for Social Work, 2019). This study brings light to ways in which programs can support mentoring relationships to inform quality relationships and minimize premature endings. The findings and implications of this study are relevant to program practices such as: mentor recruitment/screening strategies, program policies, matching processes, mentor training and support, and ongoing support to the mentoring relationship. When utilized and implemented correctly, ethnocultural empathy has the potential of placing the mentoring relationship in a better state for advancing the three (cognitive, identity, and social-emotional) developmental domains presented in Rhodes' (2005) *A Model of Youth Mentoring*, and for achieving better youth outcomes.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to investigate how a mentor's attributes such as the mentor's level of Ethnocultural Empathy predicts the strength and the length of the mentoring relationship, and if this association is moderated by a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match. The two overarching research questions are: (a) To what extent is mentor ethnocultural empathy associated with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? and (b) Under what circumstances does mentor ethnocultural empathy have a greater association with indicators of mentoring relationship quality?

Given that mentoring relationships and topics of class, race, ethnicity, and culture are complex, it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive review of the literature around these topics. However, in this chapter, I begin by providing context and setting a foundation on the topic of youth mentoring and relationship outcomes. In the subsequent sections, I expand on the topics of what constitutes strong quality mentoring relationships, and early (premature) mentoring relationship endings. I end this chapter by expanding on what is known in the mentoring literature about the topics of differences in race/ethnicity, culture, and class.

The basis for this dissertation is secondary data that were collected from multiple BBBSA program sites (formal mentoring programs), unless otherwise specified (e.g., natural mentoring relationships, and informal mentors), the vast majority of this literature review is centered on formal youth mentoring programs and formal mentors. Finally, in this chapter and dissertation, the terms match and mentoring relationship are used interchangeably to refer to the mentor-mentee dyad.

Youth Mentoring

As presented earlier in this dissertation, the conceptualization of mentoring consists of taking “place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity [e.g., therapist] to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee’s development” (MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015, p. 9). Youth mentoring relationships develop over time, and there are multiple factors that mentors and mentees bring to the relationship, all of which can impact the relationship and its process (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Spencer, 2006). For example, some factors that can impact the relationship and its process may include: personal lived experiences, personal and social demographics, differences in background, character/personality traits, interests, needs, and motives for being in a mentoring relationship (Goldner & Maysless, 2008; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Raposa et al., 2016; Spencer, 2012; Spencer et al., 2017). Considering these complexities in youth mentoring relationships, what are the mechanisms under which these relationships function?

To begin, it is important to understand how these relationships may function or be impacted within a larger system and by elements outside of the mentor-mentee dyad, especially because these systems and elements may influence the quality and the formation of the relationship (Keller, 2005b). Several works have been proposed in an effort to better explain the mentor-mentee dyad; however, few models have explored this dyad through a much larger system. Through a systemic model that is heuristic in nature, Keller (2005b) argued that the “how” of mentor-mentee relationships must be understood

within a more complex system that also involves the parent/guardian and the caseworker (or other adult identified as an important contributor to the match), with all of these relationship interactions simultaneously taking place under the policies and guidelines of the agency's mentoring program. One of the assumptions here is "that the success of the mentoring intervention will depend on the pattern and content of interactions that occur within and across the relationship subsystems" (Keller, 2005b, p. 172). Consequently, this model implies that youth outcomes could be dependent on the interactions and support (or lack thereof) of the parent/guardian, mentor, and caseworker within a program/agency (Keller, 2005b).

Taking into account that the intent of mentoring (particularly youth mentoring) is to enhance the development of the mentee, how exactly does youth mentoring contribute positively to youth development? There is evidence suggesting that youth mentoring is a positive contributor in the social-emotional and behavioral development of youth, and in youth academic outcomes (DuBois et al., 2002; DuBoise et al., 2011; Higley et al., 2016). Even within the scope of natural mentoring relationships, study findings with a group of Latino/a (low-income) high school students revealed that when compared to non-mentored youth, youth in a natural mentoring relationship endorsed a greater sense of school belonging, and youth who had a nonfamilial mentor also endorsed greater expectations about school (education) "and expectancies for success" (Sánchez et al., 2008, p. 480).

Furthermore, because of the nature of its flexible approach, youth mentoring is not anchored to one specific group, mentoring style or developmental stage, but rather, there are positive effects for youth across multiple groups (including youth considered

at-risk), and stages of development (DuBois et al., 2011). For example, in a study conducted with 859 youth participating in formal mentoring programs (BBBSA), investigators examined the effects of youth mentoring on youth “behavioral, developmental, and emotional outcomes” (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman, 2016, p. 646). Youth who participated in a mentoring relationship for at least 12 months reported mental health and behavioral benefits (e.g., less behavioral issues), and *enhanced coping skills* and parental support (emotional support; DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman, 2016). The same study revealed that with respect to gender, a similar finding was concluded for both boys and girls. Boys and girls who were in a longer lasting mentoring relationship reported beneficial outcomes, for girls this included behavior benefits and enhanced self-esteem, whereas young men reported enhanced parental and peer support (emotional support; Dewit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman, 2016).

Thus, if mentoring consists of providing relationship-based supports that are intended to enhance different areas of a mentee’s development, and if mentors and mentees bring their own complexities to the relationship, what factors and under what circumstances do these factors influence the development of stronger and longer mentoring relationships, and what is the impact on youth outcomes? It is evident that this question is a bit difficult to decipher, because there are multiple key elements that can impact youth mentoring outcomes, and the length and quality of the relationship. Some have been outlined in Keller’s (2005b) systemic model (parent/guardian, casework, and program/agency), and in the study by DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, & Lipman (2016) where the length/duration of the mentoring relationship was extremely important in

explaining and influencing youth outcomes. Bearing in mind Keller's (2005b) model to better understanding mentoring relationships within a broader system and having a general idea of how youth benefit from mentoring based supports, in the subsequent sections I elaborate on the factors and circumstances that influence the development of stronger mentoring relationships, and its impact on youth outcomes.

Factors That Lead to Quality Mentoring Relationships and Youth Outcomes

During the stages of relationship development, mentoring is a fluid process where the mentee can benefit from resources provided by the mentor and where both, the mentor and mentee, benefit as a result of being in the mentoring relationship (Keller, 2005a). However, for the relationship to flourish, there may need to be flexibility and fluidity in terms of the role that the mentor may need to adopt based on the circumstances of the mentee and of the relationship (Goldner & Mayseless, 2008). Four major roles have been identified as influential for meeting the needs of the mentee and of the relationship including the role of "parent, therapist, friend, and teacher" (Goldner & Mayseless, 2008, p. 413), with these roles not being mutually exclusive of one another and with mentors having the ability to shift between roles (Goldner & Mayseless, 2008). This flexibility and adaptability from the mentor are important, because it can contribute to positive youth development (DuBois et al., 2011; Goldner & Mayseless, 2008), and depending on the factors influencing the mentoring relationship "some relationships may develop quickly into a strong bond; some may experience a series of setbacks and breakthroughs; and others may struggle along without being able to establish a meaningful connection" (Keller, 2005a, p. 84). Other authors suggest that mentoring/relationship styles, and the foci/goals of the relationship can also impact the

quality of the relationship and its outcomes (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Raposa et al., 2016; Spencer, 2012). Therefore, it is important that mentors are provided with the necessary skills or already have the skills/abilities, and characteristics needed, in order to be able to foster strong bonds/attachments with their mentees (Spencer, 2012).

Mentor Skills and Abilities

Spencer (2012) argued that the dynamics within youth mentoring relationships can be paralleled to that of therapeutic relationships. She presented a model to bring context and understanding to what she considers *determinants* that are conducive to strong or ineffective mentor-mentee relationships. Spencer underscored the importance of a mentor's attributes (characteristics) and relationship skills as influential in fostering quality relationships, especially because mentees also have a pivotal role in shaping the relationship based on their current circumstances, lived experiences, and interpersonal skills. Therefore, and essential to the survival and quality of the relationship, is the mentor's willingness and ability to navigate and overcome foreseeable relationship barriers/concerns. In turn, the hope is that this will elicit a positive response from the mentees where they will feel connected with their mentor, trust the mentor, and be more transparent with their mentor (Spencer, 2012).

In her model, Spencer (2012) categorized the mentor characteristics into four main domains: "personal attributes, motivations, expectations, and relational skills" (p. 297). A mentor's *personal attributes* and *relational skills* can influence whether a trusting and valuable relationship with the mentee will take place, including:

- For the mentors to be more inclined in their approach to foster a close and intimate relationship with the mentee (by being more attuned to their mentee).

- That the mentor is reliable.
- For the mentor to recognize that differences in backgrounds exist (race/ethnicity, class, and culture), moreover, for mentors to have the ability and skills to embrace difference (diversity) and take interest in understanding the personal lived experiences of their mentees with whom they might not share the same background or lived experiences.
- That mentors practice “empathy, authenticity, and positive regard” (Spencer, 2012, p. 303) in the relationship and with their mentee.
- Collaboration.

When considering the personal attributes and relational skills presented, it is important to underscore that all of these factors are important for developing strong relationships, and that perhaps they are interdependent with one another (Spencer, 2012). However, one central factor to strong relationships and better outcomes is for both, the mentor and the mentee, to be active collaborators and contributors to the relationship and its process; more specifically, youth voice-and-choice is central in mentoring relationships (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Keller 2005a; Spencer, 2006, 2012). This is also what Keller (2005a) described as “mentors are influential in setting the tone and course of relationship development . . . Mentors employing youth-centered approaches appear to have longer and more productive relationships” (p. 96). If mentors set the tone of the relationship, it is important that mentors truly practice “empathy, authenticity, and positive regard” (Spencer, 2012, p. 303) including in their attitudes about young people as this too can impact the mentoring relationship. For example, Karcher et al. (2010) examined peer mentoring relationships of school-based matches, where mentors were surveyed regarding their attitudes about the young people that they may encounter throughout the course of the program. Mentees who were less academically connected and who were

paired with a mentor who held positive views toward young people tended to be more “emotionally engaged in the mentoring relationship” (Karcher et al., 2010, p. 212), and at the end of the school year endorsed having “stronger relationships with their teacher” (Karcher et al., 2010, p. 212).

Furthermore, works of other authors who have investigated what contributes to strong mentoring relationships have identified trust in the relationship as a factor conducive to strong relationship bonds (Rhodes et al., 2005; Sánchez et al., 2018). Rhodes et al. (2005) examined the construct of *relationship quality* in a BBBSA formal mentoring program. In this study, youth were surveyed regarding their perceptions and experience with their mentor (*quality of the relationship*), their academic outlook, and self-perception on a series of categories (e.g., academic abilities, self-worth, and behavior). In their findings, Rhodes et al. (2005) concluded that one of the main contributors to stronger relationships was trust. In fact, trust (*trust not broken*) was associated with having a longer relationship, and with youth reporting enhanced scholastic competence and *self-esteem*. Additionally, the more *not dissatisfied* youth were, the more they tended to report enhanced self-esteem; youth who more strongly perceived that their “mentor did not make [them] unhappy, the more [they] valued school over time” (Rhodes et al., 2005, p. 159). A similar finding regarding trust was concluded in a group school-based peer mentoring program for African American and Latino young men. In this particular study, Sánchez et al. (2018) concluded five processes essential to the program that led to youth developing closeness in their mentoring relationships. These processes included: “rapport-building activities, safe space, mutual support, group identity, and trust” (p. 14). What was particularly interesting about this finding is that

these processes were not mutually exclusive, but rather, one informed the other and they were interdependent within a reciprocal process (Sánchez et al., 2018).

Other mentoring researchers have outlined several “relational qualities” (Liang et al., 2002, p. 272) that contributed to high quality relationships among young (adolescent) college women. Liang et al. (2002) concluded that: *mutual engagement/empathy, authenticity, and empowerment* were essential in fostering quality mentor-mentee relationships. Moreover, these *relational qualities* were strong predictors of mentee’s self-esteem and loneliness. In other words, mentees who were in relationships that employed these qualities experienced enhanced self-esteem and less loneliness (Liang et al., 2002). Finally, researchers who have looked at mentors’ commitment in formal youth mentoring relationships (through a social exchange perspective—Investment Model) have concluded that like in other relationships, a mentor’s level of commitment can influence the mentoring relationship (Gettings & Wilson, 2014). Their findings suggest that perhaps for some mentors, weighing the investments made to the relationship and the gains that would be lost if the relationship ended influenced their commitment and their decision to stay/leave the match (Gettings & Wilson, 2014).

Consequently, and when taking all of the factors presented here into consideration, it is evident that mentors make multiple contributions to the mentoring relationship, to youth outcomes, and to the quality of these relationships. Similarly, mentors and mentees bring to the relationship multiple indicators that contribute to the formation and in some cases, to the duration of the mentoring relationship. Therefore, more research is needed to further examine what factors lead to high quality mentoring relationships and to its duration. As identified in this section, the quality of the

relationship and its duration are sometimes interrelated. Thus, I find it important to dedicate a section of this literature review to match duration and premature endings, particularly because match duration is an outcome variable in my study.

Match Duration and Premature Endings

Youth mentoring relationships come to an end for a variety of reasons. For example, some are associated with the circumstances of the mentor, others are associated with the circumstances of the mentee, the dynamics of the dyad, or simply because the match must come to an end if the nature and expectations of the mentoring program requires that it does (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2017). In the mentoring literature and as is commonly agreed upon by researchers, scholars, practitioners, and programs, the length and the quality of the mentoring relationship are often associated with positive youth outcomes. Longer matches (especially those lasting more than one year) are associated with better youth outcomes (Higley et al., 2016), and oftentimes formal mentoring programs (e.g., BBBSA) place high emphasis in ensuring the longevity of the match because of what this could mean for youth in terms of outcomes. Moreover, how matches end and whether they end prematurely can have a negative impact on youth and their overall mentoring experience (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2021; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017).

Past empirical works have demonstrated an association between the duration of the mentoring relationship and youth outcomes. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) investigated the effects of match duration on youth outcomes, hypothesizing “that the effects of mentoring relationships will intensify with time, and that relatively short

matches will be disruptive to youth” (p. 202). The findings in their study supported their research hypothesis—indeed, youth who were in longer matches benefited more from the mentoring relationship than youth who were in matches that ended early. When compared to mentees who had a mentoring relationship that lasted 12 months (or more), mentees whose relationship ended within 3 months had a shift (decline) in their self-worth and in their confidence about schoolwork (scholastic competence). On the other hand, mentees of matches having lasted 12-plus months experienced (and as reported by the youth) an increase “in their self-worth, perceived social acceptance, perceived scholastic competence, parental relationship quality, school value, and decreases in both drug and alcohol use” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 208).

Furthermore, the effects of match duration and re-matching was examined with mentees participating in school-based mentoring programs through multiple BBBSA agencies. Researchers were interested in the associations between match duration and re-matching on youth academic outcomes. In their findings, Grossman et al. (2012) concluded that mentees who were in relationships for 6 or more months (24+ weeks) experienced positive academic outcomes, and mentees engaged in less absenteeism independently of when their match ended. However, after controlling for *selection bias* positive academic outcomes were only observed in mentees who were in relationships that had not experienced a rupture (what the authors refer to as an *intact* match). What was even more puzzling about their findings is that when compared to youth in the control group, no significant outcomes/differences were observed in mentees who experienced a rupture in their relationship (early relationship ending) and who were not re-matched with a different mentor. However, youth who experienced an early

relationship ending and who were then re-matched with a different mentor “fared worse than their control group peers” (p. 51). Additionally, mentees of relationships that ended prematurely and who were not re-matched with a different mentor “were less likely to have unexcused absences than controls” (Grossman et al., 2012, p. 51).

Although preserving the mentoring relationship is important, it is also important to understand why and when mentoring relationships come to an end, what influences their ending, and the implications therein. This is especially important because a great number (one-third to a half) of mentoring relationships have an early match ending (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017). In order to further understand and expand on what places mentoring relationships in a higher vulnerable state for ending prematurely, in the subsequent section I elaborate on this topic as it relates to mentor and youth demographics/characteristics.

Mentor Demographics/Characteristics Associated With Match Duration

Multiple mentor demographics/characteristics have been associated with premature relationship endings. For example, a mentor’s level of income, gender, and previous mentoring experience have been associated with the duration of the match. In one particular study that examined mentor demographics that contributed to the length of the mentoring relationship, major study findings revealed that mentors with higher incomes had longer relationships (compared to mentors with lower incomes), and matches involving male mentors were slightly less likely to end (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Similar findings have been concluded in more recent research. Kupersmidt et al. (2017) was also interested in understanding what specific mentor demographics were

associated with early match endings. In their findings, mentors' personal demographics such as: gender, race, and age were also indicators of early match closures. More specifically, women, and volunteer mentors who identified as Asian (compared to their White counterparts) had a higher likelihood of having matches that ended early. Additionally, younger mentors (those within the age group of 18-24.9) also had a slightly greater chance of having an early match closure (Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that relationships with mentors with a history of mentoring experience tend to last longer (Grossman et al., 2012). Raposa et al. (2016) examined similar mentor characteristics, and their findings revealed that mentors with higher self-efficacy and who had previous experience of engaging with young people "in their communities were able to buffer the negative effects of environmental stress on match duration" (p. 327). Finally, previous experience of engaging with young people "also buffered the negative effects of youth behavioral problems on mentor perceptions of relationship quality" (Raposa et al., 2016, p. 327). This finding is interesting, because perhaps mentors who have prior experience working with young people are better prepared for some of the challenges that arise in the relationship and are better equipped with knowing how to navigate these challenges (Grossman et al., 2012; Raposa et al., 2016).

Youth Demographics/Characteristics Associated With Match Duration

Similar to mentors, there are certain youth characteristics associated with early match closures. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) analyzed youth baseline factors that contributed to the duration of the match, where the history and the age of the mentee were predictors of match duration. Matches were more likely to terminate if the youth had a history of

trauma (“emotional, sexual, or physical abuse”; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 211), or if they were between the ages of 13 and 16 years old (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Similar trends regarding the history and age of the youth have been examined and concluded by other researchers, suggesting that perhaps mentoring is not appropriate for all youth. For example, Kupersmidt et al. (2017) examined a greater number of potential factors that led to early closures in multiple formal mentoring programs. This was particularly important because “the average rate of premature closure” (Kupersmidt et al., 2017, p. 29) in this study was 38.07%. The factors that posed a risk to having a premature ending included:

- The age of the youth (older adolescents) at the time of being matched with their mentor.
- *Family/home circumstances* such as being in the foster care system, youth of an immigrant background, or if a parent was imprisoned.
- Youth *risky behaviors* such as chemical/substance use/dependence and pregnancy.

In fact, approximately 70% of the mentoring relationships that had a youth who used substances ended prematurely (Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

These findings on youth characteristics involving risky behaviors or social-emotional and behavioral struggles/concerns are not exclusive to the studies mentioned above. Raposa et al. (2016) examined data of formal school-based mentoring programs from numerous BBBSA agencies, they examined factors endorsed by participating program youth and mentors at the time they completed the baseline survey. Findings of their study revealed that (a) mentees who endorsed and/or were experiencing higher levels of distress (“stressful environments at home and at school,” p. 327), or (b) mentees who endorsed risky behaviors relative to low *academic performance or behavior*

misconduct influenced the length and the overall experience of the mentoring relationship. More specifically, mentoring relationships with mentees who had higher levels of *stressful environments* tended to be shorter, and mentees “with elevated rates of behavioral problems had mentoring relationships marked by more youth dissatisfaction and less positive mentor perceptions of relationship quality” (p. 327).

It appears then, that mentees experiencing multiple stressors prior to the inception of their mentoring relationship have a greater chance of having their relationship end early (Grossman et al., 2012; Raposa et al., 2016), as could be the case for youth in formal mentoring programs in the United States and abroad. For example, studies that have been conducted in Canada (e.g., DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016) with formal community-based mentoring programs (BBBSA) have concluded similar findings to those mentioned in previous studies, including the rate of premature closures. DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer (2016) conducted a study with participants from approximately 20 agencies from different areas in Canada. 34% of youth experienced a premature ending (match ended before the one-year benchmark), and some reasons that may have placed the match in a more vulnerable state for an early termination included: mentoring relationships involving female youth, mentees who anticipated any difficulties (*match determination difficulties*) throughout the course and process of being matched with their prospective mentor, and matches with youth who had *behavioral difficulties*. “For every unit increase on our scale of behavioral difficulties there was a 3% increase in the odds or chance of youth experiencing an early MR [mentoring relationship] closure” (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016, pp. 64-65).

Finally, the way in which youth are first referred to mentoring programs or become involved in a mentoring program matters in terms of whether or not they will persist in the relationship. Youth *extrinsic motives* of initial program involvement have also been examined, and matches with youth who endorsed having joined the program because their parents wanted them to enroll or who were referred by a service provider/other institution were at a “significantly greater risk of early and normative relationship closures” (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016, p. 69). Understanding these factors (whether *contextual*, *family*, or *individual*) and how they impact the mentoring relationship (including its duration) is important, because they can influence the duration of the mentoring relationship, and the relationship paths that lead to the social-emotional, cognitive, or identity development of youth, and ultimately to youth outcomes (Rhodes 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006).

How Mentoring Relationships End

When relationships come to an end, whether it is early or on-time, how the relationship ends can also impact the overall mentoring experience for youth, mentors, and parents/guardians (Spencer et al., 2017). Therefore, I find it important to dedicate a small sub-section of this chapter to discuss this topic despite there being limited available literature on this topic. Finally, I end this section by stating some recommendations that have been made regarding the importance of healthy and planned relationship endings.

Spencer et al. (2017) conducted a study of community-based matches “through two affiliates of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America” (p. 442). They were interested in exploring (a) what led to the ending of the mentoring relationship, (b) how the relationship ended, and (c) how the process of the ending impacted the mentee,

parent/guardian, and the mentor. Like other studies, the majority of mentors in this study identified as White, the majority of mentees (and their parent/guardian) were of a racial-ethnic minority group, and approximately 43% of the matches ended prior to the initial one-year program commitment.

In their findings, Spencer et al. (2017) concluded that matches ended due to five primary reasons: (a) *changes in life circumstances* of the mentor or the mentee, (b) feelings of dissatisfaction from the mentor, (c) feelings of dissatisfaction from the youth, (d) the mentoring relationship gradually faded (*gradual dissolution*), and (e) *mentor abandonment*. When assessing participants' perceptions regarding the quality/strength of the match, the majority of matches that ended were categorized as *weak*, followed by *strong*, *out of sync*, *adequate*, and *tenuous*. Moreover, when considering the quality/strength of the relationship and "why" the relationship ended, of the relationships that were strong the majority ended due to *changes in life circumstances* (of the mentor in most of these cases), and almost all of them planned and followed through with a formal ending. Conversely, relationships that were categorized as weak were more likely to end for multiple reasons including dissatisfaction from the mentor or youth, and less direct communication having taken place between the dyad in these relationships (Spencer et al., 2017).

What I found most interesting were the effects (impact) of "how" the ending took place on youth, parents, and mentors, that is, if it was a planned ending, an agency ending, or if there was a planned ending but this planned ending never took place. Overall, irrespective of the reasons for the ending of the match and the strength/quality of the relationship; it appears that planned endings yielded a better termination experience

for youth, parents, and mentors. For participants (especially youth and parents) who did not have a formal and planned ending, there was a sense of desire for an ending that allowed for closure and that included direct communication from the mentor (a formal planned ending). In relationships where no endings took place (where there was no closure) or that did not include direct communication from the mentor, some youth and parents/guardians reported feeling complex emotions such as: disappointment, confusion, anger, sadness and a sense of loss. These emotions were more intense for youth and parents of relationships that ended due to mentor *abandonment*. Participants (especially mentors) of relationships that were considered *strong* tended to be more mindful about their ending and its process, and consequently, were more likely to engage in a formal ending where mentors wanted the ending to be a positive experience for the mentee. Interestingly, in some relationships considered weak, mentors who valued their commitment to the agency and to the mentee were also mindful and thoughtful of having closure in the relationship (Spencer et al., 2017). Furthermore, in their study, Spencer et al. (2021) concluded similar findings regarding the importance of having an intentional planned ending. In their study, mentors were more likely to initiate the ending, and while some matches experienced an intentional and purposeful termination process, most matches experienced an ending that remained unclear and that at times, was puzzling for some program participants, something that some participants experienced as being problematic and concerning.

At this point, it is no surprise that mentoring relationship endings are part of the cycle of these relationships. Like most relationships, endings are not always avoidable and in youth mentoring relationships when mentor-mentee relationships come to an end

(and based on how they end), this can serve as an opportunity for youth with a history of unhealthy relationship endings to experience what a healthy and planned ending can look like (Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). On the other hand, when mentor-mentee relationships do not have a planned and healthy ending, this experience can further perpetuate “negative working models or relationships and diminish optimism that things will go well or differently in future relationships” (Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014, p. 469). Therefore, in order to foster a healthy ending and experience (especially for more vulnerable youth), relationship closures “should be planned, growth promoting, process oriented, and clear” (Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017, p. 72).

In this section I have discussed the associations between the length of the mentoring relationship and youth outcomes, I outlined several mentor and youth demographics and characteristics associated with premature endings, and I discussed the importance of healthy relationship endings. In the subsequent section, I discuss what is known about differences in race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (class) in youth mentoring relationships.

Differences in Race, Ethnicity, Culture, and Class in Mentoring Relationships

Differences in social class and racial-ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds between mentors and mentees exist in youth mentoring relationships. As previously discussed in this dissertation, it is not uncommon for mentoring programs (particularly formal mentoring programs) to serve a large number of youth (and their families) who are often economically disadvantaged and/or of a racial-ethnic and language minority group. On the other hand, volunteer mentors of the same programs tend to be economically

privileged and of the dominant White culture (Garringer et al., 2017; Raposa et al., 2017). As a consequence, a large number of youth of color in formal mentoring programs are paired with mentors who are White (Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012; Peifer et al., 2016; Spencer, 2006) and of a higher socioeconomic status than the youth. Therefore, I find it important to examine personal and social demographic differences of the dyad, and their implications on youth and relationship outcomes. In this section, I discuss what is known in the youth mentoring literature regarding these dyadic differences.

Earlier works of researchers who have examined how these differences in background impact youth outcomes have concluded that there are some differences in same-race versus cross-race mentoring relationships that involve racial-ethnic minority adolescents (e.g., Rhodes et al., 2002). However, in my review of the literature, findings continue to be mixed. These scholars state that on the one hand, “proponents of racial matching believe that a mentor who is not representative of a child’s racial or ethnic background will inevitably and subconsciously impose his or her racial values and customs on that child” (Rhodes et al., 2002, p. 2116), and in cross-race matches that involve European American mentors, the match runs the risk of carrying “with it all the symbolism of historical treatment that the dominant Anglo culture has inflicted in minority groups” (Rhodes et al., 2002, p. 2116). On the other hand, individuals who support cross-race matches may see this as an opportunity for growth and learning, where mentors and mentees of different racial or ethnic backgrounds can come together and bridge differences and consequently, contribute “to the dismantling of societal barriers” (Rhodes et al., 2002, p. 2118).

Drawing on data from a large evaluation sample of BBBSA programs, Rhodes et al. (2002) examined this discourse and the effects of same-race vs cross-race matches on youth outcomes. Their sub-sample included approximately 476 youth who were of a racial-ethnic minority group, and the majority of youth were from single-parent households. All of the mentors in cross-race matches were White, the majority had some level of post-secondary education, and about 30% made more than \$40,000 annually. In this study, the length of the match involving youth in same-race matches was a little bit shorter, but only because youth in same-race matches waited longer to be matched until a mentor of color was found for them. This is something that is common in most formal mentoring programs. Their findings revealed that youth in same-race matches (at the follow-up) were more likely to endorse “that they had initiated alcohol use at follow-up” (Rhodes et al., 2002, p. 2124).

Further, when factoring differences in gender, when compared to ethnic-racial minority young men in cross-race matches, ethnic-racial minority young men in same-race matches endorsed “smaller decrements in scholastic competence and self-worth” (Rhodes et al., 2002, p. 2124). Additionally, when compared to young women in cross-race matches, young women “in same-race matches reported smaller decrements in school value and self-worth” (p. 2124). Moreover, youth in cross-race matches perceived their mentors as more supportive and they were more likely to engage in conversations with their mentors “when something was bugging them” (p. 2124). Although the authors of this study suggested that (a) perhaps there is no difference given that race may only matter in combination with other factors, (b) there was not a consistent pattern in these findings and that findings were subtle, and (c) findings were more apparent once gender

was introduced (Rhodes et al., 2002). It is important to underscore that the findings of this study are based on the specific outcome variables examined and are not comprehensive of all other youth or relationship outcomes.

In a separate study that looked at race as a predictor of match duration, “same-race minority matches terminated marginally [$p = .08$] more often than same-race white matches” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 212). However, this was not found to be true in “minority dyads” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 212) where race was used as one of the pairing criteria. Finally, “cross-race minority matches terminated more often than same-race White” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 212), however, this was not found to be true in matches where interests (of the mentor and the mentee) was a primary factor for matching (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Furthermore, through a qualitative study, Spencer (2007) was interested in further exploring and understanding what she describes as youth mentoring relationship failures, that is, relationships that did not persist to the minimum one-year commitment as part of two formal community-based mentoring programs through BBBSA. Spencer (2007) identified six major themes that helped explain why these relationships terminated early. The major themes identified were: “a) mentor or protege abandonment, b) perceived lack of protege motivation, c) unfulfilled expectations, d) deficiencies in mentor relational skills, e) family interference, and f) inadequate agency support” (Spencer, 2007, p. 339). Of interest to me are the three skills that were identified under the theme of *deficiencies in mentor relational skills* which included “a) lack of youth focus, b) unrealistic, or developmentally inappropriate expectations of the youth, and c) low-awareness of personal biases and how cultural differences shape relationships” (Spencer, 2007, p. 344). More specifically, I was drawn

to the finding around mentors not having or minimally having awareness of how their biases or how differences in cultural background impacted and played out in the mentoring relationship, whether it had to do with differences in values, race/ethnicity or class (*economic differences*). Some participants of the study reported that these differences created tension in the mentoring relationship (Spencer, 2007).

As previously noted, there is concern that in cross-race matches, mentors may want to impose on youth their own set of racial values/customs (Rhodes et al., 2002). However, in a study of natural mentoring relationships, investigators examined the effects of natural mentoring relationships on youths' level of acculturation with a group of Latino/a high school students (L. C. Liao & Sánchez, 2015). After examining multiple factors (e.g., length of the relationship, type of mentor, and generational status); in their findings (and although the majority of relationships were same race/ethnic matches) youth who reported having at least one cross-race mentor tended to endorse less perceived discrimination. In this particular study, however, it was inconclusive if having a cross-race mentor led to less perceived discrimination in youth or if youth who perceive less discrimination are inclined to form natural mentoring relationships with cross-race mentors (L. C. Liao & Sánchez, 2015). Therefore, it is important to examine the effects of race/ethnicity on match quality and duration with additional match characteristics. This is especially true because while it may be tempting to pair mentors and mentees on the sole basis of race, one must apply caution in doing so, because of the within and between group differences that exist (Sánchez et al., 2014).

More recent studies examining the dynamics of racial-ethnic differences in youth mentoring relationships continue to underscore the importance of mentors' having the

ability to emphatically connect with these differences in the relationship. In fact, in one study mentors who were able to apply an empathic approach to these differences fared much better in their relationships and in their perceptions and experience of the mentoring relationship (Spencer et al., 2020). Furthermore, Jones et al. (2022) also explored these dyadic differences involving White mentors and Black mentees and concluded that some mentors in these relationships did not feel equipped or found it necessary to have conversations about “topics acknowledging ethnic/racial identity and issues centered around social justice and recognize their own privileges when mentoring Black youth in community-based youth mentoring programs” (p. 1).

When taken together, it is essential that programs provide the necessary supports and/or trainings to mentors that will allow them to have or develop the needed skills to identify and navigate racial-ethnic and cultural differences (Jones et al., 2023; Spencer 2007). In turn, this may help reduce the chance of an early match ending (Spencer, 2007) and foster a strong mentoring relationship, which can then yield greater youth outcomes. These recommendations are similar to those made by Sánchez et al. (2017). Sánchez et al. examined direct and indirect effects of racial discrimination on youths’ (Latino/o high school students) coping efficacy, with the quality (instrumental) of the mentoring relationship serving as a mediator and moderator. In their findings, there was a negative association between racial discrimination (captured when students were in ninth grade) and coping efficacy (assessed when students were in tenth grade), and “as racial discrimination increased, mentoring quality decreased and then coping efficacy decreased” (p. 15). Considering the negative impact that racial discrimination can have on youth, Sánchez et al. (2017) underscored the importance of youth and natural mentors

having the necessary skills and strategies to navigate racial discrimination, especially mentors as this can better prepare them in their role as mentors and role models to follow (Sánchez et al., 2017).

On the topic of socioeconomic (class) differences in youth mentoring relationships, research suggests that differences in class within the dyadic (and at times even systemic) mentoring relationship can hinder the relationship. For example, in her study examining causes of premature relationship endings, Spencer (2007) concluded that tension occurred in the relationship when mentors did not recognize (or were minimally aware) of how their biases or differences about class (economic differences), in addition to race/ethnicity, influenced the mentoring relationship (Spencer, 2007). Furthermore, Spencer et al. (2020) concluded in their study that mentors who were able to take an empathic perspective-taking approach to these important differences (economic and racial differences, as well as other important factors), reported a more positive mentoring experience and process. Conversely, mentors who did not employ an empathic perspective-taking approach evidently grew dissatisfied with the relationship and experienced other relationship struggles, such as not being able to form a much more purposeful connection with their mentee. These differences do not only impact mentors but can also have an impact on parents/primary caregivers. In a different empirical study that examined the important role of parents in the mentoring relationships, one parent expressed feelings of “guilt and indebtedness to the mentor” (Spencer et al., 2011, p. 56), these feelings were related to class differences between the mentor and parent. Finally, a more recent study by Spencer et al. (2022) that examined how social class bias from mentors and program staff influenced the mentoring relationship, brought to light how

some mentors and program staff can negatively influence mentoring relationships because of the class biases that they hold. In this study, three main tendencies were observed in mentors and program staff who held these social class biases, the tendencies were: (a) deficit-based views of families and youth; (b) individual level attributions for the family's economic circumstances and blaming of caregivers; and(c) perceiving mentors as being underappreciated by the youth's caregiver. Therefore, mentors and program staff should make intentional efforts of becoming more aware of class biases irrespective of whether a mentor is in a same or cross-class match (Deutsch et al., 2014).

It appears that in both formal and informal (natural) mentoring relationships, there is a need to enhance mentors' skills and to provide mentors with strategies and awareness in navigating racial-ethnic-cultural and social class differences (Deutsch et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2011; Spencer et al., 2022; Spencer et al., 2020; Spencer, 2007). Something that programs can do to better support mentors is first understanding the beliefs and perceptions that mentors bring to the relationship about individuals from different backgrounds to that of their own. Even more so, mentors should be cognizant about how their beliefs and perceptions impact the quality and the duration of the mentoring relationship. In the subsequent chapter, I elaborate on Rhodes' (2005) *A Model of Youth Mentoring*, and I discuss why examining mentors' level of ethnocultural empathy can be an initial first step to better understanding background differences in youth mentoring relationships.

Chapter Three: Framework

In this chapter, I introduce the framework that is the conceptual and research model of my dissertation and study. I begin this section by describing Jean E. Rhodes' (2005) *A Model of Youth Mentoring* which has been influential in understanding youth mentoring relationships—their formation, how they contribute to youth development, and ultimately how the different domain paths lead to positive youth outcomes. The specific domains identified for which mentoring contributes to the development of youth are: social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development. In her model, Rhodes (2005) describes certain mediating and moderating variables (e.g., length of relationship, quality of the relationship, and history of attachments) that impact the relationship paths, the match characteristics, and the developmental domains, all of which are linked to overall youth outcomes. Finally, in the last section of this chapter, I discuss why it is important to examine ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring relationships.

A Model of Youth Mentoring

Based on what is known about youth mentoring relationships and their effects on youth outcomes, Rhodes (2005) argued that there is a need to further understand the processes and changes of these relationships, which includes examining the influence of mentors on these processes. Considering the mixed/spectrum of findings that mentoring programs and relationships have on youth outcomes, Rhodes (2005) raised an important question: “how is it that certain youth can be seemingly so profoundly affected by mentoring relationships, whereas others appear to benefit little or even be harmed?” (p. 30). The broader, more general question being raised here is “how does mentoring work?” (p. 30). This model encompasses different indicators and domains of the

mentoring relationship, but at the core of these relationships is the fundamental need for mutuality, trust, and empathy in the relationship (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). In fact, once a relationship begins it is instrumental to develop mutuality, trust, and empathy, because this is the foundation for the contributions made to the developmental youth outcomes (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006). In essence, “the dynamics through which mentoring relationships can promote positive developmental outcomes are unlikely to unfold without a strong interpersonal connection, specifically one characterized by mutuality, trust, and empathy” (Rhodes, 2005, p. 31).

Therefore, in order for mentors to truly make contributions to the social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development of the youth (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006) which, in turn, can lead to better youth outcomes (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008), they need to help foster and co-create with their mentee a strong relationship. Furthermore, fostering and co-creating mutuality, trust, and empathy in the relationship can also bring to light another quality of the mentoring relationship which has been identified as influential, such that, “the level of attunement necessary for taking cues from mentees and responding to their needs empathically may be a key contributor to the quality and nature of the mentoring relationship” (Rhodes et al., 2006, p. 696). In subsequent paragraphs, I describe in more detail the developmental domains, which have been categorized in the model as mediators between mutuality, trust and empathy, and positive youth outcomes. The final mediator in the model is parental/peer relationships, however, this mediator is more connected to the developmental domains and positive youth outcomes. For a visual of *A Model of Youth Mentoring*, please refer to Rhodes’ (2005, p. 32).

Social-Emotional Development

One of the assumptions in this model is that via a close bond and through modeling, the positive interactions of the mentor and the mentee can then be generalized to other interactions of the youth. In doing so, this may allow the youth to be able to interact with other people in a much more effective way (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Furthermore, mentoring relationships can help buffer/offset some of the tensions that youth experience in other relationships during adolescence (Rhodes, 2005).

Cognitive Development

Mentors have the capacity to provide their mentees with opportunities that enhance their cognitive development, such as fostering youth to do well in school, providing access to opportunities that are growth/learn promoting, or posing an intellectual challenge or guidance in youth (Rhodes et al., 2006). Irrespective of the activity, mentors can draw from experiences and opportunities that serve as “teachable moments” (Rhodes et al., 2006, p. 694) for youth or that expand on youths’ pre-existing ideas (Rhodes et al., 2006).

Identity Development

One of the premises of mentoring relationships is that mentors serve as positive role models for their mentees. As previously stated in this literature review, mentors often adopt multiple roles including role models and advocates (Rhodes et al., 2006). Within these roles, mentors help shape the identity of the mentee in the present moment or in the future (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006), particularly because youth often make observations of the adults in their lives who sometimes influence their behavior and decision-making processes. Via these interactions mentees might begin to relate to their

mentors. As the process unfolds, there is potential for youth to become more cognizant about their initial internalizations and begin the process of shifting their identity (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006). Finally, “when mentors promote youths’ participation in prosocial activities and settings, they expose them to socially desirable or high-achieving peer groups with whom they can then identify” (Rhodes et al., 2006, p. 695).

Moderating Relationship Variables

One of the premises of this model is that mentoring relationships, indicators of relationship quality (mutuality, trust, and empathy), and the pathways connected to the developmental domains that lead to positive outcomes may develop differently for each youth, dependent upon the unique circumstances of the youth, mentor, relationship, program, family, as well as community context (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006). For example, some factors that have been identified as important moderators are: (a) the experiences of the youth with prior adults (previous attachments) informing the type of bond that they will need/seek from their mentor (Rhodes, 2005), (b) social competencies of the youth (e.g., youth being able to better self-regulate) to include their ability to engage in a more positive light with adults or peers (Rhodes, 2005), (c) the quality of the mentoring relationship (Rhodes et al., 2006), and (d) the length of the mentoring relationship. In fact, because close attachments develop over time, to foster these close bonds and make contributions to the development of youth, enough time needs to pass for relationships to follow their developmental course (Rhodes et al., 2006). At the same time, it is important to navigate factors that may moderate these paths (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006) including any “individual, family, and contextual influences” (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008, p. 256).

Ethnocultural Empathy

Some of these individual, family, and contextual influences are likely to include differences in background and social position (e.g., income/class, race, ethnicity, and culture). Consequently, it is proposed that cultural competency/sensitivity, and specifically ethnocultural empathy, is relevant and important in youth mentoring relationships. Ethnocultural empathy is conceptualized differently across professions, and it is sometimes paralleled with terms such as “cultural competence, culture empathy and trans-cultural empathy” (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011, p. 6). Although there are multiple parallels to the conceptualization of ethnocultural empathy, in an effort to establish a common definition, Rasoal, Eklund et al. (2011) have defined ethnocultural empathy as “an interpersonal phenomenon where the two persons care as well as think and feel . . . Feeling, understanding, and caring about what someone from another culture feels, understands, and cares about” (p. 8). It is our ability to have empathy toward someone from a different racial-ethnic background to that of our own (Wang et al., 2003).

In this dissertation I am using the measure developed by Wang et al. (2003) to assess mentors’ ethnocultural empathy; therefore, I find it important to expand on ethnocultural empathy as conceptualized by Wang et al. Ethnocultural empathy as a construct stems from definitions centered on basic (general) empathy, and empathy as it relates to culture and multiculturalism (Wang et al., 2003). Ethnocultural empathy is multidimensional in nature and Wang et al. conducted three studies in order to underscore the need to examine and measure this concept. According to Wang et al., ethnocultural empathy is an ability that can be learned, and it is a personal trait. Wang et al.’s conceptualization has four main parts:

- *Empathic feeling and expression* is about showing empathy either verbally or emotionally, or through actions, emotions, and thoughts regarding the feelings and/or lived experiences of individuals from a different racial-ethnic background. This domain looks at communicative prejudice or discrimination.
- *Empathic perspective taking* is intellectual empathy as it relates to a person's ability to truly comprehend what someone from a different ethnic-racial group feels or thinks, to understand their lived experiences, and "to perceive the world as the other person does" (p. 222).
- *Acceptance of cultural differences* is about understanding, embracing, and appreciating the customs and traditions of individuals from different racial-ethnic and/or cultural groups.
- *Empathic awareness* refers to how knowledgeable or aware a person is regarding the experiences of differing racial-ethnic groups. More specifically, it is about having awareness of the discriminatory encounters or unequal treatment that these groups have endured.

Although study findings have shown that ethnocultural empathy and basic empathy are correlated, it is still debatable whether or not these two concepts are truly distinct from another (e.g., Rasoal, Jungert et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2003). Irrespective of these mixed findings, it is important to assess these constructs separately, because of the distinct form of empathy that is elicited from a person who is in contact with someone from a diverse racial-ethnic and cultural group (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2003). Ethnocultural empathy is rooted in one's ability to truly empathize with groups and individuals of different racial-ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2003). Something that distinguishes empathy from ethnocultural empathy is that, historically, empathy frameworks have been established with a narrow focus and minimal consideration of "cultural and ethnic aspects" (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011, p. 1). Although such frameworks and research on empathy have made important contributions to intercultural (relationship) processes, the foci of this research on

“empathic ability” (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011, p. 2) has remained fairly homogenous and inclusive of individuals sharing the same cultural and ethnic background (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011). Therefore, it is appropriate to branch out and understand ethnocultural empathy, because it is plausible that empathizing with an individual of a diverse racial-ethnic and cultural background (to that of our own) may be more challenging than empathizing with someone with whom we share the same background (Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011).

Ethnocultural empathy has been examined with individuals in multiple career paths and in multiple settings (e.g., medical/health field, psychology and counseling psychology, higher education, and social work) because of the need to provide quality and improved services and supports to individuals of different backgrounds (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008; Rasoal, Eklund et al., 2011; Rasoal et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2003). Expressing ethnocultural empathy is important as this can minimize prejudice and discrimination, especially in relationships where there could already be an imbalance in power dynamics due to other identity groups (e.g., gender; Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008).

The same could be said about intergroup relations in youth mentoring, it is plausible that mentors who are mindful of cultural differences might be able to develop stronger mentoring relationships than mentors who do not have as much cultural empathy toward individuals of a different racial-ethnic or cultural background (Spencer, 2006, 2007). For example, Spencer (2006) conducted in-depth interviews with mentors and mentees to better understand the “relational processes” (p. 308) of their mentoring relationship that led to a strong bond and to better youth outcomes. In her findings, four main processes were influential: “authenticity, empathy, collaboration, [and]

companionship” (p. 287). Of particular interest to me was the process of empathy, particularly empathy as it relates to “the mentors’ sense of how the difficulties evidenced by these youth were understandable given the challenges they faced” (Spencer, 2006, p. 302). This included the ability for some mentors to be mindful of how differences in culture between themselves and the families could factor in the mentoring relationship. In this study, empathy was an important element which allowed the mentors to truly grasp how the difficulties that youth were experiencing “were connected to their larger relational and social contexts” (Spencer, 2006, p. 309). Further, this particular type of empathy could have aided the mentor-mentee dyad with bridging the differences in culture that they brought to the relationship (Spencer, 2006).

But what exactly fosters ethnocultural empathy in individuals or makes someone more susceptible to having ethnocultural empathy? Study findings have revealed that some predictors associated with ethnocultural empathy have been linked to a person’s age (older; Rasoal, Jungert et al., 2011), gender (female; Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008; Rasoal, Jungert et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2003), where a person is raised (small city; Rasoal, Jungert et al., 2011), and a person’s race/ethnicity (Wang et al., 2003). In the studies conducted by Wang et al. (2003), when compared to men, women had higher ethnocultural empathy in terms of *acceptance of cultural differences, empathic feeling and expression*, and in *empathic awareness*. Furthermore, there were significant differences in the levels of ethnocultural empathy between White and non-White respondents, with non-White individuals having higher levels of ethnocultural empathy (Wang et al., 2003). Upon further examination and when compared to male and White participants, non-White and female respondents “were more likely to express empathic

emotions around the issue of justice or fairness” (Wang, 2003, p. 231), they were more open to differences in culture, and they had greater awareness about the experiences of individuals from different ethnic-racial groups. Additionally, non-White participants had a greater grasp “of the experience of other ethnocultural groups by taking their perspective or sharing in their emotional experiences” (Wang, 2003, p. 231). Finally, having a more diversified background or set of experiences was also positively correlated with ethnocultural empathy, this included diversity within neighborhoods, social groups (friends), immediate family, and in secondary school settings. These findings suggest that having more experiences and contact with individuals of different racial-ethnic backgrounds may foster more ethnocultural empathy in individuals (Wang et al., 2003).

Ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring relationships can help bring more clarity to some of the mixed findings regarding same-race versus cross-race/cultural mentoring relationships (Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012). However, despite the historical differences in backgrounds between mentors and mentees, to date few studies have specifically examined ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring relationships (e.g., Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012; Peifer et al., 2016). Leyton-Armakan et al. (2012) examined the association of specific mentor characteristics (including ethnocultural empathy) on multiple youth outcomes with same-race and cross-race matches as moderators. This study was conducted with college aged women serving as mentors for a group of adolescent young women (middle schoolers) in a school-based mentoring program. The aim of this study was to assess if there was an association between three mentor characteristics (mental health, self-worth, and cultural empathy) and youth relationship satisfaction and self-reported improvement. Further, match status (whether

cross-race or same-race) was introduced to see if it moderated the relationship between the three mentor characteristics and youth outcomes. Similar to other studies, the majority of mentors in this study identified as Caucasian (69.9%), and the majority of mentees were of a racial-ethnic minority group (only 38.5% of mentees identified as Caucasian). Regarding racial match status, the groups were relatively balanced with 49% being same-race and 52% being cross-race matches. In the overall sample, there were no significant findings between mentor ethnocultural empathy (empathic feeling and expression) and mentee relationship satisfaction or self-reported improvement. However, once match status (same-race versus cross-race) was introduced as a moderator, ethnocultural empathy was positively associated with youths' "satisfaction with relationship connection" (Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012, p. 916), meaning how emotionally connected were the youth within their relationship; and when compared to same-race matches, in cross-race dyads this finding was significantly stronger (Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012). It is important to note, however, that this study was conducted with participants from a program that provided ongoing cultural and diversity trainings to mentors. Therefore, I can only speculate if this also contributed to the findings of this study as it relates to ethnocultural empathy and youth relationship satisfaction.

Other researchers have looked at the associations between mentors' ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identity on youth outcomes. In a study of the Young Women Leaders Program, in which college aged women were paired with middle school young women for an academic school year, Peifer et al. (2016) examined the associations between mentors' ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identities with the ethnic identities of their mentees. Investigators measured the construct of ethnic identity by using the *Multigroup*

Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992), which has two dimensions: (a) “commitment, or one’s sense of belonging to a group” (Peifer et al., 2016, p. 442); and (b) “exploration, or the mental processes related to understanding the meaning of group membership” (Peifer et al., 2016, p. 442). They hypothesized that (a) youth of color paired with a mentor of color would report higher ethnic identity, and (b) there would be a positive relationship between mentors’ ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identity with their mentees’ ethnic identities. Initial findings revealed that mentors of color tended to have higher levels of ethnocultural empathy and ethnic identity (*ethnic identity exploration* and *commitment*). Similarly, and when compared with majority group mentees, youth of color reported higher levels of ethnic identity exploration. However, with respect to ethnic identity commitment, there were no differences between mentees of color and their White peers. Furthermore, irrespective of mentors’ racial-ethnic background (minority/majority) “mentors’ ethnocultural empathy predicted their minority group mentees’ ethnic identity exploration” (Peifer et al., 2016, p. 444). Additionally, ethnic identity exploration and commitment in mentors also predicted more ethnic identity exploration in minority mentees (Peifer et al., 2016). What these findings suggest is that perhaps for this group of mentors and mentees and irrespective of mentors’ group status (minority/majority), mentors’ ethnic identities and ethnocultural empathy are great mentor characteristics to bring to the relationship as they can contribute to positive youth outcomes specific to youth exploring their ethnic identity (Peifer et al., 2016).

It is evident that race, ethnicity, and culture are complex, so why would ethnocultural empathy matter in youth mentoring relationships? Ethnocultural empathy could matter in youth mentoring relationships because: (a) at the core of mentoring is the

relational process that takes place between the mentor and the mentee, and (b) the need for the dyad to be able to form a strong bond; in doing so, lies the potential for youth to gain the benefits of being in a mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006). However, when there is an absence of racial/ethnic or cultural empathy or awareness of biases (especially from the mentor) this might harm the mentoring relationship (Spencer, 2006, 2007). Conversely, expressing cultural empathy and having awareness of cultural differences could help bridge these differences and/or minimize potential harm (Spencer, 2006, 2007) related to prejudice and discrimination (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008) in youth mentoring relationships.

Dissertation Model

It is evident that there are power differentials that exist between mentors and mentees based on the composition of mentoring relationships, with some of these differences existing even in the form of age and more lived experience, where mentors tend to be older than mentees and naturally have more lived experience with knowing how to best navigate the needs and growth of the mentee (Keller & Pryce, 2010), such that “the mentor assumes greater responsibility to initiate and structure the interactions in the relationship” (Keller & Pryce, 2010, pp. 37-38). This is particularly important because the hopes, motivation, needs, and behaviors that the mentor and mentee bring to the relationship will frame the start of the relational process (Keller, 2007). Therefore, when assessing how these relationships develop over time and the interactions between the dyad, special attention should be given to the “initial, person-centered factors as well as process-oriented factors” (Keller, 2007, p. 31).

Moreover, it is important to underscore that the development of the relationship can be influenced by any pre-existing notions and motives that mentors may have, including how they may perceive their role as a mentor (Keller, 2007). Consequently, if researchers and practitioners wish to further understand how mentoring relationships develop (and the effects of these relationships), it is important to examine what factors mentors either bring to the start of the relationship and/or foster soon after the start of the relationship which can include empathy (as in Rhode's [2005] model), and ethnocultural empathy (what I am proposing in this dissertation).

Rhodes' (2005) model of youth mentoring emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship between mentor and mentee and suggests empathy is a critical feature of the relationship. For a mentoring relationship to be characterized as having empathy, it is essential for the mentor and youth to engage in interpersonal processes where empathy is expressed and fostered, with the main responsibility being placed on the mentor. Consequently, it can be implied that empathy is a trait/competency/skill/quality that a mentor must have in order to be able to foster and co-create a relationship with the mentee that has empathy. As previously noted, the demonstration of empathy between mentor and mentee is considered an important indicator of mentoring relationship quality.

For this study, I am suggesting a similar (but much more specific) parallel approach with the concept of ethnocultural empathy. Considering the socio-cultural background differences between mentors and mentees, the construct of ethnocultural empathy seems an important factor contributing to the quality and the length of mentoring relationships, and one that should be examined in mentors since they are mainly responsible for setting the tone of the relationship. Because ethnocultural empathy

is a trait and an ability that can be learned (Wang et al., 2003), I am proposing that for a mentoring relationship to be characterized as having ethnocultural empathy, it is essential for mentors to bring to the relationship this trait and for mentors to express ethnocultural empathy within the relational dynamics with their mentee. Doing so is expected to yield relationship quality (better and longer mentoring relationship).

Furthermore, based on the specificity of the construct of ethnocultural empathy, I am proposing the moderators of mentor race/ethnicity, racial match status, and income match status should be considered because the development of this process may look different depending on the socio-cultural identity of the groups. Taking into account that ethnocultural empathy can lead to better intergroup relations and reduce prejudices (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008), I find it important to examine ethnocultural empathy in cross-race matches. Additionally, because race and socioeconomic status are interrelated, with communities of color historically being more disadvantaged than individuals of the White dominant culture (American Psychological Association, 2019), there is a possibility that differences in a mentor's and mentee's socioeconomic status may factor in the mentoring relationship (whether in a same income or cross-income match) and affect the association between a mentor's ethnocultural empathy and the quality of the mentoring relationship. In summary, I (a) focus on the association between ethnocultural empathy and the quality and duration of the mentoring relationship, and (b) identify under what circumstances are the associations greater when considering a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial match status, and income match status. For reference, I have included a figure of my dissertation study model (see Figure 1).

Chapter Four: Methodology

Purpose and Research Hypotheses

In this study, I investigate how mentors' attributes such as their level of Ethnocultural Empathy predicts the strength and the length of the mentoring relationship, and if this association is moderated by a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match. The two overarching research questions are: (a) To what extent is mentor ethnocultural empathy associated with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? and (b) Under what circumstances does mentor ethnocultural empathy have a greater association with indicators of mentoring relationship quality?

Here, I explore ethnocultural empathy and two main factors associated with ethnocultural empathy to predict the strength and length of the mentoring relationship: *empathic perspective taking* and *acceptance of cultural differences* (Wang et al., 2003). The dependent variables include: the Mentor Strength of Relationship (MSoR), the Youth Strength of Relationship (YSoR), and the length of the mentoring relationship (time/duration). Further, as previously noted, when compared to volunteer mentors, many young people participating in formal mentoring programs are of a racial-ethnic minority group and tend to be economically disadvantaged. Consequently, I selected three moderating variables to examine if the strength and/or the direction of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables changed when introducing: the mentor's race/ethnicity (white mentor or mentor of color), racial match (same or cross race matching), and income match (same or cross income matching).

Although few studies have explored how a mentor's beliefs about race/ethnicity factor in mentoring relationships, particularly as they relate to the quality (strength) and

duration of the mentoring relationship, I posited that in the current study, higher levels of ethnocultural empathy (empathic perspective taking and acceptance of cultural differences) would be positively associated with the quality (strength) and the duration of the mentoring relationship.

Therefore, I formulated the following research hypotheses to predict a mentor's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences:

- Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.
 - Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.
 - Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.

Similar hypotheses were formulated to predict a youth's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences:

- Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.
 - Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.
 - Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.

For the first moderator (mentor race/ethnicity), I formulated the following hypotheses to examine the interaction effects between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences to predict the MSoR and YSoR:

- Ethnocultural Empathy will be more highly associated with the SoR for white mentors than for mentors of color.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for white mentors than for mentors of color.
 - Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for white mentors than for mentors of color.

For the second moderator (racial match), I formulated the following hypotheses to examine the interaction effects between a racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences to predict the MSoR and YSoR:

- Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.
 - Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

For the third moderator (income match), I formulated the following hypotheses to examine the interaction effects between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences to predict the MSoR and YSoR:

- Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.
 - Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.
 - Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the SoR for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

Finally, I formulated the subsequent hypotheses for the duration of the mentoring relationship:

- Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will last longer.
 - Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will last longer.
 - Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will last longer.

Population and Sample

The current sample and data are from a larger mixed method longitudinal study examining mentoring relationships. The STAR project primarily focused on analyzing reasons for match closures. Given the nature and the goals of the larger study, the main unit of analysis in this dissertation is the mentoring relationship, also referred to as the match, which consists of one mentor and one mentee. Although the STAR study consists of 356 dyads (or matches; this means 356 mentors, 356 parents/guardians, and 356 mentees), a total of 354 matches were included in this dissertation study. Two matches were excluded from this study because they were distinctive when compared to the rest of the matches in the study. Both matches were considered cross-gender and couple matches, meaning that a couple decided to mentor a youth. Although by program practices this could be considered a same gender match (what is standard practice of the mentoring organization), for study purposes these matches were considered cross-gender. Only one of the partners consented to the study (female mentor paired with a male mentee) and there were no study data available for the other partner. Consequently, 100% of the matches in the current study were same gender matching. Recruitment and baseline data collection for this sample began in the fall of 2013 and the study formally ended in 2017 (Keller & Spencer, 2017).

Prospective mentors and mentees were recruited to the larger study in partnership with BBBSA. Four different mentoring sites agreed to participate in the study, with one site situated in each of the following states: Oregon, California, Colorado, and Arizona. For a match to be able to participate in the study, participants needed to fulfill both BBBSA of America's eligibility criteria and the criteria set in place by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the study. For the dyad to be considered in the study, the following criteria had to be met:

- The youth needed to be between 9 and 17 years of age (at the time of being recruited for the study).
- The youth was considered at-risk of engaging in delinquency because of experiencing at least one disproportionality/disparity (living in a single parent household, receiving free or reduced-price lunch at school, the family is receiving public assistance, or having an incarcerated parent).
- Consent/assent needed to be collected from the prospective dyad (mentor and mentee), and parents/guardians of the minor needed to provide consent for their child to be in the study. Additionally, the parent/guardian also needed to give consent and participate in the study.
- All three individuals had to complete the baseline survey.
- The dyad (and parent/guardian) had to go through the study enrollment process and complete the baseline survey prior to starting the mentoring relationship, and the match introduction meeting taking place.

All research materials and forms were made available in Spanish for Spanish-speaking only parents/guardians, and all youth and mentors completed the surveys in English (Keller & Spencer, 2017).

All prospective mentors going through each agency's standard volunteer intake process were invited to take part in the study and were provided with information about the study by one of the BBBSA trained staff members (the Enrollment and Matching

Specialist [EMS]; Keller & Spencer, 2017). If a mentor expressed interest in participating, informed consent was obtained, and the BBBSA Research Liaison (RL) would input the mentor's contact information and signed informed consent in the secured research database REDCap (Harris et al., 2009), which could be accessed by the Portland State University (PSU) research team. From this database, the PSU research team was able to retrieve the mentors' contact information and send (via email) each mentor the information and a link to the secured website to complete the online baseline survey (Keller & Spencer, 2017).

Therefore, if a prospective mentee met eligibility criteria to be in the study and if the mentee happened to be a good fit with a mentor who was already in the study (and was pending to be matched with a mentee); the EMS would contact the parent/guardian prior to the inception of the mentoring relationship and the match introduction meeting to provide information about the study and inquire about their interest to participate. Parents/guardians who expressed interest to be in the study were scheduled a meeting with the EMS. During this meeting informed consent was obtained and the parent/guardian completed the paper baseline survey. After completing the survey, the survey was sealed in an envelope, and it was mailed to the research team at PSU (Keller & Spencer, 2017). Upon parental consent and prior to the match introduction meeting, the prospective mentee was approached to be in the study and youth assent was obtained. After youth assented to be in the study, they were asked to complete the paper baseline survey, the survey was sealed in an envelope, and it was mailed to the research team of PSU (Keller & Spencer, 2017).

As a result of this process, 1,286 prospective mentors were invited to participate in the study; 1,127 gave consent to be in the study of which, 1,000 completed the baseline survey (a response rate of 88.7%; Keller & Spencer, 2017). The total number of mentors who responded to the baseline survey and who were eventually paired with a mentee was 766. However, “of the volunteers enrolled in the study and matched to a mentee, a total of 357 were in matches that included study consent and participation by the parent/guardian and youth mentee” (Keller & Spencer, 2017, p. 21). One match consisted of a couple (two adults) who was paired with one youth (Keller & Spencer, 2017). This match was already excluded from the dataset and analysis because couple matches are unique. Consequently, 356 matches were available for analysis. However, and as previously mentioned, after further inspection of the data, it was determined that two additional matches needed to be excluded because they were a cross-gender and couple match, bringing the total number of matches included in this dissertation to 354. Overall, there was strong representation of matches from most sites (28%, respectively from three of the four sites), with the site in Oregon having the least representation of matches in the study (15.8%).

Further, the sample was meant to be inclusive, and representative of all matches being made during the recruitment/enrollment period. In an ideal situation, all matches that met inclusion criteria would have been part of the study. However, due to a variety of reasons, such as “mentors who consented for the study, completed the baseline survey, and were paired with a mentee may have been in a match that did not count toward the study sample” (Keller & Spencer, 2017, p. 21). This may have been especially true for

mentors who were paired with a mentee who declined to participate in the study, or if the mentee's parent/guardian did not consent to participate.

The sample characteristics of the mentors in this study are similar to those of volunteers/mentors in other programs or organizations. Based on mentor baseline surveys, most mentors were females (57.3% versus 42.7% males), and were 18-76 years old ($M = 31.20$, $SD = 9.48$). The majority self-identified as European American/White (68.1%), followed by 11.9% multi-ethnic/racial, 8.4% Latino/Hispanic, 5.2% Asian/Asian American, and 4.9% African American/Black. A small group (.6%) identified as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and .9% identified as Other. Of those who were multi-ethnic/racial, the majority (48.8%) were Latino/Hispanic and European American/White, followed by 12.2% European American/White and American Indian/Alaska Native, and 7.3% European American/White and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The summary of the multi-ethnic/racial and other subcategories for the mentors can be found in Table 1. Most mentors were single (54.3%), although 20.2% were married, 14.5% were living with a partner, 9% were divorced, 1.2% were married but separated, and .9% were widowed. The majority of mentors had at least a bachelor's degree (70.7%) and reported a household income above \$50,000 (60.9%). The employment status of most mentors was "employed full-time" (71.1%).

Table 1*Mentor Multi-Ethnic/Racial and Other Subcategories*

| | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> |
|---|----------|----------|
| Multi-Ethnic/Racial | | |
| Latino/Hispanic and European American/White | 20 | 48.8% |
| European American/White and American Indian/Alaska Native | 5 | 12.2% |
| European American/White and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 3 | 7.3% |
| African American/Black and Asian/Asian American | 2 | 4.9% |
| European American/White and African American/Black | 2 | 4.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic and Other | 2 | 4.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic and Asian/Asian American | 1 | 2.4% |
| Latino/Hispanic and African American/Black | 1 | 2.4% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White and Asian/Asian American | 1 | 2.4% |
| Latino/Hispanic, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian Asian/American | 1 | 2.4% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White and American Indian/Alaska Native | 1 | 2.4% |
| European American/White, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Asian American | 1 | 2.4% |
| European American/White and Other | 1 | 2.4% |
| Other | | |
| Persian | 1 | 33.3% |
| Middle Eastern | 1 | 33.3% |
| Did Not Specify | 1 | 33.3% |

In contrast to the mentors' level of household income, the majority or parents/guardians reported a household income at or below \$49,999 (87.8%). For more parent/guardian demographics please refer to Keller and Spencer (2017). Finally, and based on the parent/guardian baseline surveys, the sample characteristics of the youth consisted of the following, youth (58.3% female) were 8-17 years old ($M = 11.33$, $SD = 1.99$). The majority of youth were multi-ethnic/racial (30.7%), followed by 22.9% Latino/Hispanic, 22.9% European American/White, 20.3% African American/Black, and

1.4% American Indian/Alaska Native. A small group (.9%) were Asian/Asian American, .6% identified as Other, and .3% were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Of those who were multi-ethnic/racial, the majority (33.6%) were Latino/Hispanic and European American/White, followed by 17.8% European American/White and African American/Black, 8.4% Latino/Hispanic and Other, 6.5% Latino/Hispanic and African American/Black, and 6.5% Latino/Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native. The summary of the multi-ethnic/racial and other subcategories for the youth can be found in Table 2.

Sources of Data

Because the current quantitative data subset is part of the larger mixed-method study, it is important to underscore that I only used the quantitative data subset of the mentors and the mentees. I did not include any parent/guardian data except for the parent's/guardian's income. The mentor and mentee data are longitudinal, and since one of the outcome variables is the duration (time) of the relationship, all mentoring relationships were followed from beginning-to-end or until the research study ended (some relationships lasted longer than the study). There was variation in terms of when relationships ended, and some dyads were followed for shorter or longer periods of time depending on when during the study period the relationship started and when it ended.

Mentors' level of ethnocultural empathy, and personal and social demographics were captured at the time they completed the online baseline survey (administered using the software Qualtrics; <https://www.qualtrics.com>), and prior to being matched with their mentee and starting the mentoring relationship. Like the mentors, parent/guardian income and youths' personal and social demographics were captured at the time the parent/

Table 2*Youth Multi-Ethnic/Racial and Other Subcategories*

| | <i>n</i> | % |
|--|----------|-------|
| Multi-Ethnic/Racial | | |
| Latino/Hispanic and European American/White | 36 | 33.6% |
| European American/White and African American/Black | 19 | 17.8% |
| Latino/Hispanic and Other | 9 | 8.4% |
| Latino/Hispanic and African American/Black | 7 | 6.5% |
| Latino/Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native | 7 | 6.5% |
| Mixed/Biracial (not specified) | 3 | 2.8% |
| African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native | 2 | 1.9% |
| African American/Black and Other | 2 | 1.9% |
| European American/White and American Indian/Alaska Native | 2 | 1.9% |
| European American/White and Asian/Asian American | 2 | 1.9% |
| European American/White and Other | 2 | 1.9% |
| European American/White, African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native | 2 | 1.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic and Asian/Asian American | 2 | 1.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 2 | 1.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White and African American/Black | 2 | 1.9% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White, and American Indian/Alaska Native | 2 | 1.9% |
| African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 1 | .9% |
| Caucasian/Malagasy | 1 | .9% |
| European American/White, Asian/Asian American, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 1 | .9% |
| Latino/Hispanic, African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native | 1 | .9% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White, African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native | 1 | .9% |
| Latino/Hispanic, European American/White, African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 1 | .9% |
| Other | | |
| Iranian | 1 | 50% |
| Did Not Specify | 1 | 50% |

guardian completed the paper baseline survey, and prior to the inception of the mentoring relationship. The strength of the relationship from the mentor's and mentee's perspective was captured at 3 months into the relationship. As part of their practice, BBBSA administers the MSoR and the YSoR at 3 months from the inception of the mentoring relationship. In doing so, they are able to have a better understanding of the strength of the relationship and if it is at-risk of ending prematurely. Finally, the length of the match was captured at the time the match officially terminated and was recorded in BBBSA's Agency Information Management system. It is important to underscore that when participants consented to be in the study, they also granted permission for the research team to access data records from Agency Information Management regarding their mentoring relationship (Keller & Spencer, 2017). In summary, the five main methods of data collection are:

- The mentor self-administered baseline questionnaire that captured their level of ethnocultural empathy, and personal and social demographics.
- The parent/guardian self-administered baseline questionnaire that captured their income, and youths' personal and social demographics.
- The MSoR survey at 3 months into the relationship.
- The YSoR survey at 3 months into the relationship.
- The duration of the mentoring relationship in months (date of match closure).

Measures

Independent Variables

The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003) is a 31-item scale created to measure a person's level of empathy toward individuals of a different racial and/or ethnic background from the respondent's own racial/ethnic background. It is a

valuable measure for assessing this form of empathy (Albiero & Matricardi, 2013). The reported alpha for the scale is .91 (Wang et al., 2003). The scale is made up of four factors: *empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, acceptance of cultural differences, and empathic awareness*. With higher scores indicating a higher level of ethnocultural empathy, to include greater empathic feeling and expression, empathic perspective taking, acceptance of cultural differences, and empathic awareness. The authors, Wang et al. (2003) present three studies that speak to the validity and reliability of the measure, which included several techniques used by the authors such as exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factory analysis, and the scale was “correlated in the predicted directions with general empathy and attitudes toward people’s similarities and differences” (p. 221). Furthermore, “high internal consistency and test-retest reliability estimates were also found across the three studies” (Wang et al., 2003, p. 221).

In the current study, two factors, empathic perspective taking (consisting of seven items), and acceptance of cultural differences (consisting of five items) were selected to assess the general concept of ethnocultural empathy. As reported by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the larger study, the two factors were chosen because (a) they were clear; (b) they would not create any confusion for study participants; and (c) they were the most applicable when assessing the dynamics of the mentoring relationship. The items are based on a 6-point Likert scale and scores range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Items include statements such as “I can relate to the frustration that some people feel about having fewer opportunities due to their racial or ethnic background” (for the empathic perspective taking factor), and “I feel irritated

when people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me” (for the acceptance of cultural differences factor). The independent variables used in this dissertation were empathic perspective taking and acceptance of cultural differences, and a total SEE composite score was formulated with both subscales and included in the analyses. The level of measurement for these predictor variables was measured at an ordinal level.

Dependent Variables

I included three dependent variables in my analyses: (a) the MSoR, (b) the YSoR, and (c) the length of the mentoring relationship.

The MSoR. The MSoR is a 14-item scale created to measure the strength of the relationship and match experience from the mentor’s perspective (including positive and negative perceptions), with some items needing to be reverse scored, such that higher scores are associated with “more positive relationship assessments” (Rhodes et al., 2014, p. 10), or a stronger mentoring relationship (quality of the relationship) as reported by the mentor. The reported alpha for the scale ranges from .76 (Nakkula & Harris, 2014) to .85 (Rhodes et al., 2014). The measure assesses connectedness, lack of frustration, confidence, and closeness. This measure was created primarily by Jean Rhodes “and in consultation with volunteers, program staff, and researchers” (Rhodes et al., 2014, p. 8). As described by the author, this measure was developed because of growing interest from BBBSA to better understand mentors’ match satisfaction and frustration (Rhodes et al., 2014).

The items are based on a 5-point Likert scale and scores range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items include statements such as “My little and I are interested

in the same things” (for connectedness), “I expected that being a Big would be more fun than actually it is” (for lack of frustration), “I feel confident handling the challenges of being a mentor” (for confidence), and “I feel close to my little” (for closeness). One of the limitations of this measure is the absence of more “published validity evidence, and careful investigation is warranted to determine the most appropriate applications of such parsimonious assessment” (Nakkula & Harris, 2014, p. 57). The level of measurement for the MSoR was measured at an ordinal level.

The YSoR. The YSoR is a 10-item scale created to measure the strength of the relationship from the mentee’s perspective, and higher scores suggest more “emotional engagement” (Rhodes et al., 2014, p. 10) and a more positive perception/experience of the relationship (Rhodes et al., 2005) or a stronger mentoring relationship (quality of the relationship) as reported by the youth. The reported alpha for the scale ranges from .73 (Nakkula & Harris, 2014) to .79 (Rhodes et al., 2014). The measure assesses: coping, lack of disappointment, safety, importance, and closeness. The current measure used by BBBSA is the latest version revised by Jean Rhodes, and as described by the author “the scale is a version of the original Relationship Quality Scale (Rhodes et al., 2005), which was slightly revised to include a more balanced set of positive and negative relationship experiences” (Rhodes et al., 2014, p. 10). The original scale was informed by prior qualitative work (e.g., Morrow & Styles, 1995) and The Relatedness Questionnaire (Lynch & Wellborn, 1987).

The items are based on a 5-point Likert scale and scores range from “never true” to “always true.” Items include statements such as “My Big has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem” (for coping), “When I’m with my Big, I feel ignored” (for lack

of disappointment), “When I’m with my Big, I feel safe” (for safety), “My relationship with my Big is very important to me” (for importance), and “I feel close to my Big” (for closeness). Similar to the MSoR, there is a need for more published evidence on the validity of this measure (Nakkula & Harris, 2014). The level of measurement for the YSoR was measured at an ordinal level.

The Length of the Mentoring Relationship (Time). The duration of the mentoring relationship was the third dependent variable and it was measured based on the number of months the relationship lasted, this approach was used for the cox-regression analysis. As previously stated, data collection for the study began in the fall of 2013 and ended in the spring of 2015; match duration ranged from .16 to 39.81 months. The duration of the mentoring relationship was also dichotomized for the logistic regression analysis. Such that, matches that lasted less than 12 months (closed under 12 months) were coded as “0” and matches that lasted at least 12 months (lasted 12 months or longer) were coded as “1.”

Moderating Variables

The moderating variables include: mentor race/ethnicity (White mentor = 0, mentor of color/all other groups = 1); racial match (same race = 0, cross-race = 1); and income match (SES; same income = 0, cross-income = 1). If a mentor endorsed their race as “White” only and did not select any other racial groups, they were coded as 0. However, if the mentor endorsed any other racial group including Latino/Hispanic (or selected one of several race options) they were considered a mentor of color and were coded as 1. In total, 236 mentors (68.6%) were coded as White and 108 (31.4%) were coded as a mentor of color. I followed a similar approach for the mentee, if the mentee’s

parent/guardian selected White only for their child and did not select any other racial group, the mentee was coded as 0. If the parent/guardian endorsed any other racial group including Latino/Hispanic (or selected multiple race options) the mentee was considered a mentee of color and was coded as 1. Overall, 80 mentees (23%) were coded as White and 268 (77%) were coded as a mentee of color.

When considering the rich diversity even within the groups who were categorized a person of color, this process and its coding served as the building blocks to determine racial match, in other words, determine if a match would be considered same-race or cross-race. It would have been nearly impossible to code each match true to the exact same racial/ethnic background of the participants. Therefore, if a White mentor was paired with a White mentee, the match was considered same-race and was coded as 0. Similarly, if a mentor of color was paired with a mentee of color, the match was considered same-race and was also coded as 0. Conversely, if a White mentor was paired with a mentee of color, the match was considered cross-race and was coded as 1. Similarly, if a mentor of color was paired with a White mentee, the match was considered cross-race and was also coded as 1. Consequently, 164 matches (48.4%) were coded as same-race, and 175 (51.6%) were coded as cross-race.

For the moderating variable income match, the median household income for 2013 was used as the guide to dichotomize household income into two groups, because it was during this time period when this information was captured in the baseline survey. According to data from the United States Census Bureau, the median household income in the United States for 2013 was \$52,250 (Noss, 2014). For this study, the variable “household income” was first dichotomized into two groups for the mentors and for the

parents/guardians. Such that, mentors with a reported household income of “\$50,000” or more were coded as being above the median household income, whereas mentors with a reported income of “\$49,999” or less were coded as being under the median household income. A similar process was used for the parents/guardians, any parent/guardian who endorsed a household income of \$50,000+ was coded as being above the median household income, and any parent/guardian who reported an income of \$49,999 or less, was coded as being under the median household income. This process and coding served as the building blocks to determine income match. In other words, to determine if a match would be considered same-income or cross-income. Based on the differences in income intervals between mentors and parents/guardians (including within the options for mentors and parents/guardians), it was not possible to collapse the data into different groups beyond dichotomizing the variables in this way. The only common option found for mentors and parents/guardians was the \$49,999 and \$50,000 cut off points.

If in a match the mentor and parent/guardian were both coded as “above” the median household income, the match was considered same-income and was coded as 0. Similarly, if in a match the mentor and parent/guardian were both coded as “below” the median household income, the match was considered same-income and was also coded as 0. Conversely, if in a match the mentor was above the median household income and the parent/guardian was below the median household income, the match was considered cross-income and was coded as 1. Finally, if in a match the mentor was below the median household income and the parent/guardian was above the median household income, the match was considered cross-income and was also coded as 1. Consequently, 146 matches (45.8%) were coded as same-income, and 173 (54.2%) were coded as cross-income.

Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to becoming involved with the study, the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the study requested that BBBSA's staff, and PSU and Boston University research staff working on the project complete the National Institute of Health-Protecting Human Research Participants training. Additionally, the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the study facilitated an implementation training to all staff. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants, the baseline survey with prospective mentors was implemented online using the software Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>), a software that was made available through PSU. Since this option allowed prospective mentors to complete the survey online, they had the liberty of choosing when and where to complete the survey (likely in a space of their comfort).

Regarding the MSoR survey, the YSoR survey, and the match closure date; these data were gathered by BBBSA as part of their evaluation practices and data were stored in the Agency Information Management system. As part of the partnership with BBBSA, these data were made available to the research team at PSU. Further, at the time of participant enrollment in the larger study, the following forms and instruments were administered:

- The mentor, and the parent/guardian informed consents were provided, as well as the youth assent form.
- Participant harm and risks of the study were addressed.
- Parent/guardian and youth baseline surveys were implemented.
- Prospective participants completed the baseline questionnaire.

All participants received a data code and data were de-identified. The PSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval to conduct the larger research project involving human subjects. For this dissertation involving secondary data, IRB approval (exempt approval) was obtained by PSU.

Strengths and Limitations of Questionnaires and Secondary Data

Reasons and benefits for implementing questionnaires have to do with the type of questions being asked, which are often sensitive in nature and can be very personal, such as the items that were used to assess ethnocultural empathy and those on the strength of the relationship measures. Questionnaires are a strategy for socially undesirable topics because participants might be more willing to be transparent in their responses and less reactive. In addition, questionnaires support privacy, are less time consuming for participants, and they are more standardized (Talbot, 2013). One additional benefit for the use of questionnaires is that they are useful for gathering participant “background information and measure their knowledge, attitudes, skills, or behavior” (Rubin & Babbie, 2010, p. 191). Since questionnaires tend to be self-administered, one of the major limitations is self-report. Self-report can increase measurement error, more specifically, response bias. As a result, participants’ responses might be skewed, and they may portray themselves in a more socially desirable way. This, in turn, can affect the validity of the measure (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). This limitation is further addressed in the discussion chapter of this dissertation.

Regarding the use of secondary data, there are several advantages for the use of secondary data, including access to a large sample, cost effectiveness, and the ability to examine trends over time (Singleton & Straits, 2010). I found these advantages beneficial

because I was able to access a large sample size and the variables of interest to answer my research questions. Additionally, I did not need to make a financial investment in order access these data. Given that I was a Graduate Research Assistant on the project, the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the research study granted permission for me to use the data subset as part of my dissertation project. Although these were some of the advantages for the use of secondary data, there were certain disadvantages worth noting.

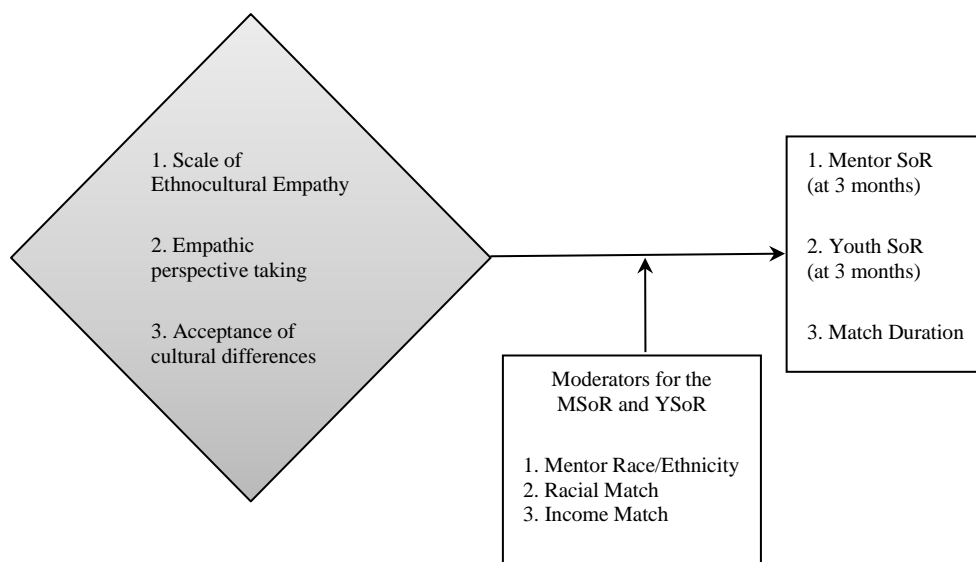
In general, some challenges with the use of secondary data are the unknowns of how the data were collected, the completeness of the data, in addition to how accurate and reliable is the data (Singleton & Straits, 2010). In other words, “it is crucial to try to determine, as far possible, how, when, where, and by whom the data were collected” (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 408). Although these are common challenges when using secondary data, in my case, these challenges did not pose large methodological concerns. As previously noted, I was involved in the study as a Graduate Research Assistant, and I was knowledgeable of the processes that were taken during the different phases of the research study (from beginning to end). I was able to identify “how, when, where, and by whom” (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 408) were these data collected. Further, the Principal Investigator of the research study is the Chair of my dissertation committee. Therefore, when I had any questions about the data, I was able to access the original research team, and they were able to provide me with any necessary information. One challenge that posed some difficulty was the number of missing SoR questionnaires. These, however, were collected by BBBSA and consequently, I could not obtain additional SoRs or obtain more information regarding the missing SoRs.

Research Model and Analyses

The primary analyses consisted of bivariate, multiple, and logistic regressions, and of an event history analysis using Cox regression with the survival function. First, each SoR measure was regressed (main effect) on the two factors measuring the general concept of ethnocultural empathy and on the composite variable. In the next step, each SoR was regressed on each predictor variable with the corresponding moderating variable (interaction term) and dichotomized variable included. The event history analysis and logistic regression were only applicable for the match length/closure outcome. All analyses were conducted using the software IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version 28.0). For a visual of the research model refer to Figure 2.

Figure 2

Research Model



Preliminary Analyses

A series of preliminary analyses were conducted to better understand the data and its properties. Preliminary analyses included: assessing the normality of the data, missing data, checking the reliability of the measures, frequencies, descriptive statistics, and correlations.

Assessing for Normality. Decisions for assessing the normality of distributions of scores of the continuous variables for the entire sample were guided by the interpretation of the: Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($p > .05$), the skewness and kurtosis of the distribution (based on the statistic value and the histogram), the observed values that were juxtaposed to the expected values on the normality plots, and by identifying any potential outliers that could have been skewing the data (using the box plots as an initial step; Pallant, 2013). Furthermore, I engaged in consultation with the Principal Investigator of the larger STAR study (who is also my dissertation chair) regarding the normality of the data, and when taken together, no major concerns were identified preventing me from moving forward with the analyses.

Missing Data. The data were examined in order to identify cases with limited item-level missing data on specific measures to calculate mean scores using the data available. Furthermore, independent-samples *t*-test and chi-square tests were conducted to identify patterns for missing data in the dataset.

Reliability of Measures. To examine the reliability of the measures or “the scale’s internal consistency” (Pallant, 2013, p. 101), I conducted the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient test to assess the internal reliability of the independent and the dependent variables that were composed of multiple questions. Following the guidelines provided

by Pallant (2013), I first reversed any negatively worded items, and then I entered the items for each measure (one measure at a time) into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to assess the reliability of the scale as it relates to this study's sample. Given that alpha values range from 0 to 1, and that values of .70 and above are considered respectable and preferred (Pallant, 2013; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), I used these recommendations as general guidelines when I conducted this test and examined the alpha values of the measures in this study.

Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics. I conducted frequencies in order to report on the characteristics (personal and social demographics) of the sample which included categorical variables. Frequencies were also utilized for the moderating variables: mentor race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match to look at the group sizes. Further, frequencies also allowed me to identify or rule out any potential errors in the categorical variables. Finally, I used descriptive statistics to inspect the central tendency of the scales—mean, median, and mode, and to obtain the range and standard deviation of the scales.

Correlation. Prior to moving forward with the multiple regression models, I first inspected the relationship (strength and direction) of my variables using the Pearson correlation technique. When using this test, the values of the coefficients (r) are between -1 and +1, with scores closer to 1 indicating a stronger relationship, and the negative (-) or plus (+) sign indicating the direction of the relationship (Pallant, 2013). This test helped me identify if there was a relationship between the variables, how strong was the relationship, and examine the direction of the relationship (negative or positive). Another

advantage to this test was that it allowed me to identify (or rule out) any early signs/concerns of multicollinearity.

Primary Analyses Using Regression

To answer my research questions and test the stated hypotheses, I conducted a series of bivariate regressions as a first step, I then created the moderation models and introduced the moderating variables using multiple regression, to see if they moderated the relationship between ethnocultural empathy and the MSoR and YSoR.

Bivariate Regression. In this analysis I began by computing a score for empathic perspective taking (EPT), and acceptance of cultural differences (ACD). I also created a composite variable for ethnocultural empathy (SEE) which included both empathic perspective taking and acceptance of cultural differences. The process for this analysis was as follows: The independent variables included mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences (all ranging from 1 to 6, with higher values indicating greater ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences). The dependent variable was the MSoR (which ranges from 1 to 5, with higher values suggesting a stronger mentoring relationship as reported by the mentor). The bivariate regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and the MSoR one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted. The same process was implemented involving the outcome variable YSoR. The independent variables included mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences. The bivariate regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and the YSoR one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted with the YSoR.

Centered and Interaction Terms (for Multiple Regression). In preparation for the moderation models, I first needed to center and create interaction terms for:

- Ethnocultural empathy (SEE)
- Empathic perspective taking (EPT)
- Acceptance of cultural differences (ACD)
- Mentor race/ethnicity
- Racial match (same or cross-race match)
- Income match (same or cross-income match)

I created a centered score for the three variables SEE, EPT, and ACD by subtracting the mean score (grand mean) from the original score for each variable (original score - mean score). Next, and to create the interaction terms based on the centered scores, I took each centered score and multiplied it by each of the moderating variables (e.g., centered composite SEE*mentor race/ethnicity; centered composite SEE*racial match; and centered composite SEE*income match). A total of 9 interaction terms were created.

Moderation Models Between Mentor's Race/Ethnicity and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR and YSoR. After conducting the bivariate regressions and creating the interaction terms, I ran the moderation models using multiple regression to see whether the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables was affected by a mentor's race/ethnicity. Interaction effects were examined between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR, and YSoR. The predictor variables included a mentor's race/ethnicity (coded as: 0 = white mentor and 1 = mentor of color) and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural

differences. Furthermore, to address multicollinearity issues (and as aforementioned), ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences were centered, and the interaction terms were created based on the centered ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences. A total of three moderation models were conducted to predict MSoR. The same process and predictors variables were implemented to predict YSoR, three moderations models were conducted to predict YSoR.

Moderation Models Between Racial Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR and YSoR. I ran the moderation models using multiple regression to see whether the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables was affected by racial match. Interaction effects were examined between racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR, and YSoR. The predictor variables included a racial match between a mentor and mentee (coded as: 0 = same-race match and 1 = cross-race match) and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. Furthermore, to address multicollinearity issues (and as aforementioned), ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences were centered, and the interaction terms were created based on the centered ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences. A total of three moderation models were conducted to predict MSoR. The same process and predictors variables were implemented to predict YSoR, three moderations models were conducted to predict YSoR.

Moderation Models Between Income Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR and YSoR. I ran the moderation models using multiple regression to see whether the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables was affected by income match. Interaction effects were examined between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR, and YSoR. The predictor variables included an income match between a mentor and mentee (coded as: 0 = same-income match and 1 = cross-income match) and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. Furthermore, to address multicollinearity issues (and as aforementioned), ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences were centered, and the interaction terms were created based on the centered ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences. A total of three moderation models were conducted to predict MSoR. The same process and predictors variables were implemented to predict YSoR, three moderations models were conducted to predict YSoR.

Event History/Survival Analysis and Logistic Regression. For the outcome variable duration of the mentoring relationship, I conducted an event history/survival analysis in order to determine if the duration of the mentoring relationship was predicted by a mentor's level of ethnocultural empathy. A reason why this form of analysis is very common in social sciences and in other disciplines, has to do with the variety of events (and their timing) that can be examined when using event history analysis (Allison, 2014). There are different types of events that can be analyzed through this approach including repeated (e.g., number of marriages in a lifetime), nonrepeated (e.g., death),

single, and multiple events (e.g., specific causes of death; Allison, 2014). In essence, and as described by Allison (2014) “an event consists of some qualitative change that occurs at a specific point in time . . . [it] is a longitudinal record of when events happened to a sample of individuals or collectivities” (p. 1). The way in which events are framed, clearly depends on the purpose for using the event history data, and the predictor and outcome variables. For this dissertation I treated all endings of the mentoring relationships as a single (and nonrepeated) event, especially because I was not distinguishing different types of endings, but rather I was looking at the survival of the relationship predicted by ethnocultural empathy.

As aforementioned, the event that I studied was the ending of the mentoring relationship (the duration); more specifically, I examined at what point in time (the number of months) the mentoring relationship ended with ethnocultural empathy as the explanatory variable. All matches are at-risk for experiencing a match relationship ending at a given point in time, also known as the *risk set*. The risk set is a fundamental component of this analysis, and it refers to the set of participants who run the risk of experiencing the event (Allison, 2014). Another central component of event history analysis “is the conditional probability that an event will occur at a particular time to a particular individual, given that the individual is at-risk at that time” (Allison, 2014, p. 8). This is the hazard rate and it serves as the dependent variable in the model (Allison, 2014). As it relates to this dissertation, the *hazard* is the risk of a particular mentoring relationship coming to an end (at that particular time), because that particular relationship has not yet ended prior to that time. After the ending of the relationship, it is then removed from the risk set. Thus, the number of matches in the risk set (who are at-risk) is

reduced. In this analysis, this process repeated itself with the ending of every match at any given time, as such the risk set continued to decline because those relationships were no longer at-risk for experiencing a relationship ending.

Another advantage for using event history analysis is the ability to include cases in the models that have not experienced the event, this is also known as censoring (Allison, 2014). Typically, censoring can occur with cases who have not experienced the event prior to the ending of the study, or in situations of attrition where (for whatever reason) individuals are no longer being observed, although censoring is a great advantage in event history analysis, it also poses concerns around bias (Allison, 2014). Based on what is known in the literature regarding the number of mentoring relationships that end prematurely (i.e., prior to the 12th month commitment) or that some relationships may exceed the 12th month commitment it was relevant to censor cases in this study, especially because the STAR project followed cases for at least 15 months.

One of the most commonly used models in event history analysis is the Cox proportional hazards model. The Cox proportional hazard model is used when the goals are to form “causal inferences from survival data” (Allison, 2014, p. xiii) or when the focus is to make predictions (Allison, 2014). The Cox model can also be described as being “semiparametric or partially parametric [because] it is parametric insofar as it specifies a regression model within a specific functional form; it is nonparametric insofar as it does not specify the exact form of the distribution of event times” (Allison, 2014, p. 5). Given the scope of my dissertation I used Cox regression (with the survival function) to formulate the semiparametric survival models, without the need to designate a baseline given that the hazard was held constant (Allison, 2014). Furthermore, because

I was looking at the duration of the mentoring relationship in months, and the match start and end dates were recorded, this model fit the data well because I could determine if the event occurred (the relationship ended), and when it occurred (precise time). Since this information was known, there was no need for an ad hoc procedure.

In summary, Cox regression analyses were conducted (with the survival function) to evaluate if mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were related to the duration of the mentoring relationship. Furthermore, the Cox regression analysis was used for two primary reasons: (a) to account for different timing of enrollment since every match was made throughout the course of the recruitment study period (recruitment and baseline data collection began in the fall of 2013 and ended in the spring of 2015; Keller & Spencer, 2017), and (b) to censor the match duration since some of the matches had not closed at end of the data collection period (32.8%, $n = 116$). A Cox regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and match duration one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted.

I also examined match duration through a binary approach. I conducted a logistic regression analysis for the outcome variable match duration to determine if the duration of the mentoring relationship met the program's twelve-month commitment (predicted by a mentor's level of ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences). The matches that lasted less than 12 months (closed under 12 months) were coded as 0 and the matches that lasted at least 12 months (lasted 12 months or longer) were coded as 1. A logistic regression analysis was conducted with each

predictor variable and match duration one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted.

Power

At the time of the STAR study grant proposal the Principal Investigator conducted an analysis to determine the appropriate sample size for analysis involving event history data—Cox regression models. To obtain a power of .80, the sample size estimate “ $n = 360$ was selected to provide power exceeding .80 under a variety of effect size scenarios” (Keller, n.d., p. 23). Although at the time of the grant proposal the target sample size was $n = 360$, the actual current sample size was $n = 354$ which is relatively close to the desired sample size of $n = 360$. Given that I use secondary data and that these data had already been collected, I could not increase the sample size. No major issues regarding power were identified because the target and actual sample sizes were relatively close.

Ethical Considerations

Oftentimes in social work research and practice, social workers find themselves navigating difficult ethical decisions or dilemmas that may arise as part of the research/practice process. IRBs, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the National Institute of Health provide specific guidelines to conduct ethical research practices and to protect research participants (Brennan, 2013). For example, the NASW (2008) has its own set of principles pertaining to research conduct and guides ethical research practices such as informed consent, minimizing risks to participants, protection of human participants, and submitting research to IRBs. IRBs and the National Institute of Health are influential in ensuring that correct ethical practices are applied in

research; both focus on the importance of protecting research participants (e.g., minimizing risk, consent, etc.) and on the importance of appropriately monitoring/collecting data (to avoid fabrication). Further, researchers have an obligation to report unanticipated problems, adverse events, and any knowledge of research misconduct (Brennan, 2013; Singleton & Straits, 2010).

It is important to underscore that for the larger STAR study, the PSU IRB granted approval to conduct this research involving human subjects, and all possible efforts were made to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of study participants. Changes that took place throughout the course of the research study and data collection phases were submitted to the IRB for approval. Further, informed consent was gathered from participants, and youth assented to be in the study (after the parents/guardians gave consent for their child to participate in the study). Throughout the course of my dissertation project, I continued to abide by these ethical standards.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, all raw data were de-identified and as part of the larger study, participants received a data code. The data collected from mentors and youth at 3 months (MSoR and YSoR), and the termination date of the mentoring relationship were collected by BBBSA as part of their data collection practices. These data were accessible to the Principal Investigator of the STAR study. Participants were made aware of how outcomes were going to be disseminated and of the purpose for dissemination. To continue to protect the privacy and confidentiality of study participants and the integrity of the data, I stored all data and analyses in my PSU drive that is password protected.

Risks and Harm

At the time of participant enrollment to the larger STAR study, all possible risks and harms were addressed with participants, and participants were reassured that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any point. The major risks involved that were discussed with participants had to do with the possibility of participants feeling uncomfortable with some of the questions on the survey. However, participants were informed that they could skip any questions that they did not want to respond to or that made them feel uncomfortable.

Informed Consent/Assent

Informed consent for the volunteer mentors and parent/guardian, and assent for the youth was given at the time of recruitment/enrollment to the study. The consent and assent included: all possible risks and harm, process of data collection and dissemination, confidentiality and anonymity, the role of research participants and researchers, and that participation was voluntary throughout the entire research process. One of the strengths of having collected informed consent/assent at the time of participant enrollment, is that this reduced any concerns regarding deception, particularly because participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and its implications prior to providing consent/assent.

Participant Gift/Honorarium

At baseline, mentors did not receive any form of gift for the survey completion, but at follow-up they received a \$15 gift card (after completing the survey). Youth received up to a total of \$30 in gift cards, one \$15 card upon completion of the baseline survey, and another \$15 gift card upon completion of the follow-up survey.

Parents/guardians received \$30 for completing the baseline survey, an additional \$30 for completing the follow-up survey, and an additional \$40 if they participated in a telephone interview.

Cultural Considerations

Earlier in this dissertation, it was noted that formal mentoring programs serve a large number of youth who are of a racial-ethnic minority group and who are oftentimes economically disadvantaged. Consequently, and to be inclusive of more racial-ethnic groups in the study, the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the study made the decision to include monolingual Spanish speaking participants in the research study, which mainly consisted of the parent/guardian of the youth. Latinos are very diverse in different domains such as in language, race, and family; and cultural considerations need to be given because of the within-group differences with this population, and the complexity of the Latino culture (Longres et al., 2008). Further, and to practice culturally competent research, all efforts must be made by researchers to form a “culturally competent research team” (Casado et al., 2012, p. 4), and it is important that assent forms and informed consent are provided in the native or preferred language of study participants (Casado et al., 2012).

With respect to the larger STAR study, one consideration made was the importance of developing culturally and linguistically appropriate instruments, and practices that were sensitive to the values and norms of the Latino culture. All materials were submitted for translation to a certified translator. Using my bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate background and skills in Spanish and English, I completed the quality review of the translations to ensure that content and context was appropriate and of high quality.

This work and process allowed for materials to be made available in Spanish for Spanish speaking parents/guardians. However, materials in Spanish were not available to participating youth of Spanish speaking parents/guardians, because BBBSA's staff implementing the surveys provided assistance to youth who needed help completing the survey. These staff served as language brokers for the small number of youth who needed guidance or had clarifying questions about the study and instrument(s). Earlier in the document I noted that for a match to be included in the STAR study, the volunteer mentor, the parent/guardian, and the youth needed to provide consent/assent to be in the study. Therefore, it is important to mention that Spanish Speaking parents/guardians were made aware in the consent form of how their child would participate in the study, and the research team respected the wishes of the parents/guardians about whether they provided consent for their child to be in the study.

Chapter Five: Results

Preliminary Results

Preliminary analyses included examination of missing data, the reliability of measures, descriptive statistics for all variables of interest, and bivariate correlations among the predictor and outcome variables.

Missing Data

For cases with limited item-level missing data on specific measures, mean scores were calculated using the data available (see Newman, 2014; Parent, 2013) for each participant who responded to at least two-thirds (or 70%) of the items on the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy, the subscale Empathic Perspective Taking, and on the MSoR. A 60% threshold was used for the subscale Acceptance of Cultural Differences because of the odd number of items on the subscale (it consists of 5 items). As for the YSoR, participants who responded to at least 60% of the items on the scale were assigned a mean score, this was done in order to maximize the use of two cases where participants almost responded (were 1 response away) to at least 70% of the items on the scale.

Although the amount of missing data at the measure level is important to take into consideration when making informed decisions about how to treat cases with missing data, what is often more important are the patterns of missing data and not necessarily the amount missing (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This is especially true when data values are missing not at random irrespective of the number of values as they are more serious and can impact generalizability (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In a series of independent-samples *t*-test and chi-square analyses, patterns for missing data were identified in the dataset, particularly involving the mentor and youth 3-month SoR.

Independent-Samples T-Test. Missing data patterns were examined for mentor 3-month SoR. When examining the relationship between the completion of the 3-month SoR (IV; 0 = not completed, 1 = completed) and match duration (DV duration in months), mentors who completed the 3-month SoR were more likely to have a longer lasting relationship ($M = 20.98$, $SD = 9.92$), compared to mentors who did not complete the 3-month SoR ($M = 15.23$, $SD = 11.19$), and the difference was statistically significant ($t(352) = 4.94$, $p < .001$). Similarly, patterns for youth 3-month SoR (IV; 0 = not completed, 1 = completed) and match duration (DV duration in months) were examined. Youth who completed the 3-month SoR were more likely to have a longer lasting relationship ($M = 20.81$, $SD = 10.16$), than youth who did not complete the 3-month SoR ($M = 16.84$, $SD = 10.99$), and the difference was statistically significant ($t(352) = 3.52$, $p < .001$). It is not surprising that both mentors and youth in longer lasting relationships were more likely to complete the 3-month SoR, when compared to mentors and youth in matches that ended earlier, particularly because an agency requirement is for the match to last at least 3 months (or within the data collection time period) before the 3-month SoR can be implemented with mentors and youth. It is possible, that in part, for the matches that did not last at least 3 months, the mentors and youth did not have the opportunity to complete the 3-month SoR.

Furthermore, other patterns were identified between completion of the 3-month youth SoR (IV; 0 = not completed, 1 = completed) and youths' age (DV), such that, youth who completed the 3-month SoR, in general were more likely to be younger ($M = 11.11$, $SD = 1.80$), than youth who did not complete the 3-month SoR ($M = 11.59$, $SD = 2.18$), and this difference was also statistically significant ($t(307.18) = 2.23$,

$p < .05$). For mentors, although in general, mentors who completed the 3-month SoR were more likely to be younger ($M = 30.65$, $SD = 8.97$), than mentors who did not complete the 3-month SoR ($M = 32.25$, $SD = 10.35$), this difference was not statistically significant ($t(342) = 1.49$, $p = .14$). The findings of the t -tests involving age are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Independent-Samples T-Test for Mentor and Youth Age and SoR Completion

| | | 3 Month SoR | | |
|--------|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Overall |
| Mentor | Age | $M = 30.65$ ($SD = 8.97$) | $M = 32.25$ ($SD = 10.35$) | $M = 31.20$ ($SD = 9.48$) |
| Youth | Age | $M = 11.11$ ($SD = 1.80$) | $M = 11.59$ ($SD = 2.18$) | $M = 11.33$ ($SD = 1.99$) |

Chi-Square Test. Due to missingness involving the SoRs, additional chi-square tests were conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in mentor and youth SoR completion rates by specific participant demographics. Three additional participant demographics were selected including: gender, and the dichotomized variables race (mentor/youth of color or not) and income (mentor/parent above or below the median household income). For parent income, this variable was included in the contingency table involving the youth SoR. A series of 2 X 2 contingency table analysis were conducted. For mentor gender, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 344) = 3.03$, $p = .08$, completion rate for male is 60.5% and female is 69.5%). A similar result was observed for youth, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 345) = 2.28$, $p = .13$,

completion rate for male youth is 50% and female youth is 58.2%). For the variable mentor race, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 344) = .94, p = .33$, completion rate for white mentors is 67.4% and mentors of color is 62%). A similar result was observed for youth, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 348) = 1.10, p = .30$, completion rate for white youth is 60% and youth of color is 53.4%). Finally, for the variable mentor income, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 343) = .01, p = .91$, completion rate for mentor above median household income is 65.6% and below median household income is 64.9%). A similar result was observed for parent/guardian income, the results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2(1, N = 329) = .01, p = .94$, completion rate for parent/guardian above median household income is 55% and below median household income is 54.3%). The findings of these demographic variables are summarized in Table 4.

Furthermore, completion patterns between a paired mentor and mentee were examined to determine if there was an association for a matched pair's completion of the SoR questionnaire. A 2 X 2 contingency table analysis was conducted and the results indicated that there was a statistically significant association between a matched mentor-mentee SoR completion ($\chi^2(1, N = 354) = 128.31, p < .001$), suggesting that matched pairs were more likely to complete the SoR together (50.3%) or not complete the SoR together (29.7%), when compared to only one of them completing the SoR (15.5% and 4.5% respectively for mentor only SoR and mentee only SoR). This association was strong with a large effect size, $\Phi = .60$ (see Table 5 and Figure 3). Finally, two 4 X 2 contingency table analyses were conducted to see whether there was a significant

difference in mentor and youth SoR completion rates by site. For the mentor SoR, the completion rates were somewhat different across the four sites, $\chi^2(3, N = 354) = 10.14$, $p < .05$, $\Phi = .17$), with completion rates ranging from 58.6% to 78%. Similarly, for the youth SoR, completion rates were somewhat different across the four sites, $\chi^2(3, N = 354) = 22.92$, $p < .01$, $\Phi = .25$), with completion rates ranging from 38.4% to 71%.

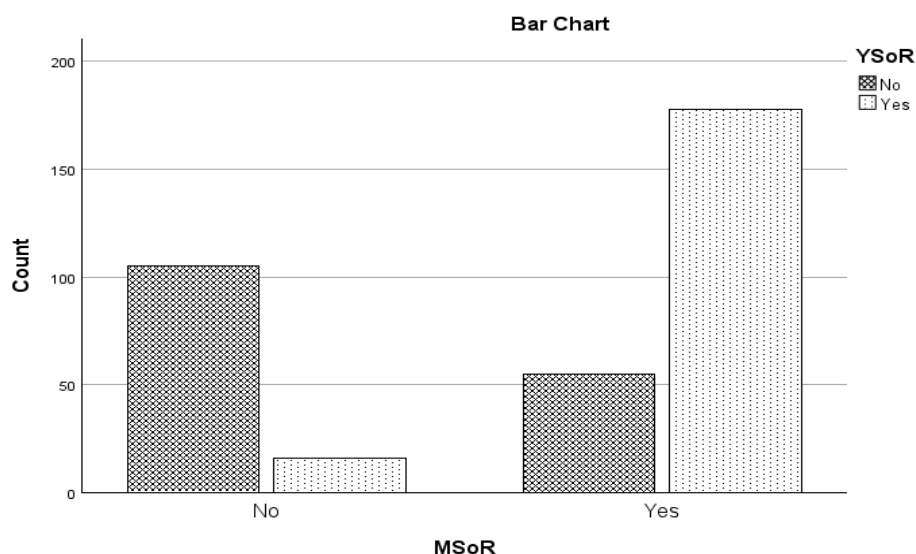
Table 4

Chi-Square Summary of Mentor and Youth Demographics and SoR Completion

| | | | 3 Month SoR | |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | | Yes | No |
| Mentor | Gender | Male | 60.5% ($n = 89$) | 39.5% ($n = 58$) |
| | | Female | 69.5% ($n = 137$) | 30.5% ($n = 60$) |
| | | Overall | 65.7% ($n = 226$) | 34.3% ($n = 118$) |
| | Race/Ethnicity | White | 67.4% ($n = 159$) | 32.6% ($n = 77$) |
| | | Mentor of Color | 62% ($n = 67$) | 38% ($n = 41$) |
| | | Overall | 65.7% ($n = 226$) | 34.3% ($n = 118$) |
| | Income | Above | 65.6% ($n = 137$) | 34.4% ($n = 72$) |
| | | Below | 64.9% ($n = 87$) | 35.1% ($n = 47$) |
| | | Overall | 65.3% ($n = 224$) | 34.7% ($n = 119$) |
| Youth | Gender | Male | 50% ($n = 72$) | 50% ($n = 72$) |
| | | Female | 58.2% ($n = 117$) | 41.8% ($n = 84$) |
| | | Overall | 54.8% ($n = 189$) | 45.2% ($n = 156$) |
| | Race/Ethnicity | White | 60% ($n = 48$) | 40% ($n = 32$) |
| | | Youth of Color | 53.4% ($n = 143$) | 46.6% ($n = 125$) |
| | | Overall | 54.9% ($n = 191$) | 45.1% ($n = 157$) |
| | Income (Parent) | Above | 55% ($n = 22$) | 45% ($n = 18$) |
| | | Below | 54.3% ($n = 157$) | 45.7% ($n = 132$) |
| | | Overall | 54.4% ($n = 179$) | 45.6% ($n = 150$) |

Table 5*Matched Pair's SoR Completion*

| | | Youth SoR | |
|------------|-----|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Mentor SoR | Yes | 178 (50.3%) | 55 (15.5%) |
| | No | 16 (4.5%) | 105 (29.7%) |

Figure 3*Visual Output of Matched Pair's SoR Completion Questionnaire*

Summary. Based on the outcomes of the *t*-tests and chi-square analyses, there were no statistically significant differences for SoR completion rates among mentor and youth demographic groups, with the exception of youth age. Youth who completed the SoR were more likely to be younger youth. However, match duration was a statistically significant factor for completion of 3-month SoR for both mentors and mentees in that, those who had a longer lasting relationship were more likely to complete the 3-month

SoR. Additionally, completion patterns were also identified between a matched pair's completion of the SoR, such that matched pairs were more likely to complete or not complete the SoR together, compared to only one of them completing the SoR. Finally, significant findings were observed with respect to SoR completion rates by site for both mentor and youth. Given these observed patterns, it can be concluded that the data are missing not at random (MNAR). As aforementioned, when the missing patterns of the data are MNAR, irrespective of the number of values, it can cause serious threats to generalizability (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). When the data are MNAR as is the case here, the use of multiple imputation can be counterproductive and lead to biased results, particularly because multiple imputation does not account for the existing patterns in missing data (Hughes et al., 2019). Hughes et al. (2019) recommended the use of complete case analysis (CCA) when data are MNAR, because CCA can yield unbiased results in situations of MNAR. Consequently, and given that the data are MNAR, the CCA approach was used in this dissertation analyses.

Reliability of Measures

After reversing all necessary items, the Cronbach's alpha was obtained for each measure to assess its internal consistency. The measures included, the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (and the two subscales Empathic Perspective Taking and Acceptance of Cultural Differences), the MSoR, and the YSoR. According to Wang et al. (2003) the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy has a respectable internal consistency, with a reported Cronbach α of .91. In the current study, the Cronbach α coefficient for Ethnocultural Empathy was .77. For the subscale Empathic Perspective Taking, the Cronbach α obtained was .69, and .77 for the subscale Acceptance of Cultural

Differences. The Cronbach α coefficient for the MSoR measure has been reported as low as .76 (Nakkula & Harris, 2014) and as high as .85 (Rhodes et al., 2014). In the current study, the Cronbach α for the mentor SoR was .85. For the YSoR measure, the Cronbach α coefficient has been reported as low as .73 (Nakkula & Harris, 2014) and as high as .79 (Rhodes et al., 2014); in the current study, the Cronbach α coefficient was .67.

Descriptive Statistics

Results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Range</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> | <i>N</i> |
|---|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy | 4.60 | .61 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 339 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking | 4.20 | .77 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 339 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences | 5.16 | .65 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 339 |
| Mentor Strength of Relationship | 4.10 | .49 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 233 |
| Youth Strength of Relationship | 4.80 | .27 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 194 |
| Match Length (in months) | 19.01 | 10.71 | 39.65 | .16 | 39.81 | 354 |
| Match Closure Under 12 Months (1 = 12+ months) | .69 | .46 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 354 |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (1 = mentor of color) | .31 | .46 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 344 |
| Racial Match (1 = cross race match) | .52 | .50 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 339 |
| Income Match (1 = cross-income) | .54 | .50 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 319 |

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations among mentors' ethnocultural empathy, MSoR, YSoR, and match duration are presented in Table 7. Preliminary analyses for correlation revealed that there was a positive association between ethnocultural empathy and MSoR ($r = .17$, $p < .05$). Empathic perspective taking was positively associated with MSoR ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), and acceptance of cultural differences was positively associated with MSoR ($r = .13$, $p = .05$). There was a positive association between MSoR and YSoR ($r = .17$, $p < .05$), match duration (in months; $r = .23$, $p < .01$), and the dichotomized match duration variable ($r = .25$, $p < .01$). The relationship between YSoR and match duration (in months) was positive ($r = .20$, $p < .01$).

Core Study Results

The two overarching research questions examined in this study were: (a) To what extent is mentor ethnocultural empathy associated with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? and (b) Under what circumstances does mentor ethnocultural empathy have a greater association with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? Several analyses were conducted to answer these research questions and a series of hypotheses. Analyses included: bivariate regression, moderation models, cox regression, and logistic regression.

Table 7*Bivariate Correlations*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Ethnocultural empathy | — | | | | | | |
| 2. Empathic perspective taking | .91** | — | | | | | |
| 3. Acceptance of cultural differences | .74** | .40** | — | | | | |
| 4. Mentor SoR | .17* | .15* | .13 ⁺ | — | | | |
| 5. Youth SoR | .07 | .07 | .06 | .17* | — | | |
| 6. Match duration (in months) | .01 | -.01 | .04 | .23** | .20** | — | |
| 7. Match duration (dichotomized) | .03 | .00 | .06 | .25** | .10 | .77** | — |
| Respondents (<i>N</i>) | 339 | 339 | 339 | 233 | 194 | 354 | 354 |
| Mean (<i>SD</i>) | 4.60 (.61) | 4.20 (.77) | 5.16 (.65) | 4.10 (.49) | 4.80 (.27) | 19.01 (10.71) | .69 (.46) |

*Note 1. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p = .05$

1. Bivariate Regression Analyses

1-1. Mentor SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR. Bivariate regression analyses were conducted to predict a mentor's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. A bivariate regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and mentor-reported SoR one at-a-time; a total of three analyses were conducted.

H1a-M. Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.

The first bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a mentor's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy. Ethnocultural empathy was a statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .17, t = 2.53, p < .05$), such that mentors with higher ethnocultural empathy endorsed stronger mentoring relationships.

H1b-M. Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.

The second bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a mentor's reported SoR based on the mentor's empathic perspective taking. Empathic perspective taking was a statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .15, t = 2.25, p < .05$), such that mentors with higher empathic perspective taking endorsed stronger mentoring relationships.

H1c-M. Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the mentor.

The third bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a mentor's reported SoR based on the mentor's acceptance of cultural differences. Acceptance of cultural differences was a marginally statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .13, t = 1.97, p = .05$), such that mentors with higher acceptance of cultural differences endorsed stronger mentoring relationships.

1-2. Mentor SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict YSoR. Similar hypotheses were tested using bivariate regression analyses to predict a youth's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. A bivariate regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and youth-reported SoR one at-a-time; a total of three analyses were conducted.

H1a-Y. Mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.

The first bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a youth's reported SoR based on the mentor's ethnocultural empathy. Ethnocultural empathy was not a statistically significant predictor for the YSoR.

H1b-Y. Mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.

The second bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a youth's reported SoR based on the mentor's empathic perspective taking. Empathic perspective taking was not a statistically significant predictor for the YSoR.

H1c-Y. Mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will have stronger mentoring relationships, as reported by the youth.

The third bivariate regression analysis was conducted to predict a youth's reported SoR based on the mentor's acceptance of cultural differences. Acceptance of cultural differences was not a statistically significant predictor for the YSoR.

2. Moderation by Mentor Race/Ethnicity

2-1. Interaction Between Mentor's Race/Ethnicity and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR. Interaction effects were examined between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict MSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$;

Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Interaction Between Mentor's Race/Ethnicity and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Mentor SoR

| | Mentor Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | .21 | 2.56 | .01 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | .05 | .71 | .48 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and SEE | -.10 | -1.18 | .24 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 2.67 | 3, 218 | < .05 | .04 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | .20 | 2.28 | .02 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | .05 | .72 | .47 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and EPT | -.10 | -1.15 | .25 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 2.20 | 3, 218 | .09 | .03 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | .15 | 1.91 | .06 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | .07 | .99 | .32 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and ACD | -.05 | -.66 | .51 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 1.71 | 3, 218 | .17 | .02 |

H2a-M. Ethnocultural Empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{\text{MSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Ethnocultural Empathy} \\ + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 218) = 2.67, R = .19, p < .05$).

The interaction term was not statistically significant nor mentor's race/ethnicity; however, ethnocultural empathy was statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .21, t = 2.56, p < .05$), after controlling for other variables, such that mentors with higher ethnocultural empathy endorsed stronger mentoring relationships as reported by the mentor.

H2b-M. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{\text{MSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Empathic Perspective} \\ \text{Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 218) = 2.20, R = .17, p = .09$). The interaction term was not statistically significant nor mentor's race/ethnicity; however, empathic perspective taking was statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .20, t = 2.28, p < .05$), after controlling for other variables, such that mentors with higher empathic perspective taking endorsed stronger mentoring relationships as reported by the mentor.

H2c-M. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{MSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 218) = 1.71, R = .15, p = .17$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

2-2. Interaction Between Mentor's Race/Ethnicity and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict YSoR. Interaction effects were examined between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict YSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between a mentor's race/ethnicity and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict YSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$; Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 9.

H2a-Y. Ethnocultural Empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{YSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Ethnocultural Empathy} + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

Table 9

Interaction Between Mentor's Race/Ethnicity and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Youth SoR

| | Youth Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | .08 | .83 | .41 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | -.02 | -.23 | .82 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and SEE | .00 | .03 | .98 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .35 | 3, 180 | .79 | .01 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | .13 | 1.31 | .19 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | .00 | .03 | .98 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and EPT | -.10 | -.98 | .33 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .59 | 3, 180 | .62 | .01 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | -.02 | -.21 | .84 | |
| Mentor Race/Ethnicity (dichotomize) | -.03 | -.35 | .73 | |
| Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and ACD | .16 | 1.85 | .07 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 1.35 | 3, 180 | .26 | .02 |

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 180) = .35, R = .08, p = .79$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H2b-Y. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Empathic Perspective Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 180) = .59, R = .10, p = .62$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H2c-Y. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for white mentors than for mentors of color.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Mentor Race/Ethnicity and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Mentor Race/Ethnicity} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 180) = 1.35, R = .15, p = .26$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

3. Moderation by Racial Match

3-1. Interaction Between Racial Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR. Interaction effects were examined between a racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between a

racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict MSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$; Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

Interaction Between Racial Match and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Mentor SoR

| | Mentor Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | .22 | 2.31 | .02 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | -.07 | -.99 | .32 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and SEE | -.05 | -.57 | .57 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 3.06 | 3, 213 | < .05 | .04 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | .20 | 2.15 | .03 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | -.07 | -.96 | .34 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and EPT | -.09 | -.92 | .36 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 2.31 | 3, 213 | .08 | .03 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | .17 | 1.71 | .09 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | -.09 | -1.33 | .18 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and ACD | .00 | .01 | .99 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 2.73 | 3, 213 | < .05 | .04 |

H3a-M. Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{\text{MSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Ethnocultural Empathy} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 213) = 3.06, R = .20, p < .05$).

The interaction term was not statistically significant nor racial match; however, ethnocultural empathy was a statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .22, t = 2.31, p < .05$) after controlling for other variables, such that mentors with higher ethnocultural empathy endorsed stronger mentoring relationships as reported by the mentor.

H3b-M. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{\text{MSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Empathic Perspective Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 213) = 2.31, R = .18, p = .08$). The interaction term was not statistically significant nor racial match; however, empathic perspective taking was a statistically significant predictor for the MSoR ($B = .20, t = 2.15, p < .05$) after controlling for other variables, such that mentors with higher empathic perspective taking endorsed stronger mentoring relationships as reported by the mentor.

H3c-M. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{MSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

Although the overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 213) = 2.73, R = .19, p < .05$), none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

3-2. Interaction Between Racial Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict YSoR. Interaction effects were examined between a racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict YSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between a racial match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict YSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$; Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 11.

H3a-Y. Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{YSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Ethnocultural Empathy} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

Table 11*Interaction Between Racial Match and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Youth SoR*

| | Youth Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | -.01 | -.04 | .97 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | .01 | .12 | .90 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and SEE | .11 | 1.04 | .30 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .69 | 3, 177 | .56 | .01 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | -.08 | -.79 | .43 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | .01 | .15 | .88 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and EPT | .21 | 2.11 | .04 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 1.72 | 3, 177 | .17 | .03 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | .16 | 1.43 | .16 | |
| Racial Match (dichotomize) | .01 | .09 | .93 | |
| Interaction Racial Match and ACD | -.13 | -1.14 | .26 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .68 | 3, 177 | .56 | .01 |

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 177) = .69, R = .11, p = .56$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H3b-Y. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Empathic Perspective Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

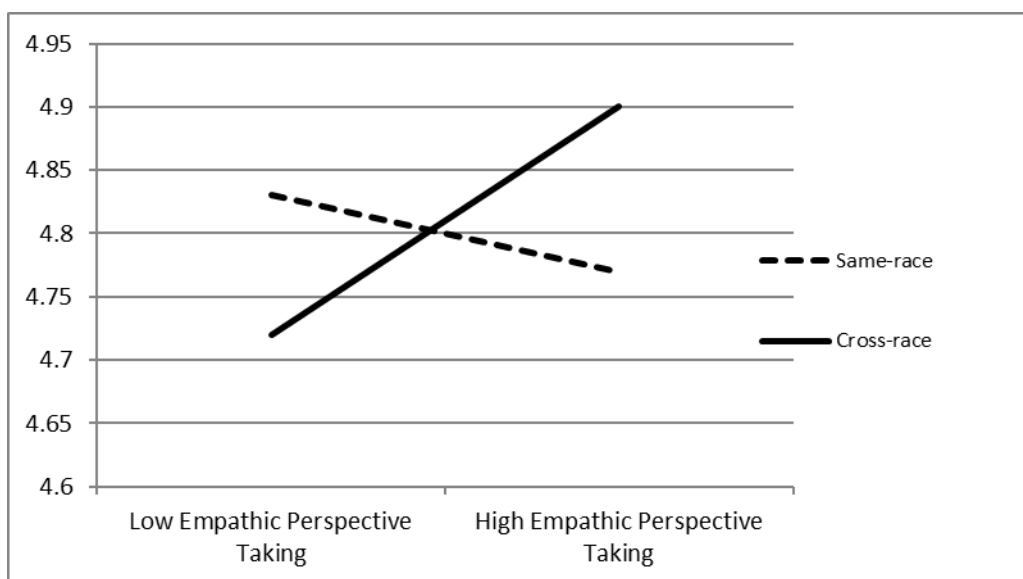
Although the overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 177) = 1.72$, $R = .17$, $p = .17$), the interaction term between racial match and empathic perspective taking was statistically significant in predicting the YSoR ($B = .21$, $t = 2.11$, $p < .05$), after controlling for other variables. The results indicated that empathic perspective taking was more highly associated with the strength of the relationship for cross-race matches than for same-race matches. A mentor's empathic perspective taking level appears to have stronger, and positive, impacts for cross-race matches. For cross-race matches, youths who have mentors with a higher level of empathic perspective taking reported stronger relationships as compared to youths who have mentors with lower level of empathic perspective taking. For the same-race matches, mentor's empathic perspective taking levels seem to have negative impact on youth-reported strength of relationship, although the effect is not as pronounced for this group. None of the other predictors were statistically significant. The interaction plot was created based on the following regression equation using unstandardized betas:

$$\hat{Y}_{\text{YSOR}} = 4.80 + .12 \text{ (interaction term: racial match x centered empathic perspective taking)} + .01 \text{ (racial match)} - .03 \text{ (centered empathic perspective taking)}$$

The interaction plot shown in Figure 4 was created to illustrate these relations. High and low empathic perspective taking scores were created based on 1 standard deviation (*SD*) above and below empathic perspective taking scores based on centered empathic perspective taking scores.

Figure 4

Interaction Plot Between Racial Match and Mentor EPT to Predict Youth SoR



H3c-Y. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-race matches than for same-race matches.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Racial Match and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Racial Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 177) = .68, R = .11, p = .56$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant including the interaction term.

4. Moderation by Income Match

4-1. Interaction Between Income Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict MSoR. Interaction effects were examined between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict MSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict MSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$; Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 12.

H4a-M. Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{\text{MSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X \text{ Interaction Income Match and Ethnocultural Empathy} + \beta_2 X \text{ Income Match} + \beta_3 X \text{ Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

Although the overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 200) = 4.17, R = .24, p < .01$), none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

Table 12*Interaction Between Income Match and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Mentor SoR*

| | Mentor Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | .09 | .90 | .37 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | .01 | .21 | .84 | |
| Interaction Income Match and SEE | .17 | 1.70 | .09 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 4.17 | 3, 200 | < .01 | .06 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | .09 | .92 | .36 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | -.00 | -.02 | .98 | |
| Interaction Income Match and EPT | .16 | 1.62 | .11 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 3.72 | 3, 200 | < .01 | .05 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | .05 | .49 | .63 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | .02 | .29 | .77 | |
| Interaction Income Match and ACD | .14 | 1.30 | .20 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | 2.18 | 3, 200 | .09 | .03 |

H4b-M. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{MSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Income Match and Empathic Perspective Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Income Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

Although the overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 200) = 3.72$, $R = .23$, $p < .01$), none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H4c-M. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{MSOR} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Income Match and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Income Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 200) = 2.18$, $R = .18$, $p = .09$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

4-2. Interaction Between Income Match and SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict

YSoR. Interaction effects were examined between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences to predict YSoR using a multiple regression analysis. The interaction terms between an income match and mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were entered to predict YSoR. All the results indicated that multicollinearity was not of a concern ($VIF < 10$; Pallant, 2013). The summary results for the multiple regression models can be found in Table 13.

Table 13*Interaction Between Income Match and SEE, EPT, and ACD to Predict Youth SoR*

| | Youth Strength of Relationship | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| | β | t | p -value | |
| Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) | .03 | .29 | .77 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | -.06 | -.78 | .44 | |
| Interaction Income Match and SEE | .04 | .35 | .73 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .43 | 3, 167 | .71 | .01 |
| Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) | .04 | .36 | .72 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | -.07 | -.84 | .40 | |
| Interaction Income Match and EPT | -.01 | -.05 | .96 | |
| Overall Model | F | df | p -value | R^2 |
| | .31 | 3, 167 | .82 | .01 |
| Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) | .01 | .07 | .94 | |
| Income Match (dichotomize) | -.05 | -.67 | .50 | |
| Interaction Income Match and ACD | .09 | .76 | .45 | |
| Overall Model | F | $d.f$ | p -value | R^2 |
| | .72 | 3, 167 | .54 | .01 |

H4a-Y. Ethnocultural empathy will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Income Match and Ethnocultural Empathy} + \beta_2 \text{ X Income Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Ethnocultural Empathy} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 167) = .46, R = .09, p = .71$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H4b-Y. Empathic perspective taking will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Income Match and Empathic Perspective Taking} + \beta_2 \text{ X Income Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Empathic Perspective Taking} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 167) = .31, R = .08, p = .82$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

H4c-Y. Acceptance of cultural differences will be more highly associated with the strength of the relationship (SoR) for cross-income matches than for same-income matches.

$$Y_{\text{YSOR}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ X Interaction Income Match and Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \beta_2 \text{ X Income Match} + \beta_3 \text{ X Acceptance of Cultural Differences} + \epsilon$$

The overall model was not statistically significant ($F(3, 167) = .72, R = .11, p = .54$), and none of the predictors were statistically significant, including the interaction term.

5. Cox Regression Analyses: Mentor SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict Match Duration

Cox regression analyses were conducted (with the survival function) to evaluate if mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences were related to the duration of the mentoring relationship. The independent variables included mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences (all ranging from 1 to 6, with higher values indicating greater ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences). The dependent variable was match duration which was recorded in months ($N = 354$). The match duration ranged from .16 to 39.81 months ($M = 19.01$, $SD = 10.71$). Again, 116 matches were active (not closed) at the end of data collection, and consequently they were censored. A Cox regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and match duration one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted.

H5a. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will last longer.

The first Cox regression analysis was conducted to evaluate if greater mentor ethnocultural empathy was related to longer lasting mentoring relationships. The results indicated that mentors' ethnocultural empathy was not a significant predictor of match duration ($p = .90$).

H5b. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will last longer.

The second Cox regression analysis was conducted to evaluate if greater mentor empathic perspective taking was related to longer lasting mentoring relationships. The

results indicated that mentors' empathic perspective taking was not a significant predictor of match duration ($p = .75$).

H5c. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will last longer.

The third Cox regression analysis was conducted to evaluate if greater mentor acceptance of cultural differences was related to longer lasting mentoring relationships. The results indicated that mentors' acceptance of cultural differences was not a significant predictor of match duration ($p = .42$).

6. Logistic Regression Analyses: Mentor SEE, EPT, or ACD to Predict Match Duration

The same three hypotheses were tested using logistic regression to evaluate the relation between the likelihood of a match lasting more than a year and a mentor's level of ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. The predictors were ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, or acceptance of cultural differences. The outcome variable was match duration. For match duration, the matches that lasted less than 12 months (closed under 12 months) were coded as 0 and the matches that lasted at least 12 months (lasted twelve months or longer) were coded as 1. A logistic regression analysis was conducted with each predictor variable and match duration one at-a-time, a total of three analyses were conducted.

H6a. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater ethnocultural empathy will last longer.

The first logistic regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relation between the likelihood of a match lasting more than a year and a mentor's level of

ethnocultural empathy. Ethnocultural empathy was not a statistically significant predictor for match duration ($\chi^2 (1, N = 339) = .33, p = .57, \text{Cox-Snell } R^2 = .00$).

H6b. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater empathic perspective taking will last longer.

The second logistic regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relation between the likelihood of a match lasting more than a year and a mentor's level of empathic perspective taking. Empathic perspective taking was not a statistically significant predictor for match duration ($\chi^2 (1, N = 339) = .01, p = .94, \text{Cox-Snell } R^2 = .00$).

H6c. Mentoring relationships involving mentors with greater acceptance of cultural differences will last longer.

The third logistic regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relation between the likelihood of a match lasting more than a year and a mentor's level of acceptance of cultural differences. Acceptance of cultural differences was not a statistically significant predictor for match duration ($\chi^2 (1, N = 339) = 1.37, p = .24, \text{Cox-Snell } R^2 = .00$).

Chapter Six: Discussion

Given the positive youth outcomes associated with participation in mentoring programs, there is growing interest in the mentoring field to explore factors associated with mentoring relationship quality and duration in formal youth mentoring programs. In comparison to the majority of volunteer mentors, many young people participating in formal mentoring programs are of a racial-ethnic minority group and tend to be economically disadvantaged. With these racial-ethnic and economic differences between mentors and mentees, the dynamics that such differences create within mentoring relationships require further exploration. Drawing from previous literature, there is a clear need for mentors and mentees to establish mutuality, trust, and empathy in the mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2005), with mentors having a greater responsibility of fostering these key ingredients in the relationship. Therefore, the attributes and character qualities that mentors bring to the relationship are important and should be further explored and examined.

Using bivariate regression analyses, the current study examined main effects of a mentor's ethnocultural empathy on MSoR and YSoR. Ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective-taking, and acceptance of cultural differences were all predictors of the MSoR. Mentors with more ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective-taking, and acceptance of cultural differences endorsed a stronger (better quality) mentoring relationship. It is likely mentors who were better equipped from the beginning to be more understanding of differences were able to be more empathetic toward themselves, their mentee, and the mentoring relationship. This could have led to more positive perceptions and experiences of the mentoring relationship from the mentor's perspective. Considering

that mentors have a greater responsibility in fostering healthy relationship dynamics with youth, are choosing to become mentors through formal mentoring programs (versus natural mentors), and thus, may already have a general idea of the backgrounds of the youth participating in these programs (Miranda-Díaz et al., 2020), it is possible that many mentors already possessed a certain level of ethnocultural empathy needed in the mentoring relationship. In this sample, on average, mentors were slightly on the higher end of ethnocultural empathy at baseline ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .61$). Although the ethnocultural empathy of mentors may have been somewhat elevated overall, with the possibility of limited variability on this scale within this sample, a statistically significant association was still found with relationship quality.

These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Spencer et al. (2020) that highlighted the importance of mentor empathy, which included perspective-taking and adaptability in youth mentoring relationships. Specifically, Spencer et al. (2020) found that mentors who were able to engage more empathically in the relationship through perspective-taking within the context of racial and economic differences, immigration status, as well as be understanding, open and flexible reported being more satisfied with the mentoring process and experience. The same study found that mentors who were not willing to engage in perspective-taking experienced the mentoring process and overall experience as challenging. These mentors struggled to form purposeful connections with youth and, consequently, grew dissatisfied with the relationship. In some cases, these mentors projected those negative thoughts/feelings (frustration) on to the mentee/mentee's family (Spencer et al., 2020).

In the current study, ethnocultural empathy and the two sub-scales were important in predicting the strength of the relationship as perceived and experienced by the mentor, but no main effects or apparent impact was found for the YSoR. This is an interesting phenomenon because the mentoring relationship and youth are impacted by the qualities, skills, and attributes of the mentor (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006; Spencer, 2012). A potential explanation for the differences in findings between the mentor SoR and the youth SoR could be a possible ceiling effect for the youth SoR. Based on the descriptives involving the youth SoR ($M = 4.80$, $SD = .27$), it appears that there was greater variability in the distribution of scores for the mentor SoR compared to the youth SoR. The ceiling effect involving the youth SoR could have also been partially attributed to the timing of the YSoR. At 3 months into the mentoring relationship, it is possible that these youth continued to experience excitement about the start of their mentoring relationship and may not have yet encountered challenges in the relationship or with their mentor (or at least not any that would have persuaded them to respond differently). For youth, perhaps mentor ethnocultural empathy might be more relevant or important later in the mentoring relationship, after the dyad has encountered more and different experiences, and once the relationship has gone through different stages of development (Keller, 2005a). After the initial enthusiasm for the relationship, longer experience together could potentially lead to different results and more variability in the distribution of scores for the YSoR. Conversely, the fact that there was more variability with the mentor SoR than with the youth SoR, suggests that perhaps the mentors were more discerning regarding their perceptions about the strength (quality) of the relationship, and consequently there was more variability to explain. Nonetheless, the

fact that mentor-reported ethnocultural empathy had no main effects or impact on how youth perceived and experienced the strength (quality) of the relationship at 3 months raises the question that perhaps other factors or circumstances may have an effect (or moderate the effects) on youths' perception/experience of the strength (quality) of the relationship, and that this is a topic that necessitates further research.

To explore possible interaction effects associated with ethnocultural empathy and MSoR and YSoR, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted with moderators and interaction terms. In the first set of moderation analyses, which included the moderator mentor race/ethnicity (White mentor or mentor of color) and the interaction terms, ethnocultural empathy and empathic perspective-taking remained predictors of the MSoR; in fact, the coefficient estimate for both increased. However, neither the moderator nor the interaction terms were significant predictors of the MSoR. Furthermore, like in the bivariate analyses, mentor ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences were not predictors of the YSoR, and neither were the moderator nor the interaction terms. Previous studies have placed greater emphasis on the effects of mentor characteristics (personal and social demographics including mentor race/ethnicity) and prior mentoring experience on match duration (see Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Grossman et al., 2012; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Raposa et al., 2016). In relation to mentoring relationship quality, available literature has been centered around the role that gender (see C. L. Liao & Sánchez, 2019; Liang et al., 2014) and social class (Deutsch et al., 2014) has on relationship quality. Despite the moderator (mentor race/ethnicity) and the interaction terms not being significant predictors in the current study, race/ethnicity is still likely to be important in youth

mentoring relationships. For example, other studies have emphasized the importance of relatability in mentoring relationships specific to race/ethnicity within the context of cross-racial/cultural matching (see Spencer, 2007), something that was explored in this study.

In the second set of moderation analysis which included the moderator racial match (same or cross-race match), mentor ethnocultural empathy and empathic perspective taking continued to be significant predictors of the mentor SoR, but acceptance of cultural differences was not. Interestingly, the interaction term between racial match and mentor empathic perspective taking was a significant predictor of the YSoR. Consistent with the hypothesis, this finding indicated a greater association for cross-race matches than for same-race matches, suggesting that youth in cross-race matches who had mentors with more empathetic perspective taking endorsed a stronger mentoring relationship, whereas that was not necessarily the case for youth in same-race matches. Although the literature has been mixed regarding youth outcomes and mentoring relationship experiences in same or cross-race matches, this study found that mentor empathic perspective taking (specific to race/ethnicity/culture) influenced how youth experienced their mentor and the relationship dynamics in relation to race, ethnicity, and culture. It is possible that youth in these relationships felt a sense of comfort and safety expressing their racial-ethnic and cultural values, beliefs, and customs. Youth in these relationships may have experienced validation from their mentors of their racial-ethnic identity, and perhaps these mentors were better prepared to problem solve cultural differences in the mentoring relationship and were more empathic and flexible with their own discomfort regarding racial-ethnic and cultural differences.

This finding aligns with a qualitative study conducted by Spencer (2006) which consisted of in-depth interviews with mentors and mentees. The aim was to better understand the relational processes of the mentoring relationship that aided with the formation of strong bonds and better youth outcomes, and mentor empathy was an important element in the relational process. More specifically, the study emphasized empathy as it relates to mentors having the ability to be mindful of how differences in culture between themselves and the families influenced the relationship dynamics. This also allowed mentors to better understand the challenges experienced by their mentees and make the connection that some of the difficulties experienced by their mentee “were connected to their larger relational and social contexts” (Spencer, 2006, p. 309). Perhaps cross-race matches may have the potential to provide growth learning opportunities for mentors and mentees with understanding different lived experiences, and with bridging differences (Rhodes et al., 2002), but this is likely to be most successful when mentors have higher levels of ethnocultural empathy, specifically empathic perspective taking.

Furthermore, and as aforementioned, in the study conducted by Spencer et al. (2020), mentors who were able to apply an empathetic, perspective taking, and an adaptable approach to the relationship reported a better-quality relationship and overall mentoring experience. Perhaps there is a parallel here, where the youth with mentors who displayed more empathic perspective taking experienced a more positive mentoring relationship experience because they felt understood by their mentors, felt as if their mentors were trying to understand their point of view, and felt that their mentors were better equipped to navigate situations related to differences in background or at least be open to such differences. Additionally, a similar finding was observed by Leyton-

Armakan et al. (2012) where once racial match status (same-race or cross-race) was introduced as a moderator between mentor ethnocultural empathy and mentee relationship satisfaction (or self-reported improvement) ethnocultural empathy was positively associated with youths' "satisfaction with relationship connection" (p. 916), these youth felt more connected to the relationship.

Leyton-Armakan et al. (2012) also concluded that this finding was stronger in cross-race matches than in same-race matches. This is something that was similarly observed in this study, where in same-race matches, mentor empathic perspective taking levels seemed to have had a negative impact on YSoR, although the effect was not as pronounced for this group. I can only speculate that perhaps in same-race matches, there are other factors (perhaps even within group differences) and relationship dynamics that could be moderating the relationship between mentor ethnocultural empathy and the strength of the relationship from the youth's perspective. For example, in this study, a same-race match does not necessarily mean that the mentor and youth share the exact same racial-ethnic and cultural background; instead, a same-race match constitutes a mentor of color paired with a youth of color, or a white mentor paired with a white youth. Although people from communities of color may share similar lived experiences as members of the non-dominant group, this does not imply that differences do not exist. Perhaps in some of these same-race matches racial-ethnic and cultural differences were present, and this may have mattered to the youth in these relationships.

Additionally, in matches where both the mentor and mentee shared the same race-ethnic or cultural background, within group differences can still be present. This is something that I have experienced and observed personally (though my lived experiences

as a member from a community of color) and professionally. Consequently, continuing to explore how race/ethnicity and culture factor in mentoring relationships should be examined on a continuum (beginning, middle, and end of relationships). Pairing mentors and mentees only based on race without factoring additional mentor-mentee characteristics (such as within and between racial, ethnic, and cultural group differences) can pose challenges, and culturally responsive practices such as considering between and within group differences are strongly encouraged (Sánchez et al., 2014). Several works have examined same versus cross-race (ethnic and cultural) matching in youth mentoring relationships under different circumstances (mentor or mentee characteristics, mentor relational skills) or within the context of examining specific youth outcomes and match length (see Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; L. C. Liao & Sánchez, 2015; Rhodes et al., 2002; Spencer, 2007). However, there is limited literature in the mentoring field with mentor ethnocultural empathy at the forefront in combination with racial match status to examine this dynamic from the youths' perspective in relation to the strength of the mentoring relationship experience (e.g., Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012), as was the case here with the YSoR.

In the third set of moderation analysis which included the moderator income match (same or cross-income), neither ethnocultural empathy (and the two subscales) nor the moderator or the interaction terms were predictors of the mentor or youth SoRs. A possible explanation for the non-significant findings for economic factors in this study could have been the measure used. Perhaps ethnocultural empathy (which is centered on racial/ethnic background differences) was not the best measure to use in combination with same or cross-income match to assess the strength of the mentoring relationship.

Utilizing a different measure (e.g., Yun & Weaver (2010) *Development and Validation of a Short Form of the Attitude Toward Poverty Scale*) may have yielded different results. Although in this study these relationships were not significant, previous research has indicated through qualitative inquiries that differences in socioeconomic status (social class) between mentors and youth can influence the relationship dynamics and, in some cases, hinder the quality of the relationship. I can only speculate that perhaps these youth may not have had the developmental maturity to fully grasp the complexities of how social class factors in the mentoring relationship, something that perhaps the youths' parents may have been more attuned to. For example, in a qualitative study that examined the role of parents in the youth mentoring process, mixed feelings and feelings of discomfort regarding differences in social class backgrounds were inevitable, with one parent in particular expressing feelings of "guilt and indebtedness to the mentor" (Spencer et al., 2011, p. 56). In a different study that examined causes of premature relationship endings, it was concluded that tension occurred in the mentoring relationship when mentors did not have (or minimally had) awareness of how their biases or differences about class (economic differences), race/ethnicity, and values influenced the mentoring relationship (Spencer, 2007). It is also possible that differences in class may not have been as important for these mentors and youth, when compared to other relationships dynamics. For example, through a narrative thematic analysis involving participants (mentors, parents, and program staff) of community-based mentoring programs, Spencer et al. (2022) examined how social class bias from mentors and program staff influenced the mentoring relationship. Findings revealed that although some mentors were able to work in partnership with parents regarding the challenges they faced based on their economic

circumstances, other mentors and some program staff held a deficit mindset of the youth and family. These deficit viewpoints (to some extent) were “rooted in negative social class-based assumptions about attitudes and behaviors” (Spencer et al., 2022, p. 1579). The same study revealed three main tendencies that were observed in mentors and program staff who held these social class biases: (a) deficit-based views of families and youth, (b) individual level attributions for the family's economic circumstances and blaming of caregivers, and (c) perceiving mentors as being underappreciated by the youth's caregiver. Such tendencies and viewpoints held by the mentor (or program staff) left parents feeling disenchanted by the mentoring relationship, with these perspectives also contributing “to the minimization of parent/caregiver voice in the mentoring process and negative interpretations of parent/caregiver and, in some cases, youth attitudes and behaviors” (Spencer et al., 2022, p. 1579).

Therefore, despite the lack of findings for the blunt income dichotomies in this study, it seems advisable for mentors and program staff to make intentional efforts of becoming more aware of class biases irrespective of whether a mentor is in a same or-cross class match. Not taking class differences seriously can have negative implications on youth and the field (Deutsch et al., 2014).

In summary, the racial match moderator, in particular cross-race pairings, had the greatest impact. Unlike mentor race or income match, cross-race conceptually aligns better with mentor ethnocultural empathy because there is a clear cultural difference, and therefore, ethnocultural empathy should have greater importance. Although intersections between race and social class exist, conceptually speaking, ethnocultural empathy and

“socioclass empathy” are different. These findings are not surprising or disappointing, in fact, the specificity of these variables is what future research should continue to examine.

The final analyses consisted of a series of Cox regressions and logistic regressions to examine if mentor ethnocultural empathy was a predictor of match duration. Mentor ethnocultural empathy (and the two subscales) were not predictors of match duration in either type of analysis. I can only assume that perhaps there are other factors that affect match closures (or the duration of the mentoring relationship) that are extraneous to the relationship. For example, in the larger STAR study 63.5% of overall relationship endings (closures) were because of a mentor-oriented reason, and the top four reasons reported for a match closure were “a time constraint on the part of the mentor” (Keller & Spencer, 2017, p. 42), followed by a move on the part of the mentor, the mentor lost contact with the child/agency, and finally a move on the part of the child/family (Keller & Spencer, 2017). Therefore, I can only speculate that significant findings were more likely to be observed with the MSoR and YSoR than with the duration of the mentoring relationship, in part, because one speaks more about the strength (quality) of the relationship, whereas the duration of the relationship is impacted by so many other factors.

While not observed in this study, it is important to underscore that ethnocultural empathy or basic empathy have been important in establishing healthy mentoring relationships between youth and mentors in formal mentoring programs (see Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012; Liang et al., 2002; Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006; Spencer, 2006, 2007, 2012); and with a healthier (better quality) mentoring relationship therein lies the potential for the relationship to last longer. Mentoring relationship endings are

inevitable, and like with everything that has a beginning, youth mentoring relationships also have an ending. Considering that there are many reasons why mentoring relationships end (see DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2021), and that longer relationships produce better outcomes for youth (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Higley et al., 2016), it is important to continue to explore indicators that are conducive to better quality and longer lasting relationship. Therefore, and irrespective of the non-significant findings in this study regarding match duration, we cannot entirely discount ethnocultural empathy as a possible factor in match duration, and more research is warranted.

Limitations

There are some limitations to the current study that are worth noting, mostly due to the challenges of using secondary data. One of the challenges involved the measures used. As previously mentioned, the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003) consists of four factors. However, in the current study only two factors were included. The two factors were chosen by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator of the larger study because: (a) they were clear, (b) they would not create any confusion for study participants, and (c) they were the most applicable when assessing mentoring relationship dynamics. It is possible that additional insights may have been brought to light had the remaining factors been included in the study, allowing a much more comprehensive examination of ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring relationships. With respect to the mentor and youth SoRs, as previously noted by other researchers more “published validity evidence” (Nakkula & Harris, 2014, p. 57) is needed. While the SoRs have been standard practice for some formal mentoring programs (e.g., BBBSA) it

is important to mention that this measure speaks to the experience in the match but may not necessarily fully assess its strength or quality. Consequently, it is important to continue to determine if this measure is the most appropriate for assessing relationship strength/quality (Nakkula & Harris, 2014). Which also includes assessing the reliability of the measures, particularly because in the current study, the Cronbach α coefficient for the YSoR was .67, which may have been another reason why it was less likely to see findings involving the YSoR. Another challenge with the use of secondary data is the completeness of the data (Singleton & Straits, 2010), something that was evident in this study, particularly with the MSoR and YSoR questionnaires. Several SoR questionnaires were missing, something that I found confusing considering that one reason for implementing the SoR with mentors and mentees at 3 months is for programs to have a greater understanding of the status of the mentoring relationship and in doing so, be able to provide support to the match with the hope of preventing a premature match ending. This is especially true because a great number of mentoring relationships end early (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017). Reasons as to why several SoRs were not collected (were missing) are unknown, but some were lost to attrition; participants in matches that ended prior to the 3 months never had the opportunity to respond to the 3 month SoR. These matches may not have been high quality relationships (or perhaps were relationships that included mentors with lower levels of ethnocultural empathy), and their absence may have reduced variability on the SoR. Another reason for the absence of SoRs could have included participants that were not as responsive to the requests of the agency, perhaps those that did respond to the SoR included participants that were experiencing a stronger

(better quality) relationship and wished to be in more compliance with the agency. It is important to note that the attrition (missingness) involving the SoRs may have contributed to losing variability in the scores and perhaps made it more challenging to find significant findings or stronger findings. Although the number of missing SoRs is a limitation in this study, it is important to underscore that overall insightful information was still captured regarding the association between mentor ethnocultural empathy and the mentor and youth SoR.

Another limitation has to do with social desirability (response bias), something that is not uncommon with the use of self-administered questionnaires. As mentioned earlier, at baseline mentors in this study on average ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .61$) were slightly on the higher end in their level of ethnocultural empathy, which may have led to not enough variability in the distribution of scores. Considering that mentors completed the baseline survey prior to becoming mentors and starting their mentoring relationship, it is possible that these mentors endorsed responses that appeared more favorable and that would not hinder their chances of becoming a mentor while still going through the vetting process (although the data were collected independently by the research team). Furthermore, it is possible that these prospective mentors experienced some level of cognitive bias in their responses when assessing their level of ethnocultural empathy at baseline. Perhaps some of these mentors inflated their responses in this first assessment without truly grasping and making an accurate assessment of their level of ethnocultural empathy within the complexity of mentoring relationship dynamics, especially because their responses were captured prior to the start of the mentoring relationship. Consequently, prospective mentors had not yet had the experience of engaging in these relationship dynamics when

they were responding to the questions at baseline. However, it is possible that with the passage of time (after the mentoring relationship started), some mentors may have come to realize the complexities of these relationships and may have felt differently about their competence and confidence as a mentor, with navigating racial/ethnic and cultural dynamics with their mentees and their families, and about their overall level of ethnocultural empathy. One additional consideration regarding the measure is that it may have created some feelings of discomfort for some participants, and this may have also influenced how participants responded to the questions. The items are thought and self-reflection provoking, and perhaps not all mentors were ready, willing, or able to engage in their responses to these questions in a more transparent light (e.g., with minimal bias, and fear of being judged). When taken together, to some extent, these measurement limitations raise questions about the validity of the measure. With respect to the mentor SoR, a similar parallel regarding response bias could have been present perhaps the findings for mentor ethnocultural empathy and mentor SoR to some extent, could be partially attributed to the methods for data collection (method bias—surveys) and social desirability from the mentors, but I can only speculate about this.

Another limitation is the demographic (race/ethnicity and gender) composition of the mentors and youth in the sample. It is important to note that this sample was made up of participants from BBBSA, and the findings might not be relevant for all mentoring programs, specifically with respect to the demographics of the sample. However, the composition of the sample is consistent with patterns and trends observed more generally in formal mentoring programs (Raposa et al., 2017). Further, some of the demographic categories in the baseline surveys may have created confusion for participants. During the

stages of data cleaning, some challenges were identified which informed the coding of the categorical variables for the moderation models. Lastly, and although the sample size was not a limitation in this study, something alarming was the number of mentoring relationships that terminated early (prior to the 12-month commitment), consisting of approximately one third (30%; Keller & Spencer, 2017). However, this early match termination rate is not uncommon and closely reflects trends observed more generally in formal mentoring programs (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

Implications and Future Research

The social work profession and the mentoring field have several intersections. Central to the social work profession is the need for social justice and social change, cultural sensitivity, and to anchor ourselves by having in mind the best interest of individuals and communities (NASW, 2008). Similarly, the mentoring field continues to seek understanding about the relationship dynamics between youth and mentors, and recommends five ethical principles to programs that could be conducive to high quality programs and mentoring relationships, such as: “promoting the welfare and safety of the young person, be trustworthy and responsible, act with integrity, promote justice for young people, and respect the young person’s rights and dignity” (Rhodes et al., 2009, pp. 453-456).

In the spirit of these ethical principles, ethnocultural empathy (while still an emerging concept in youth mentoring) can be a quality and a tool in the youth mentoring field. As a quality, in the current study mentors with more ethnocultural empathy reported having a stronger relationship. Similarly, youth in cross-race matches who had

mentors with more ethnocultural empathy also reported a stronger relationship. Therefore, prospective mentors (with the support of program practitioners) should explore their level of ethnocultural empathy and capitalize on this quality or make improvements if they wish to have a better mentoring experience and foster positive relationships with prospective mentees and their families. As a tool, mentoring researchers and program practitioners (including social workers working with youth in these settings) should strongly consider assessing ethnocultural empathy with prospective mentors if the goal is to develop quality relationships that will yield favorable outcomes for mentors and youth. Through this assessment process, programs will be better equipped to make screening determinations of mentors—whether to screen out, provide growth (learning) opportunities, or capitalize on this existing quality. Incorporating ethnocultural empathy in this process could also be beneficial for programs who are interested in recruiting mentors with more altruistic motivations for volunteering. In their study, Miranda-Díaz et al. (2020) concluded that mentors with more ethnocultural empathy endorsed “higher levels of altruistic motivations for volunteering” (p. 174).

Other mentoring researchers (e.g., Sánchez et al., 2017; Spencer, 2007; Spencer et al., 2022) have underscored the importance of examining the beliefs that mentors bring to the mentoring relationship regarding their mentees’ ethnic/racial and economic backgrounds and considering that “mentor training affects mentor retention and youth outcomes” (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2014, p. 439) thoughtful consideration should be given to the type of training that mentors receive. For example, in the study mentioned above by Leyton-Armakan et al. (2012), where mentor ethnocultural empathy and youth relationship satisfaction was examined, this study took place with participants who were

part of a program that provided ongoing cultural/diversity training to mentors. The need to provide ongoing cultural/diversity training is something that has also been explored by Jones et al. (2023). In their study, mentors in cross-race dyads (involving White mentors and Black mentees), voiced and underscored the importance of receiving ongoing support/training in order to better support their mentee with experiences that occur with growing up (Jones et al., 2023). Providing training to mentors on the topics of cultural sensitivity/humility, equity, and social justice should be a standard practice implemented by programs (Anderson & Sánchez, 2022) because these trainings could help enhance ethnocultural empathy in mentors and bring awareness of important issues impacting communities of color. By assessing mentors' ethnocultural empathy and implementing relevant and quality trainings, practitioners will be able to better support the relationship, and mentors will be better prepared at every stage of the mentoring relationship to support their mentee, this is especially true in situations where mentors may question their ability or comfort in addressing or navigating racial/ethnic and cultural differences or other topics of race with mentees, something that was observed in a study conducted by Jones et al. (2022).

Using in-depth semi-structured interviews, Jones et al. (2022) examined how White mentors navigated “topics acknowledging ethnic/racial identity and issues centered around social justice and recognize their own privileges when mentoring Black youth in community-based youth mentoring programs” (p. 1). In their findings, they concluded that some mentors either did not feel comfortable having these conversations or did not find it necessary (relevant) at all. However, they also concluded that “mentoring Black youth did have an effect on how mentors' perceived awareness of social issues and

acknowledgement of privileges they hold” (Jones et al., 2022, p. 1). Practitioners and mentoring researchers should strongly consider including race (racial differences) in the mentoring relationship equation, as is evident in this study and in other works showing that racial/cultural differences matter in youth mentoring relationship and will become apparent in different ways, whether from the mentor’s, youth’s or parent’s perspective and experience of the mentoring relationship. Ethnocultural empathy could serve as a bridge for cultural differences with the hope of producing better quality relationships. Furthermore, mentor ethnocultural empathy could have additional benefits for youth. For example, Peifer et al. (2016) concluded in their study that mentor ethnocultural empathy was positively associated with mentees’ ethnic identity exploration, something that was more strongly observed in mentees of color. It appears that mentor ethnocultural empathy has the potential to positively contribute to youths’ ethnic identity exploration (Peifer et al., 2016) something that could be viewed as a protective factor. Consequently, social workers working with diverse youth in settings who partner with mentoring programs should raise questions about the supports/training facilitated to mentors and staff about cultural awareness. Even more so, if social workers identify these gaps in existing mentoring programs, they should strongly consider partnering with programs to develop culturally responsive trainings and practices.

In this study, one third of mentoring relationships ended early (30%; Keller & Spencer, 2017), and although this rate is like that of trends more generally observed in formal mentoring programs (DeWit, DuBois, Erdem, Larose, Lipman, & Spencer, 2016; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017), it is evident that something needs to shift in the field. Acknowledging that matches end early and that early match termination

can be harmful to young people is not enough. The work does not end there, the work necessitates action and curiosity. I invite mentoring researchers and practitioners, as well as social workers, to remain curious about how the emerging concept of ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring could factor in mentoring relationships, particularly as it relates to match duration. Perhaps there are other factors that are mediating or moderating the relationship between ethnocultural empathy and match duration, such as the SoR questionnaires. I am interested in further examining through a different form of analysis (e.g., structural equation modeling) if the SoRs mediate this relationship and if it matters more/less at 3 or 12 months. As aforementioned, irrespective of the non-significant findings in this study as it relates to ethnocultural empathy and match duration, the field and profession must remain curious about these relations. Premature match endings pose their own challenges which can lead to negative effects for youth (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Kupersmidt et al., 2017; Spencer et al., 2017; Zilberstein & Spencer, 2017). These recommendations are in alignment with the principles of having in mind the best interest of individuals and communities (NASW, 2008), “promoting the welfare and safety of the young person” (Rhodes et al., 2009, pp. 453-456), and with two of the Grand Challenges for Social Workers—*Ensure healthy development for all youth* and *Eradicate social isolation* (Grand Challenges for Social Work, 2019).

A limitation in this study was the number of missing SoR questionnaires. From a practice and prevention approach, programs should continue to prioritize collecting this information at 3 months. This information will help practitioners have a better understanding of the status of the relationship and inform what support the relationship needs to be successful or at a minimum, identify what supports or actions are needed to

minimize potential harm or an early match ending. In the future, I am interested in further exploring at which point in the relationship ethnocultural empathy matters more. I am interested in examining if ethnocultural empathy is more important at 3 or 12 months into the relationship, in order to further inform the prevention and intervention work that is needed to support the relationship dynamics between mentors, mentees, and families.

Additionally, and as I reflect on my dissertation project, it is important to reflect on when these data were collected (between the years 2013-2017). These data were collected pre-Donald Trump administration and pre-pandemic. As is common knowledge, during the Trump administration and the COVID-19 pandemic there was a shift in the nation, a shift that came with racial, economic, and social unrest. These two events and the intersection of the two further highlighted the disparities in this country, and exacerbated and normalized the racism that has been part of the nation's past, its present, and likely its future. Advocates, social justice groups, protests regarding the treatment of people of color by law enforcement and the justice system (e.g., George Floyd, and immigrant children/adults in detention centers), and movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too were very active and prominent during this period. Considering that these data were collected prior to these events, it is possible that today these data could look different as circumstances may have considerably changed for people. If prior to the Trump administration and the pandemic ethnocultural empathy mattered to mentors and youth participating in youth mentoring programs, I contend that today, ethnocultural empathy may be more relevant and necessitates further examination in the youth mentoring field, particularly when considering the shifts that this nation has undergone and the effects of these shifts on historically oppressed groups.

Furthermore, and when considering the shifts that this nation has undergone and the effects of these shifts on historically oppressed groups, researchers and practitioners should continue to remain critical and curious of the measures used in research and in practice, and if needed, consider alternative measures that might also be a good (or even better) fit for specific groups and their lived experiences. The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (Wang et al., 2003) is one tool. However, it may not be the only tool, perhaps there are other tools (see Gonzales et al., 2016) that might also be a good fit in youth mentoring relationships within the context of perceived discrimination and the lived experiences of specific groups. Therefore, mentoring researchers should also consider expanding the concepts of race/ethnicity and cultural dynamics in mentoring relationships under perhaps a broader umbrella, such as oppression, and consider centering the lived experiences of youth participating in mentoring programs through this lens in the measures used. Doing so may also capture intersections and dynamics of multiple identity groups that go beyond racial/ethnic/cultural dynamics in mentoring relationships.

Conclusion

This study underscores the complexity of mentoring relationships and the need to further explore and examine mentor-mentee relationship dynamics. In this study, I investigated if a mentor's level of ethnocultural empathy predicted the strength and length of the mentoring relationship, and if this effect was moderated by a mentor's race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match. Two overarching research questions were examined: (a) To what extent is mentor ethnocultural empathy associated with indicators of mentoring relationship quality? and (b) Under what circumstances does mentor

ethnocultural empathy have a greater association with indicators of mentoring relationship quality?

Based on findings from quantitative analyses, mentor ethnocultural empathy is an important factor positively associated with a mentor's perception and experience of the strength (quality) of the mentoring relationship at 3 months. Mentors who endorsed higher levels of ethnocultural empathy, empathic perspective taking, and acceptance of cultural differences tended to report stronger mentoring relationships. Furthermore, when mentor ethnocultural empathy was examined under different circumstances (e.g., mentor race/ethnicity, racial match, and income match) somewhat similar findings held. After mentor race/ethnicity and the interaction terms were introduced, mentor ethnocultural empathy and empathic perspective taking continued to be a predictor of the MSoR. A similar trend was observed when racial match and the interaction terms were introduced, mentor ethnocultural empathy and empathic perspective taking remained predictors of the MSoR. Interestingly, when examining the same relationships with the YSoR, mentor empathic perspective taking mattered for youth in cross and same-race matches. For youth in cross-race matches, this relationship was positive, suggesting that youth who were in cross-race matches and had mentors with more empathic perspective taking tended to report a stronger mentoring relationship at 3 months. Although the same positive relationship was not observed in same-race matches (which should be further explored in future research or through program practices), these findings suggest that mentor empathic perspective taking is important in the mentor-mentee relationship dynamic from the mentee's perspective at 3 months into the relationship.

This study clearly illustrates the need for researchers and practitioners to remain curious about the work, and it also raises the importance of reflecting on intent, impact, and action in youth mentoring and the direction of the field. While the intent of mentoring and mentoring programs is to contribute positively to youth and provide opportunities for youth, we must be willing to see beyond the intent and take accountability of the impact (whether positive or negative) that mentoring can create in the lives of young people. This study offers researchers and practitioners the opportunity to act by exploring and examining ethnocultural empathy as a quality and as a tool in youth mentoring. By incorporating ethnocultural empathy as prevention work during the recruitment and screening phases of potential mentors, practitioners will be able to identify areas of growth and training that mentors need in relation to views of cultural differences, provide support with bridging these differences, and raise awareness of issues about race. As intervention work (after the inception of the mentoring relationship) examining the quality of the mentoring relationship is important to help prevent an early match ending. In this study, ethnocultural empathy was an important factor associated with how mentors and youth experienced and perceived the mentoring relationship at 3 months. Practitioners should consider the 3-month follow-up with matches as an opportunity to assess the quality of the relationship and its association with mentor ethnocultural empathy, in order to provide training and support at every developmental stage of the relationship. Additionally, policy makers of mentoring programs should consider a similar process with program staff, when considering the instrumental role that program staff have in supporting mentoring relationships, examining staffs' level of ethnocultural empathy necessitates further consideration and research. Programs should

also consider providing staff with training that will bring to light their own views, perceptions, and biases of cultural differences for the purpose of personal growth and to be better equipped to support mentors, youth, and families.

Although there were limitations, this study and its approach provides new insights, enhances, and contributes to the existing and emerging literature surrounding ethnocultural empathy in youth mentoring (e.g., Anderson & Sánchez, 2022; Leyton-Armakan et al., 2012; Marshall et al., 2015; Miranda-Díaz et al., 2020; Peifer et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 2020), and on previous research centered on mentor-mentee background differences and racial matching. This study further underscores that race, and perceptions about race and culture matter in youth mentoring. In this study, it mattered to mentors and youth in relation to how they experienced the strength (quality) of the mentoring relationship. Finally, and although there were no significant findings associated between ethnocultural empathy and match duration, I am seeing this as an opportunity for future research. The fact that ethnocultural empathy was associated with the SoR leaves me wondering if the SoR might serve as a mediator between ethnocultural empathy and match duration. Practitioners and researchers should consider ethnocultural empathy as a quality and tool that when utilized correctly has the potential to “reduce rather than reproduce social patterns of oppression, stigmatization, and inequality” (Keller et al., 2020, p. 35) in youth mentoring relationships.

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Appendix A. STAR Mentor Consent Form

Portland State University
Consent for Participation in Research
Study To Analyze Relationships (STAR)
Mentor Consent Form

Invitation

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Thomas Keller from Portland State University and Renée Spencer from Boston University. The researchers want to learn what factors influence the development and duration of new youth mentoring relationships. This study is being done in cooperation with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and is funded by the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. You are being asked to participate in this research because you are going through the volunteer enrollment process at a Big Brothers Big Sisters agency that is participating in the study.

What you would do

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey prior to being matched with a mentee that has questions about your background, attitudes, personality, interests, social experiences, and motivations for being a mentor. This survey is anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. After you have been in your match for 15 months, you will be asked to complete a second online survey with questions about your mentoring relationship and experiences in the program. If your relationship with your new mentee ends less than 15 months after being matched, you will be asked to complete the second online survey right after your match ends. If your match ends in less than 15 months, it is also possible that you could be contacted by the researchers for an interview over the telephone asking you to describe various aspects of your mentoring relationship and your experiences in the program. If you agree to the telephone interview, it will be audio-taped for an accurate record of the conversation.

As part of its normal program operations, the Big Brothers Big Sisters agency will be gathering information about you and your mentoring relationship. By agreeing to be in the research, you are giving the researchers permission to be provided access to this information.

Potential risks and benefits

While participating in this study, it is possible that some questions may be difficult or uncomfortable to answer. You may skip questions that you prefer not to answer. You also may contact the researchers to discuss any questions or concerns about the survey.

You may not receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study, although some people like the opportunity to share information and feedback about their experiences. The study

may increase knowledge to help mentors in the future. What we learn from this study may lead to the improvement of services offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters and other youth mentoring programs.

Honorarium

To recognize your time and effort in the study, you will receive \$15 at the time of your follow-up survey. You will receive an additional \$40 if you are asked to complete a telephone interview.

Privacy

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be linked to you or identify you will be kept confidential. We will use ID codes so that your name is never connected with the responses you provide. All data will be kept in secure locations or stored in password protected university computers. The web-based survey will be hosted on secure server through a service dedicated to web-based research. Your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or publications. Reports will present statistically summarized data, and names will be changed for any quotations. Although Big Brothers Big Sisters staff will know about your participation in the research, your responses will not be shared with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program or anyone else. The study will have a Privacy Certificate with the Department of Justice. This means the researchers will not ever be required to release any information you provide to legal authorities for any reasons (like a court subpoena). The only exceptions would be if information indicates you may harm yourself or others, or there is an indication of child maltreatment.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study, and your decision will not affect your relationship with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. You also may withdraw from this study at any time or decide not to do any part of the study without affecting your status with your Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Future contact

The researchers also ask for permission to contact you in the future about possible participation in studies related to this research. Potential participation in any future studies would be entirely optional. If you grant this permission, please initial here (_____ **initials**).

Questions or concerns

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, please contact Thomas Keller at kellert@pdx.edu or (503-725-8205). If you have concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Portland State University Office of Research Integrity, phone (503) 725-2227 or 1 (877) 480-4400.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information. You will be provided with a copy of this form for your own records.

Please mark the appropriate choice below to indicate your decision about participation in the study:

_____ I agree to participate in the study _____ I do *not* agree to participate in the study

(Print name)

(Signature)

Date

Research representative signature _____

Date _____
(must be same date as participant signature)

PLEASE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON NEXT PAGE

Please provide your contact information. Please also give information for two people (friends, relatives), with whom you are not currently living, who will always know how to reach you.

Mentor contact information

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Best times to call: _____

Email address(es): _____

Friend or relative who could help to contact or locate you (# 1)

Name _____

Relationship to you _____

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Email address(es): _____

Friend or relative who could help to contact or locate you (# 2)

Name _____

Relationship to you _____

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Email address(es): _____

Appendix B. STAR Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Portland State University
Consent for Participation in Research
Study To Analyze Relationships (STAR)
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Invitation

You are being asked to give permission for your child to participate in a research study about the development of youth mentoring relationships. You also are being asked to provide your voluntary consent to participate in the research yourself. The study is being conducted by Thomas Keller from Portland State University and Renée Spencer from Boston University in cooperation with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. You and your child are being asked to participate in this research because your child is enrolled to have a new match in a Big Brothers Big Sisters agency participating in the study. In addition, your child meets eligibility requirements for the study based on age (9-16 yrs old) and family circumstances.

What your child would do

If you give permission, your child will be asked to complete a survey before the match with a mentor is started. The survey has questions asking your child about things that might be important in the mentoring relationship, like attitudes, personality, behaviors, interests, social experiences, and expectations for having a mentor. This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. If the relationship with the new mentor ends within fifteen months of being in the program, your child will be asked to complete a second survey with questions about the mentoring relationship and experiences in the program. This second survey may be done by mail or over the telephone.

By providing permission for your child to participate in the research, you also are agreeing for the researchers to have access to the information that the Big Brothers Big Sisters agency has about your child, your participation in the program, and the mentoring relationship.

What you would do

If you agree to be in the study, you also will be asked to complete a survey before the match is started. The survey has questions asking about your child's personality, behaviors, and interests. The survey also asks about your family circumstances and your expectations for the mentoring program. This survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. If the relationship with the new mentor ends within fifteen months of being in the program, you will be asked to complete a second survey with questions about the mentoring relationship and experiences in the program. This survey may be done by mail or over the telephone. If the match ends, it is also possible that you could be contacted by the researchers for an interview over the telephone asking additional questions about experiences in the program. The telephone interview would be audio-taped for an accurate record of the conversation.

Potential risks and benefits

While participating in this study, it is possible that some questions may be difficult or uncomfortable for you or your child to answer. You and your child may skip questions that you prefer not to answer. You and your child also may contact the researchers to discuss any questions or concerns about the survey.

You and your child may not receive direct benefits from taking part in this study, although some people like a chance to talk about their experiences. What we learn from this study may lead to better services offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters and other youth mentoring programs.

Honorarium

To recognize time and effort for the study, your child will receive \$15 for completing the baseline survey and an additional \$15 if your child completes a follow-up survey. You will receive \$30 for completing the baseline survey, an additional \$30 if you complete a follow-up survey, and an additional \$40 if you are asked to do a telephone interview.

Privacy

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be linked to you or identify you and your child will be kept confidential. We will use ID codes so that your names are never connected with your responses. All data will be kept in secure locations or stored in password protected university computers. The identity of you and your child will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or publications. Reports will present statistical data, and names will be changed for any quotations. Although Big Brothers Big Sisters staff will know about your participation in the research, your responses will not be shared with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program or anyone else. The study will have a Privacy Certificate with the Department of Justice. This means the researchers will not ever be required to release any information you provide to legal authorities for any reasons (like a court subpoena). The only exceptions would be if information indicates you may harm yourself or others, or there is an indication of child maltreatment.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research is voluntary. You and your child do not have to be in this study, and your decision will not affect your relationship with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. You and your child also may withdraw from this study at any time or decide not to do any part of the study without affecting your status with your Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Future contact

The researchers also ask for permission to contact you in the future about possible participation in studies related to this research. Potential participation in any future studies would be entirely optional. If you grant this permission, please initial here (_____ **initials**).

Questions or concerns

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact Thomas Keller at kellert@pdx.edu or (503-725-8205). If you have concerns about your rights as a research

subject, please contact the Portland State University Office of Research Integrity, phone (503) 725-2227 or 1 (877) 480-4400.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information. You will receive a copy of this form for your own records.

Please mark the appropriate choice below to indicate your decision about participation in the study:

_____ I agree to have my child participate in the study and I agree to participate myself as well

_____ I do not agree to have my child participate in the study

(Print name)

(Signature)

Date _____

Research representative signature _____

Date _____
(must be same date as participant signature)

PLEASE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON NEXT PAGE

Please provide your contact information below. Please also provide contact information for two other people (friends or relatives), with whom you are not currently living, who will always know how to reach you.

Parent/Guardian contact information

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Best times to call: _____

Email address(es): _____

Friend or relative who could help to contact or locate you (#1)

Name _____

Relationship to you _____

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Email address(es): _____

Friend or relative who could help to contact or locate you (#2)

Name _____

Relationship to you _____

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

Email address(es): _____

Appendix C. STAR Youth Assent Form

Portland State University
Study To Analyze Relationships (STAR)
Youth Assent Form

Invitation

You are being asked to be in a research study about mentoring relationships. Your parent/guardian has given permission for you to be in the study. We are asking you to be in the research because you are involved with a Big Brothers Big Sisters agency that is part of the study. You also are right for the study based on your age and family situation.

What will you do?

First, we want you to fill out a survey. There are questions about your attitudes, behaviors, interests, and activities. This survey will take about 30 minutes to finish. If your match with your Big Brother or Sister happens to end before 15 months, we would want you to do another survey about what it was like to have a Big Brother or Sister and what happened in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. This survey might be done by mail or over the telephone.

Potential risks and benefits

There may be some questions on the survey that you don't feel like answering or that might make you feel bad to think about. If that ever happens, you can just skip the questions.

We hope to learn things about mentoring relationships that can help other kids in the future who are in Big Brothers Big Sisters programs.

Gift

To thank you for doing the study, we will give you \$15 after the first survey and another \$15 if you do another survey later.

Privacy

The researchers are going to learn some information about you and your family, and they will do everything they can to keep your information private. No one that you know will ever get to see your answers to the questions on the surveys. We use ID codes so your name is never on the survey.

Voluntary participation

It is your choice to be in this research. Your decision does not change your chances of getting a Big Brother or Big Sister. You also can stop being in the study at any time, and nothing bad will happen if you decide to leave the study.

Questions or concerns

If you have questions about this study, you can contact Thomas Keller at kellert@pdx.edu or (503-725-8205) or people at Portland State University (503) 725-4288.

Signature

I have read (or someone has read to me) the above information. I have my own copy of this form.

Please mark the appropriate choice:

_____ I agree to be in the study

_____ I do not agree to be in the study

(Print name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Research representative signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D. The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (Wang et al., 2003)

1. It is easy for me to understand what it would feel like to be a person of a racial or ethnic background other than my own.
2. It is difficult for me to relate to stories in which people talk about racial or ethnic discrimination they experience in their day to day lives.
3. It is difficult for me to put myself in the shoes of someone who is racially and/ or ethnically different from me.
4. I know what it feels like to be the only person of a certain race or ethnicity in a group of people.
5. I can relate to the frustration that some people feel about having fewer opportunities due to their racial or ethnic backgrounds.
6. I feel uncomfortable when I am around many people who are racially/ ethnically different than me.
7. I don't know a lot about important social and political events of racial and ethnic groups other than my own.
8. I feel irritated when people of different racial or ethnic background speak their language around me.
9. I feel annoyed when people do not speak standard English.
10. I get impatient when communicating with people from other racial or ethnic backgrounds, regardless of how well they speak English.
11. I don't understand why people want to keep their indigenous racial or ethnic cultural traditions instead of trying to fit into the mainstream.
12. I don't understand why people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds enjoy wearing traditional clothing.

Appendix E. Mentor Strength of Relationship (Rhodes et al., 2014)

1. I am enjoying the experience of being a Big.
2. I expected that being a mentor would be more fun than actually it is.
3. My Little and I are interested in the same things.
4. I feel confident handling the challenges of being a mentor.
5. Being a Big is more of a time commitment than I anticipated.
6. I feel overwhelmed by my Little's family difficulties.
7. My Little has made improvements since we started meeting.
8. I sometimes feel frustrated with how few things have changed with my little.
9. My Little and I are sometimes at a loss for things to talk about.
10. It is hard for me to find the time to be with my Little.
11. I think my Little and I are well-matched.
12. I get the sense that my Little would rather be doing something else.
13. My Little has trouble sticking with one activity for very long.
14. I feel close to my Little.

Appendix F. Youth Strength of Relationship (Rhodes et al., 2014)

1. My Big has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem.
2. My Big helps me take my mind off things by doing something with me.
3. When I'm with my Big, I feel ignored.
4. When I'm with my Big, I feel mad.
5. When I am with my Big, I feel safe.
6. When I'm with my Big, I feel disappointed.
7. My relationship with my Big is very important to me.
8. When I'm with my Big, I feel bored.
9. When something is bugging me, my Big listens while I talk about it.
10. I feel close to my Big.