

ABSTRACT

HARPER-BALL, TINA MICHELLE. Cross-Cultural Mentoring of Educational Leadership Trainees (Under the direction of Dr. Tamara Young).

Informed by social capital theory, this qualitative study sought to understand mentors and mentees experiences in cross-cultural mentoring relationships established to support the career development of assistant principals. The data from interviews with seven mentors and mentees in school districts located in the southeast region of the United States indicated that the experiences of mentors and mentees varied. Gaining new insights and visibility in new networks were important benefits to participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Also, in some cases, the mentor provided the mentee access to their network, which expanded their social capital. Some mentors shared that they did not think to provide their mentees access to their network. The findings also suggested that differences in the demographic backgrounds between the mentor and mentee may diminish or even eliminate some of the benefits of the mentoring relationship. Improper pairing, as well as lack of time to build trust, cultivate the relationship, and collaborate, impeded the achievement of potential benefits from the relationship. Informed by the results, I delineate several recommendations for both practitioners and researchers about cross-cultural mentoring in educational leadership to improve participants' experiences and its impact on assistant principals' professional development.

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Cross-Cultural Mentoring of Educational Leadership Trainees

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my maternal grandparents, John H. Harper and Pauline Battle Harper. Thank you for always encouraging me to dream and pursue my goals.

I also thank my husband of 27 years, Mr. Robert Lee Ball Jr., for his tireless support of my academic endeavors.

To my two children, Rah ‘Shun Ball and Iman Ball, thank you so much for your words of encouragement and high expectations of me.

To my siblings, Darlicia Harper, Shawn Harper, and Dominick Garner, I am humbled by your love, support, and respect. As the oldest child, it has always been my duty to set a positive example; therefore, I dedicate my dissertation to each of you.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Regena H. Jordan. Thank you for being a prayer warrior and always loving and supporting me in every aspect of my life. This accomplishment would not have been possible without you.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Tina Michelle Harper-Ball earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Middle School Language Arts and Social Studies from North Carolina Central University. After teaching for 10 years, she obtained her Masters of School Administration from North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her dedication to public education led her to pursue an Ed.D., a goal she set for herself at the age of 18.

Tina loves spending time with her eight grandchildren, including Maccabaeus who became an angel at five days old, but is still very much a part of her heart. The smiles on those precious faces and giggles of delight bring Tina great joy and hope. It is Tina's deepest desire to instill in each of her grandchildren a love for learning, a passion for excellence, and a fearlessness to persevere during times of adversity.

The required isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic and the heart-wrenching loss of family and friends allowed Tina to discover a new passion: gardening. She loves watching her herbs and vegetables grow. Gardening serves as a release from the fast pace of daily life and allows her to enjoy moments of quiet reflection. Also, Tina finds harvesting the vegetables with her grandchildren to be wonderful experience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Purpose and Rational of Study	4
Conceptual Framework	4
Overview of Research Methods	6
Significance of the Study	6
Limitations of the Study	7
Definition of Key Terms	7
Chapter Summary	9
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Chapter Introduction	11
Origins and Definitions of Mentoring	11
Formal and Informal Mentoring	14
Mentoring versus Coaching	17
Mentoring School Administrators and Principals	21
Mentoring Assistant Principals	22
Cross-Cultural Mentoring	23
Social Capital	24

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	28
Research Questions	28
Research Design.....	28
Study Participants	29
Data Collection.....	30
Interviews	30
Pre-Screening Questionnaire.....	31
Memoing	32
Data Analysis	32
Process.....	32
Trustworthiness	33
Subjectivity Statement	33
Ethical Considerations	34
Chapter Summary.....	34
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	35
Chapter Introduction	35
Participant Demographics	35
Themes from Study Findings.....	37
Research Question 1.....	38

Social Networks	38
Professional Practice	40
Trust and Honesty	41
New Environments and Roles	42
Time	43
Research Question 2.....	44
New Insights.....	44
Visibility in New Networks.....	45
Research Question 3.....	46
Differences in Race/Ethnicity	46
Age	47
Gender	48
Research Question 4.....	49
Improving Cultural Sensitivity	49
Identifying Commonalities.....	50
Conducting Self-Reflection.....	51
Sharing Trust and Authenticity	51
Covid-19 Pandemic.....	52
Chapter Summary.....	54

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	55
Chapter Introduction	55
Key Findings	55
Limitations of the Study.....	58
Implications of the Study	59
Recommendations for Mentoring Practices	61
Future Directions for Research	62
REFERENCES	64
APPENDICES	79
Appendix A: Solicitation Email.....	80
Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter.....	81
Appendix C: Prescreening Questions.....	82
Appendix D: Mentor Participant Questionnaire	83
Appendix E: Mentee Participant Questionnaire.....	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Comparison of Features of Formal and Informal Mentoring	17
Table 2: Comparison of Mentoring and Coaching Relationships.....	20
Table 3: Background Information for Study Participants.....	36
Table 4: Themes from Study Findings.....	38

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Educational leaders need a wide range of skills and knowledge to prepare for the complex and challenging job of being an educational leader in the twenty-first century. As such, how to best prepare educational leaders is the subject of much debate. The nature and impact of course content, instructional methods, and theoretical frameworks used by district and university principal preparation programs have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature. Mentoring, a common components for principal preparation programs, is often viewed as playing an important role in the development of effective future school leaders.

Mentoring has garnered a considerable amount of interest across academic disciplines, especially business, and its purposes are well documented. Mentoring is an educational experience focused on teaching and learning within groups and cultures (Mullen, 2005). Initially, mentoring was viewed as a hierarchical relationship between two individuals, whereby the mentor has the experience, skills, and knowledge that the mentee needs to acquire to be competent in his or her role in the organization, and the relationship allows the mentee to learn from the mentor (McCormack & West, 2006).

Current understandings of mentoring view the relationship as complex social interactions between a more experienced individual and a novice individual (Fairbanks et al., 2000). The mentor passes on knowledge of subjects, facilitates personal development, and encourages wise choices as the protégé makes transitions (Zachary, 2002). A mentor is someone who helps a protégé learn something that would require a protégé additional time to learn, or which the protégé would have not learned without the mentor's support (Bell, 2000). Through the guidance of a mentor, the protégé grows professionally and builds a networks. The role of a mentor is

multifaceted and based on the context of the profession, purpose, goals, and expected outcomes. Mentoring is important because it has lasting career and personal effects on the protégé (Noe et al., 2002). Mentoring in educational contexts is used as a human resource development strategy to address cognitive, behavioral and affective factors (Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Mentoring practices are shaped by complex dynamic relationships within perceived structures (Jones & Brown, 2011). These structures are predetermined by the types of learning experiences the mentor and mentee participate. Also, professional contexts have unique characteristics and practices that shape the mentoring experience (Brondyk & Searby, 2013).

The nature of the mentoring relationship has evolved over time. Mentoring has moved from an intense exclusive, multi-year relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a less experienced individual to also include a variety of short-term, low intensity interactions with peers (Feldman et al., 1999). Contemporary research on mentoring moves away from the idea of a mentor with altruistic motives guiding a young, less experienced person toward a path to achieving professional goals for the mentor and the mentee (Freeman, 2008). Now mentors are viewed as benefiting from the relationship as well. A mentoring relationship provides an avenue for the mentor to contribute to the profession and become a reflective practitioner, while the mentee learns valuable knowledge and practices as they move forward in their prospective careers (Heirdsfield et al., 2008). Mentoring also helps the mentor increase power to influence team members and better understand different perspectives, and it enhances the managerial skills of the mentor (Dubrow et al., 2012). In short, as Villalpando and Solórzano (2005) posit, mentoring is a partnership which is both equitable and reciprocal in nature.

Of particular interest to this study is a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Cross-cultural mentoring is an ongoing, intentional, and mutually enriching relationship between

individuals who have distinctive cultural differences such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, or nationality (Barker, 2007). Cross-cultural mentoring has become increasingly important as the United States' population becomes more diverse and professions seek to have greater diversity in leadership positions. Because educational leaders and the students they serve come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, we must improve our understanding of cross-cultural mentoring to better prepare effective schools leaders in the United States

Additionally, as organizations adapt to address the needs of a workforce that reflects growing population diversity, cross-cultural mentoring will likely increase. Cross-cultural mentoring can be used to create a workplace with a common language, acceptable cultural interactions, and behaviors that enhance the organization and its diverse working environment. Population projections indicate that nearly one in five (19%) persons in the U.S. will be foreign born in 2050, well above the 2005 level of 12%. By 2050, the Non-Hispanic Whites, who made up 67% of the population in 2005, will comprise 47% in 2050. Hispanics will increase from 14% of the population in 2005 to 29% in 2050. Blacks, who accounted for 13% of the population in 2005, will be roughly the same proportion in 2050. Asian/Asian Americans, who were 5% of the population in 2005, will represent 9% of the population in 2050. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

However, this diversity is not reflected in the leadership of public schools. According to the 2011-2012 School and Staffing Survey, the estimated total distribution of principals in public schools is Black non-Hispanic (10.1%), Hispanic (6.8%), and White non-Hispanic (80.1%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Despite its rising importance, there is a dearth of research on cross-cultural mentoring in education leadership. Hence, this study seeks to better understand the nature, benefits, and challenges of cross-cultural mentoring.

Purpose and Rational of Study

This study investigated the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principal mentees in cross-cultural mentoring relationships in educational leadership. Four questions guided this research.

1. What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in education leadership cross-cultural mentoring relationships?
2. What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals in education leadership participating a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
3. What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
4. How do mentors and novice assistant principals mentees navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?

Conceptual Framework

Social capital theory served as the conceptual framework underpinning this research study. Social capital involves the access to information and resources via social relationships. Fundamentally, mentoring is a social relationship established to confer benefits to the participating individuals. Since mentoring highlights relationships and the benefits derived from those relationships for individuals or select groups (Lin, 2001), social capital is an ideal lens to use in examining cross-cultural mentoring.

Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman are credited with presenting the idea of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as the aggregation of actual and potential resources shared by individuals or institutions through mutual acquaintances and relationships. Mentoring relationships create opportunities for the mentor and mentee to share resources that

result from their participation in the relationship. Based on Bourdieu (1986), the strength of social capital networks are greatly influenced by social class, socioeconomic factors, education level, and the replication of benefits within the network. Mentoring increases mentees' access to social capital networks that they may not have had access to without the mentoring relationship.

James Coleman's (1988) research on social capital indicates that participation in the networks and access to resources provides opportunities for members of a group to tap into individual or group member potential and enables social mobility. Moreover, Coleman (1988) espoused that social capital's strength is derived from the function of the resources and the benefits received by participants in the social network, including the development of group norms and behavior expectations among group members that solidify resources within the social capital network.

James Putnam is considered the most contemporary contributor to social capital theory. Putnam's (2000) work examines intimate relationships through social capital that create bonding, bridging interactions among members which result in linking resources within the network. According to Putnam (2000), social capital refers to connections gained from participation in relationships between individuals, groups, and communities. Success of these connections greatly depends upon adhering to rigid norms, mutual trust, shared values, and reciprocity. Likewise, mentoring relationships create camaraderie and professionalism as well as promote organizational culture, organizational norms, values, and standards (Williams et al., 2003). Putnam's (2000) work focuses on the development of social relationships within social capital networks that enable opportunities for collective actions among the members. Putnam also notes importance of reciprocity in forward mobility within social capital networks.

Key concepts of social capital are bonding capital, bridging capital, and linking capital (Putnam, 2000). Bonding and bridging social capital are different types of relationships people have within their networks. Bonding social capital refers to the relationships among members of a network who share some similarity, while bridging social capital generates broader identities, increases access to more resources, and creates greater reciprocity (Putnam, 2000). Szreter and Woolcock (2004) define bridging social capital as beneficial relationships or connections between people who are dissimilar in some way, such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or level of education. A cross-cultural mentoring relationship represents an opportunity for bridging social capital.

Overview of Research Methods

I used qualitative research design to explore the experiences of individuals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship for career development in educational leadership. Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants. Semi-structured interviews conducted with three mentors and four novice assistant mentees through an online teleconferencing platform served as the primary data source. Both deductive and inductive coding approaches were used to identify themes across participants that answered the research questions. Lastly, because participants were from a southeastern state in the U.S., the history and culture of the role of race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation in the state played an underlying role in all relationships.

Significance of the Study

This research provided insights into the experiences of mentors and mentees in educational leadership mentoring relationships. The study adds to the sparse body of research in educational leadership investigating cross-cultural mentoring. Additionally, insights gained from this study can help districts improve mentor training programs and principal preparation

programs develop better internships. This study also informs the theoretical and empirical research on the benefits and challenges of cross-cultural mentoring and helps explain variation in mentoring experiences. The results of this study can inform the development of strategies for navigating challenges that may arise as a result of being in a cross-cultural relationship. Lastly, this draws attention to social capital in educational leadership mentoring relationships, notably, bridging social capital that focuses on relationships in a network between people with dissimilar backgrounds.

Limitations of the Study

It is difficult to consistently distinguish between what aspects of the mentoring experience is definitively due to the differences demographic traits or other traits (e.g., personality and experience mentoring). Also, this study was conducted during an unusual time. Interviews were conducted during heightened polarization and tribalism due to natural and state political debates and a social movement addressing racial justice in the United States.

Also, the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the study's design. Semi- structured interviews were conducted virtually instead of face-to-face. Interpersonal connections were challenging. At times, technological challenges resulted in rescheduling of interviews. Depending on which mentoring experience participants were describing, safety protocols may have influenced how the study participants experienced cross-cultural mentoring. Daily school operations were different because of the pandemic and changed rapidly during the study.

Definition of Key Terms

It is imperative for terminology to be purposely selected and consistently used within a research study to aid readers' understanding of the study and its findings. The following

definitions are provided to clarify how terms are used in this study and create a common language throughout the study.

Cross-cultural mentoring involves an ongoing, intentional, and mutually enriching relationship between individuals who have distinctive cultural differences such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, or nationality (Barker, 2007).

Bonding social capital refers to inward looking networks that typically reinforce exclusive identities and promote homogeneity in groups (Putnam, 2000).

Bridging social capital involves open networks that are outward looking and tend to include people from across diverse social lines (Putnam, 2000).

Linking social capital is the extent to which individuals build relationships with institutions and other individuals that provide access and connection to power structures (Putnam, 2000).

Mentoring is a term generally used to describe a relationship between a less experienced individual, called a mentee or protégé, and a more experienced individual known as a mentor. Mentoring can be defined as an educational experience focused on teaching and learning within groups and cultures (Mullen, 2005).

Mentor describes an individual with expertise who serves as an advisor or coach for a less experienced person focusing on assisting the mentee's research and long-term goals (Lavosky & Shimoni, 2007).

Mentee describes an individual considered to be a novice in their profession who is guided by a more experienced mentor to help improve and develop skills and knowledge within a field (Haynes & Ghosh, 2008).

Novice assistant principal describes an assistant principal intern or an assistant principal having served only one to five years in the position.

Social capital theory is defined, for the purposes of this paper, as purposefully building and using social relationships to generate some benefit; social capital consists of the shared resources gained from relationships among people embedded in a social network structure that can be acted upon for an anticipated benefit which improves individual lives and communities (Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Uyen & Porciuncula, 2010).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 began with a brief overview of mentoring and cross-cultural mentoring. The chapter delineated a problem statement that explained the gap in the literature related to cross-cultural mentoring in educational leadership, which the current study intended to address. The conceptual framework serving as the underpinning of the study, social capital theory, was explained, and an overview of the research design was provided. The chapter also discussed the significance of the study along with its limitations. Finally, the chapter concluded with key terms to aid in understanding the study.

Chapter 2 follows with a review of the literature describing mentoring in multiple contexts. The development of social capital theory is also discussed from the perspectives of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (2000).

Chapter 3 begins with a rationale for utilizing for qualitative research methods, and the purpose of the study is reiterated. Descriptions of the research design, organizational context, study participants, sampling criteria, data collection, and interview protocol are also included. Chapter 3 also provides in-depth explanations of data analysis procedures, data management and security, and strategies used to establish trustworthiness of the results from the study.

Chapter 4 describes the participants of the current study and presents the findings for each of this study's guiding research questions, which are comprised of the salient themes that emerged from analysis of participants' interviews.

Chapter 5 presents the implications for theory, practice, and policy. It also includes recommendations for future research on cross-cultural mentoring.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I restate the purpose and research questions guiding this study. Then, I provide an overview of research related to: (1) the origins and definitions of mentoring, (2) mentoring, (3) cross-cultural mentoring, and (4) social capital. I conclude with a chapter summary.

This study sought to reveal how mentors and mentees in cross-cultural mentoring partnerships in educational leadership experience their relationship and navigate the multifaceted nuances of their experience. Four questions informed this study's exploration of cross-cultural mentoring in educational leadership:

1. What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in cross-cultural mentoring relationships?
2. What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
3. What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
4. How do mentors and novice assistant principals navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?

Origins and Definitions of Mentoring

The term *mentor* originated from Greek mythology (Riggin-Newby & Zarlengo, 2003). Homer's epic *The Odyssey* is credited with establishing the foundation of the term mentor. Mentor was the name of the older, dependable friend of King Odysseus, and King Odysseus entrusted his young son to Mentor while he fought in the Trojan War. Mentor's responsibilities

to the young child were to protect, guide, instruct, and counsel him while the king was away. Mentor was described as an older man who was regarded as having great moral character and wisdom. Hence, the term mentor has been associated with an older, wise teacher, a guide and counselor with experience who guides the path of a younger, less experienced individual. According to Drago-Severson (2009), mentoring is one of the oldest methods used to support human development. Mentoring supports the mentee's in cognitive, emotional, and leadership development as well as social integration (Garvey et al., 2009).

Mentoring has received a considerable amount of interest across different academic disciplines, especially in the world of business, resulting in increased applications of mentoring and mentoring programs across diverse disciplines. The ubiquitous nature of mentoring programs and mentoring research studies have created definitional and conceptual ambiguity related to studying the subject. Mentoring is defined in numerous ways in the literature. Hall (2003) points out that the definition of mentoring even among scholars within disciplines remains unsettled. Thus, creating a concise definition of mentoring to reduce variability and create generalizability among studies examining mentoring have been the focal point in recent literature. Kram (1985) found that mentoring has different meanings based on personal experiences with mentoring . Similarly, Haggard et al. (2011) reported that mentors and mentees participating in their study relied on their own schemata to define mentoring when the researchers did not provide a specific definition for it. Because differences in the definition of mentoring have the potential to impact the outcome of research studies related to mentoring (Dreher & Ash, 2009), providing respondents with the definition of mentoring or criteria to adhere to when responding to research questions helps respondents to appropriately identify mentoring experiences and provide relevant information the researcher seeks to attain. Furthermore, the use of a researcher-provided

definition for mentoring increases applicability across respondents because definitions create consistency and respondents are responding to the same perceptions. Countering claims of the value of a researcher-provided definition in a study of mentoring, Eby and Lockwood (2005) contend that a researcher's definitions of mentoring can still create variability in interpretation among respondents. Wanberg et al. (2003) likewise acknowledge the varied definitions of mentoring are problematic; however, they note that the rudimentary concept of mentoring is consistent throughout the literature.

Overall, mentoring is a complex social and psychological phenomenon (Roberts, 2000). It is an educational experience focused on teaching and learning within groups and cultures (Mullen, 2005). Historically, mentoring has been viewed as a hierarchical relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced mentee. For example, Fairbanks et al. (2000) define mentoring as a complex social interaction between a more experienced individual and a novice individual. The mentor has experiences, skills, and knowledge that the mentee needs to become competent in their role within an organization (McCormack & West, 2006).

Mentoring can involve a formalized process in which a mentor oversees the career development, and encourages self-reflection for improved outcomes for the mentee, and it is a critical element of an education experience with lasting career and personal effects for the protégé (Noe et al., 2008). Zachary (2002) explains that the purpose of the mentor is to pass on knowledge to subjects, facilitate personal development, and encourage wise choices as the protégé makes professional transitions. A mentor is someone who helps the protégé learn something new that would have required additional time, have been learned slowly, or not have been learned at all without the help of a mentor (Bell, 2000). Also, through the guidance of a mentor, the protégé grows professionally and builds networks. Generally, the role of a mentor is

multifaceted and derived from the context of the discipline, purpose, goals, and expectations of the intended outcomes of the mentoring relationship. More recently, mentoring has moved away from the intense exclusive, multi-year relationship between an older, more experienced individual to include a variety of short-term, low-intensity interactions with peers (Haggard et al., 2011). Also, as mentoring is a viable relationship established to enhance individual, career, personal, and professional growth and development for both mentor and the mentee, it can be considered a reciprocal relationship (Young & Wright, 2001). Mentoring relationships can thus be established to be supportive and reciprocal while fostering knowledge building (Mullen, 2004, 2012).

Formal and Informal Mentoring

With the emphasis on cost-effective employee training and increased research on the positive effects of mentoring as an important resource for employees and companies alike, formal mentoring programs have gained more popularity (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Furthermore, capitalizing on internal knowledge unique to specific organizations, formal mentoring offers opportunities for leadership development to be tailored to address organizational goals and objectives to achieve sustainability for the longevity of the organization while also giving the organization a competitive edge (Corner, 2014). Wanberg et al. (2003) define a formal mentoring relationship as a developmental relationship that is established and sponsored by the organization and involves a senior mentor with more experience being matched with a less experienced junior protégé for the purposes of sharing organizational knowledge and advancing the protégé's career for a specified period.

Muir (2014) found that emerging leaders and their mentors reported that participating in a strong formal mentoring relationship was essential to the discovery and development of their

identity and style as a leader. Formal mentoring meetings can take place two to four times a year, for a timeframe of 60 to 90 minutes each, with the meetings ending with a written report of objectives and action items (Eddy, 2013). Formal mentoring programs vary in structure regarding policies and procedures used in matching protégés with mentors (Siegel et al., 2011). Formal mentoring relationships are structured with organizational assistance and arranged for a stated time period, with a minimum number of meetings of a specified length, and may also specify mentoring content requirements (Kelch-Oliver et al., 2013; Siegel et al., 2011).

Mentoring helps mentors and mentees by establishing, progressing, and safeguarding various stages of their careers (Cummings & Worley, 2001). It has been described as an essential tool (Levinson et al., 1978). Mentors can offer opportunities for organizational socialization, motivation, and increased job performance by identifying the skills a new employee may be lacking and need to be more successful (Wilson & Elman, 1990). Mentors also communicate their different experiences with the organization to help the mentee grow professionally (Stone, 2004).

Mentees can also provide employee satisfaction back to the mentor. The seminal work of Kram (1985) describes mentoring as the aspects of developmental relationships that enhance the growth and advancement of both individuals. Mentorships, whether formal or informal, should be beneficial for mentors as well as protégés. This is especially true given the mutuality and reciprocity of developmental relationships (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Mentors have the opportunity to view new perspectives on their current performance through the eyes of the mentee (Stone, 2004), and mentors receive self-fulfilling job revitalization within the organization while providing positive visibility with beneficial experiences to the mentee (Rosser & Egan, 2003). The mentor provides career support by opening doors within the organization

and creating opportunities for the mentee. Challenging work opportunities provided by the mentor in a workplace relationship creates high visibility for both employees, thus reflecting a mutual reinforcing relationship that demonstrates the value and commitment of the two employees in support of the organization (DeSimone et al., 2002). Mentors are characterized as individuals devoted to providing leadership to a new employee in an effort to minimize organizational obstacles and increase the upward advancement of mentees (Chao et al., 1992; Hunt & Michael, 1983). Mentors have the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences as role models, while at the same time they gain the chance to receive respect, support, and recognition among peers as well as from new employees by having a new employee shadow them at work (DeSimone et al., 2002; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988).

However, everyone does not have the opportunity to participate in a formal mentoring program and may select an informal mentoring relationships instead. Informal mentoring relationships are a result of interpersonal interactions and usually motivated by the needs of the two parties (Eby et al., 2005). In addition, informal relationships are often less visible than their formal counterparts (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Still, these informal mentoring relationships also have positive benefits according to research on mentoring, most of which focuses on the benefits to the protégé (Herbohn, 2004; Scandura & Viator, 1994; Siegel et al., 2011; Viator & Scandura, 1991).

Most of the mentoring research focuses on the benefits of an informal relationship to the protégé (Herbohn, 2004; Scandura & Viator, 1994; Seigel et al., 2001; Viator & Scandura, 1991). Informal mentoring relationships are a result of interactions and are usually motivated by the needs of the two parties (Allen et al., 2005). These relationships will last as long as the mentor and protégé remain involved with one another. According to Crutcher and Naseem

(2016), good mentoring involves prompting critical reflection, modelling and role modelling, collaborative relationships and knowledge about individuals' needs. However, as Kram (1983) notes, the dynamics and nature of the relationship change over time. Table 1 shows a comparison between the features of formal and informal mentoring.

Table 1

Comparison of Features of Formal and Informal Mentoring

	Formal Mentoring	Informal Mentoring
Goals	Established goals connected to a strategic business objective of the organization	Unspecified goals
Outcomes	Measurable outcomes	Unknown outcomes
Access	Open access for all who qualify	Limited access to the program
Mentor/mentee pairing	Strategic pairing of mentors and mentees	Self-selection of mentors and mentees
Duration of mentorship	Mentoring engagements lasting 9 to 12 months	Long-term mentoring
Training and support	Expert training and support	No expert training or support
Benefits	Direct organizational benefits	Indirect organizational benefits

(Adapted from Jarvis, 2004)

Mentoring versus Coaching

The growth in productivity and the continuity of an organization is determined by the professionalism and personal qualifications of its employees (Kauffeld, 2010). One critical element of enhancing organizational health and the performance of employees is through training (Arthur et al., 2003). In fact, the transfer of job-related knowledge through training is considered one of the most significant factors influencing organizational level outcomes and sustainability

(Kozlowski et al., 2000). For these reasons, providing professional development for employees has become very important. Companies seek professional development programs and opportunities that create openness, build partnerships, and foster trust among individuals in the workplace (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Moreover, the literature indicates that the demand for professional development has created heightened interest in mentoring and coaching as avenues to improve the skillsets of leaders and other professionals.

Mentoring has emerged as one of the most popular strategies for leadership development due to its cost-effectiveness and strategic efficacy (Corner, 2014), as well as because organizational leaders can use mentoring relationships to develop individuals for career advancement (Kelch-Oliver et al., 2013; Lloyd-Jones, 2014). Likewise, coaching has gained interest as a method for developing leadership in varied professions (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001), and this rising attention to the value of coaching has resulted in the development of new programs and publications on the topic (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Quick & Macik-Frey, 2004).

While mentoring and coaching have some similarities and are often used interchangeably in the literature, they are quite different, and it is important to delineate between them to provide clarity for this study. The literature is unclear about the definition of the two concepts, and there is significant confusion surrounding the function and purpose of mentoring and coaching in practice-based settings (Clark et al., 2006; Clutterbuck, 2008; Garvey, 2004; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007). Mentoring is typically defined as a personal, long-term relationship with a domino effect (Varney, 2009), whereas coaching is a functional relationship related to maintaining performance standards. Additionally, coaching has been defined as a collaborative relationship where the coach and the coached engage in a systematic process of setting goals and

developing solutions with the aim to facilitate goal attainment, self-directed learning, and personal growth of the coached (Grant & Stober, 2006). Increased interest in organizational professional development and leadership development has propelled mentoring and coaching to the forefront of training research.

Mentoring programs have grown in popularity as a career resource for employees (Ragins & Kram, 2007). A plethora of research has been conducted to understand the nuances of mentoring relationships, such as the general benefits of mentoring (Donner & Wheeler, 2001; Scandura & Lankau, 2002) and the impact of the mentoring relationship on the mentor and the mentee. The mentor-mentee relationship produces multiple investments in the lives of people and communities connected to the mentor and mentee (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). The mentor provides support to the mentee as well as direction and feedback related to career planning and professional development (Haggard et al., 2011). In a mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee interact on a regular basis to enhance the competencies and skillsets of the mentee and accelerate their learning to aid in their career development. Mullen and Tuten (2010) state that reciprocal learning is involved in the mentoring relationship, and similarly, mentors reap benefits from the mentoring relationship; for example, mentors experience increased influence in their roles, grow professionally, and develop leadership skills (Messmer, 2003). Furthermore, mentoring provides psychological support for the mentee and helps them with socialization (Ragins et al., 2000). Understanding the dynamics of the work environment is critical for the success of a mentee as they embark on a new career endeavor. Mentoring involves building a non-judgmental partnership between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust—so that the mentee experiences support during the learning process of taking on different professional roles during the mentoring relationship (Irby et al., 2017).

In contrast, the coach-coached relationship lends itself to distinct benefits and a different type of relationship between the parties. In the coaching relationship, the coach develops an agenda to provide support and create individual solutions designed to meet the specific needs of the coached (Grant, 2001). The coaching relationship takes place within an organizational setting in varied formats, with the purpose of team building or creating a collegial network to support each other (Greene & Grant, 2003). Frisch (2001) contends that the coaching relationship is a component of the job of a human resource professional. Table 2 provides a summary of the differences between mentoring and coaching.

Table 2

Comparison of Mentoring and Coaching Relationships

Mentoring	Coaching
Ongoing relationship that can last for long periods or short periods of time	Client relationship with an established duration
Allows and encourages, in the long term, a deeper relationship between the mentor and mentee	Short-term (time-bound) relationship
Mentor – Senior person with more experience and the knowledge, expertise, and networks needed by the mentee	Coach – May not have similar professional background as the individual being coached, unless specifically requested
Revolves around developing the mentee professionally	Focused on a specific area of development at work, frequently considered an intervention to monitor progress toward specific goals
Agenda set by mentee in collaboration with the mentor, who provides support and guidance to prepare the mentee for future roles	Agenda focused on creating a pathway for achieving specific immediate goals for the individual being coached
Meetings structured to meet the needs of the mentee and provide opportunities for self-reflection and critique of learning experiences	Meetings structured with a specific focus on a regular basis to address performance issues for the individual being coached

(Adapted from Jarvis, 2004)

Mentoring School Administrators and Principals

School cultures are diverse, and the expectations of educational administrators who lead them have changed dramatically (Villani, 2006). Providing school leaders with support that helps them develop effective leadership skills has become imperative to their success in the field. Mentoring is a learning relationship that offers novice school administrators and senior principals the opportunity to learn new skills, and it is a method that can be used to cultivate and prepare school leaders for the challenges of leading a school (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Mentoring is one common component of training and supporting new principals enrolled in principal preparation programs or in the beginning years of their principalship. Aspiring school leaders need sustained learning experiences in the context and action of the community of practice, working alongside mentor principals, to be fully prepared to take on complex roles. To this end, a mentor provides practical advice and shares knowledge related to the intricate workings of the school setting (Williams et al., 2004), which has significant benefits to the mentee.

Mentoring has been used frequently to deliver professional development in education and business as well (Daresh, 2004). The effectiveness of mentoring programs as professional development for new principals and educational leaders has been studied intensely (Daresh, 2004; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Mentoring exposes school leaders to educational theory and field practice. It also provides career development, creates professional networks, facilitates sponsorships, promotes professional advancement, and offers the mentee psychological support such as counseling (Meyer & Mabaso, 2007). The mentoring relationship has been shown to eliminate school administrator isolation, as the mentor serves as a role model who assists the mentee with the acquisition of new knowledge and skills needed to be successful as a school administrator while providing these leaders an opportunity to share their lived experiences with

peers. Additionally, mentoring provides a school administrator with the opportunity to connect to a network with a wealth of knowledge, talent, and support. Such a culture of collaboration further supports the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Daresh, 2004).

Moreover, successful mentoring of novice school administrators also benefits the school districts through the creation of a culture of consistency. School districts with viable mentoring programs benefit from access to a larger pool of qualified principal applicants to fill new positions. Daresh (2004) found that school districts with mentoring programs have more qualified administrators, system norms for learning, and increased employee motivation and productivity. In addition to improving leadership development processes, school districts with mentoring programs have more effective school leaders (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004).

Mentoring Assistant Principals

A large population of school principals are reaching retirement age (Goldring et al., 2013). This rapid turnover has outstripped the ability of school districts to recruit new leaders. Taking into account the changing roles and responsibilities discussed earlier as well as increasingly higher expectations of school principals, there is clearly a demonstrated need for increased mentoring of new school leaders (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). Many school districts have tackled the challenge of filling school administrator vacancies through programs designed to prepare and develop their own effective school leaders (Fuller & Young, 2009), and a number of candidates are assistant principals. Mentoring has been deemed as one method to cultivate and make these new leaders ready for the challenges they will face as they begin their careers as principals. Mentoring programs for novice principals were developed within school districts to provide a support system and improve the effectiveness of new school leaders as they began their careers (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000; Reyes, 2003). Hargreaves (2009)

claimed that school districts recognized the benefits of hiring from within the school system and implemented some type of succession plan to assist in identifying and developing future leaders.

Mentors provide the mentee with practical advice about procedures, managerial and technical duties like budget scheduling, evaluation of teachers, and working with parents (Daresh, 2004; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Mentoring relationships are most effective when they are developed through a culture of collaboration, in which the mentor serves as the role model and guide to help expand the knowledge and skills of the new school leader (Daresh, 2004; Hopkins-Thompson, 2000). Mentors also help aspiring principals by providing feedback to assist in the transition from other roles in the school setting to that of a school leader. Having a mentor provides aspiring principals with the opportunity to observe and participate in school-based situations, such as dealing with problems and implementing school programs and innovations. Mentoring programs also provide guidance and feedback as new principals develop the capacity to fulfill their new roles and responsibilities (Hopkins-Thomas, 2000; Reyes, 2003).

Cross-Cultural Mentoring

Mentoring across cultures is an especially delicate dance requiring the juxtaposition of group norms and societal pressures and expectations with individual personality characteristics (Palmer & Rosser-Mims, 2010). Increased globalization and mobility have created a need for cultural awareness and sensitivity among organizations and academic institutions. Similarly, with workplace and classroom diversity, there is cross-cultural interaction among people from all walks of life. Such increased diversity means that individuals in today's workforce will experience more cross-race, cross-cultural interactions (Murrell, 2001). Grossman (2000) contends that mentoring between individuals from diverse backgrounds is an effective method to create a diversity-friendly work environment. Furthermore, cross-cultural mentoring is an

intricate developmental component of the human lifecycle and necessary for the health of any organization (Klinge, 2015). The purpose of cross-cultural mentoring is to build capacity within an organization and create continuity for an ever-evolving identity. Therefore, mentoring has become a prevalent component of leadership training (Owen, 2012).

Cross-cultural mentoring requires building a relationship between two individuals who identify themselves differently in some way, typically a demographic trait such as age, gender, race, or ethnicity. While these differences can be problematic to navigate, they are not insurmountable. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004) contend that cross-cultural, cross-racial, and cross-gender mentoring ignites irrational fears and assumptions based on taboos related to race and gender. Therefore, trust is extremely important for successful cross-cultural mentoring relationships. Establishing trust in cross-cultural mentoring relationships is critical to the development of the relationship, especially compared to a mentoring relationship between individuals from the same race and gender (Thomas, 2001). Furthermore, Thomas (2001) notes that cross-cultural mentoring relationships must be open and honest, and the mentor and the mentee both must maintain self-identity while avoiding protective hesitation and negative stereotypes during their interactions.

As increasingly diverse educators pursue educational leadership positions, it is important to examine cross-cultural mentoring in the field of educational leadership. Educational leadership programs are designed to prepare aspiring school leaders for a dynamic career.

Social Capital

The benefits of mentoring have been well documented, including increased income, career advancement, and job satisfaction (Witt Smith et al., 2000). However, the research on how mentoring increases social capital is limited (Thomas, 2001). Social capital is defined as the

aggregation of tangible and potential resources that are shared between individuals, communities, and institutions through mutual acquaintances and relationships (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 2000). Social capital can be reproduced as symbolic power and real power (Portes, 2000). Social capital flows through social networks. It is embedded in mentoring relationships and can be mobilized to increase career development (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Portes, 1998). The strength and quality of mentoring relationship determine the value of social capital upon the members.

Historically, people have used education as a form of social capital to improve their standard of living. Educational institutions reproduce themselves, and social agents who are in power positions and entrenched in the practices lead the discourse within the institutions (Bourdieu & Passon, 1990). The creation of new knowledge and new ways of learning represents an important outcome of the social capital of high-quality mentoring (Allen & Eby, 2003; Lankau & Scandura, 2002). Mentoring involves the transfer of social capital within and across organizational and career contexts. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004) are two other researchers who utilized their experience with cross-race mentoring. As a White male full professor and a Black female associate professor, they experienced 13 years in a successful mentoring relationship that began when they were teacher and student. They found the following issues when entering in cross-race mentoring relationships: (a) trust between mentor and protégé, (b) acknowledged and unacknowledged racism, (c) visibility and risks pertinent to racial-minority faculty, (d) power and paternalism, (e) benefits to mentor and protégé, and (f) the double-edged sword of Otherness in academia (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004, p. 30). Researcher van Emmerik (2004) conducted a study on the benefits of participating in a mentoring relationship and intrinsic career success. The study involved 416 females and 514 male participants from

Utrecht University in the Netherlands, and the results showed that mentoring positively impacted career success, promotion, higher income, and higher job satisfaction. This researcher also noted that the effects of mentoring relationships was influenced by the size of the network, emotional intensity, and stability of the mentoring relationship (van Emmerik, 2004). In follow-up research, van Emmerik (2006) conducted a study to examine how gender difference impacts the development of social capital, with a sample that included 352 females and 486 male faculty members. The results indicated that the males in the study experienced more successful outcomes with the development and creation of social capital within their social and professional networks (van Emmerik, 2006). Social capital theory suggests that mentors' access to resources helps mentees learn the values of their professions and fields of study due to connections within the network which include navigating different cultural and political systems.

Chapter Summary

In discussing the literature on mentoring, cross-cultural mentoring, and social capital theory, I demonstrated that these concepts individually lack extensive research in the field of educational leadership, and by and large mentoring can be beneficial to the mentor, mentee, and organization. To meet the growing demand for school principals, mentoring, a common component of district and university programs, will likely involve cross-cultural mentoring that may have benefits for both the mentor and mentee. This cross-cultural mentoring relationship is a form of social capital, bridging (relationships across traits that often divide societies—e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation), and it also can confer additional social capital by giving mentees access to mentors professional networks. As such, this study explored both the general benefits and challenges of participating cross-cultural mentoring relationships, as well as

the nature and outcomes of social capital associated with these mentoring relationships. The next chapter details the research design.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 restates the purpose of the study and explicates the research design. It outlines the procedure for selecting participants and addresses how data were collected and analyzed. A description of the techniques used to ensure trustworthiness as well as the limitations of the study are also described.

The purpose of this study was to identify how mentors and mentees in cross-cultural mentoring relationships established for the career development of novice assistant principals experience their mentoring relationship and navigate challenges that arise.

Research Questions

Four questions guided this study's exploration of the lived experiences of cross-cultural mentoring:

1. What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in cross-cultural mentoring relationships?
2. What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
3. What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
4. How do mentors and novice assistant principals navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?

Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach to examine the nature of cross-cultural mentoring relationships. Using qualitative research provides a lens to focus on and illuminate the experiences and perceptions of mentors and mentees. Creswell (1998, 2007) defined qualitative

research as an inquiry into the process of understanding a social or human problem, conducted in a natural setting and designed to build a complex, holistic picture of participants' beliefs. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple interpretations of reality and seeks to understand those interpretations (Merriam, 2009). The elements of a basic qualitative research include understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection. This study used qualitative methods to examine, explore, and describe cross-cultural mentoring relationships. As there is limited knowledge about cross-cultural mentoring in education leadership, qualitative research methods are appropriate because they are used in research when the subject matter is relatively new, not suited for quantitative methods, and lacking substantial theory.

Study Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select study participants. Purposeful sampling allows for the selection of information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). This approach is particularly necessary given that the number of cross-cultural mentoring pairs is unknown, and individuals may be hesitant to participate because of the importance of the relationship and potential power dynamics. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants that will allow the researcher to understand the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select study subjects that are most representative of the sample needed to answer the research questions. Purposeful sampling occurs when the research subject possesses specific characteristics or attributes important to the study (Patton, 2002). To identify potential participants, I created a list of novice principals based on (a) announcements announcement of new personnel in the role of assistant principal posted on different school districts websites located in a state in southeastern U.S., (b)

referrals from a faculty member of a university who oversaw internships of new principals across multiple districts, and (c) snowballing—participants recommended other potential participants. Then, I sent emails to individuals on the list. The email pre-screening questions and a description of the research study. I asked them to respond to me if they were interested.

I then selected participants who indicated that (a) they were or had been involved in cross-cultural mentoring relationships that focused on developing and supporting assistant principal trainees enrolled in a principal preparation program; b) they or their mentee were novice assistant principals with up to four years of experience; and c) the cross-cultural mentoring relationship involves two persons who have distinctive cultural differences such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, or nationality.

Data Collection

Interviews

The research questions guiding this study require in-depth responses to fully capture the phenomena under investigation. Seidman (2006) noted that the purpose of in-depth interviewing is to understand the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences. According to Seidman (2006), interviews are a mode of inquiry that allow researchers to access to the narratives of historical experiences. Interviews also allow the researcher to pursue in-depth information around the topic. Yin (2009) describes interviews as guided conversations, which are an important source of data. Also, utilizing semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to refocus the questions or prompts for information if something novel or interesting emerges.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the researcher to better understand the perspectives of the participants. Once participants had indicated that they were interested in participating in the study, I sent the informed consent statement and the interview guide. I exchanged emails to schedule the interviews, selecting dates and times based on their availability. Semi-structured online interviews were conducted in this study using Google Meets, with each participant individually responding to a standard protocol to make sure all participants were asked the same questions. Interviews were audio-recorded, and captions were generated from the teleconferencing program. I reviewed the transcripts from Google Teams to ensure that the transcription was accurate. I also asked each participant if they wanted to review their transcript to clarify details, expound upon specific points, or retract any comments. Only one participant, who also audio-recorded the interview, wanted to go back through the interview and their responses. I also took notes during the interview. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Transcripts of the interviews were saved electronically on the researcher's password-protected computer. Audio recordings were destroyed after the transcripts had been verified for accuracy.

Pre-Screening Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be used in qualitative research to draw from a larger sample population and narrowed to representative group of participants that meet specific characteristic (Creswell, 2012). Both open-ended and closed response questions can be included in the design of the questionnaire. Closed response questions are designed with pre-selected answers and do not provide an opportunity for the respondent to share additional insights related to the topic. On the other hand, open-ended survey questions allow respondents to expound on the topic, providing a more in-depth explanation, description, or insights relevant to the survey question

(Creswell, 2012). A web-based questionnaire was sent to potential participants to gather demographic information and to identify possible study candidates that met established criteria required to be eligible to participate in the study.

Memoing

Memoing is an effective method for a researcher to document their impressions, emerging themes, and reactions to the data throughout the study. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2003) define memoing as a process of constantly jotting down any and all information heard or observed that may be relevant to the research or could play a crucial role throughout the analysis process. Researcher memos were drafted with each interview in this study, as well as throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Data Analysis

Process

Qualitative research data collection and data analysis occur concurrently, thereby allowing the researcher to adjust as necessary and to investigate new concepts and themes as they emerge (Merriam, 2009). Stake (2005) pointed out that there is no specific moment of beginning data analysis, but instead the process starts with first impressions and goes through final compilations of gathered information. Because qualitative research involves an iterative, cyclical process when gathering, organizing, and interpreting data, the data collection and data analysis processes inform one another and together reveal emerging themes (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, simultaneously collecting and analyzing the data prevents the researcher from becoming overwhelmed with the volume of the data collected. Data in this study were collected until the point of saturation, which ensured the research questions had been answered. I reviewed each transcript and also listened to the recordings again to identify repeated words and concepts

as they related to the four research questions. After identifying themes within an interview, I looked at themes across interviews (Yin, 2009).

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2013) identifies eight validation procedures to verify qualitative research findings and analysis: (1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, (2) use of multiple and different resources as well as varied investigations and theories to corroborate evidence, (3) peer review and debriefing, (4) reformation of the working hypothesis as the research advances, (5) clarification of researcher bias, (6) member checking, (7) use of rich, thick description to allow readers to make decisions regarding transferability to other settings, and (8) external audits. Creswell (2013) recommends at least two of these procedures are employed in any research study. I used peer review and debriefing, which involved repeated conversations with a faculty member about the research as it was being analyzed. Peer review and debriefing procedures increase the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research study (Janesick, 2011). Creswell (2014) describes this as a safeguard to enable the research to resonate with someone other than the researcher. Also, the peer review and debriefing can reveal overlooked ideas or rerepeated ideas of the researcher. Peer review and debriefing is advised because, in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument (Spillett, 2003). I also clarified researcher bias, which involved crafting a statement of subjectivity and employing multiple frameworks (i.e., mentoring and social capital theory) and multiple sources (i.e., mentors and mentees involved in different cross-cultural mentoring relationships).

Subjectivity Statement

I was a student in the administrator and supervision Master's program at North Carolina State University. Participating in a field experience under the guidance of a mentor was part of

my program requirements. My mentor, who was of a different race/ethnicity and religion, worked for the same school district as I did. As I reflect on my research, many of the themes in the literature about cross-cultural mentoring echo my professional experiences. I was aware of the power inherent in my mentor's position in the school system, and making a good impression was extremely important to me as a mentee. Also, navigating the historical issues of cultural power were addressed with open discussion. While I enjoyed my experience, it made me curious about how others in cross-cultural mentoring relationships in educational leadership programs would handle a similar mentoring experience. Therefore, reporting the findings with integrity was of great importance. As such, several steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness.

Ethical Considerations

I followed the research ethic guidelines specified by North Carolina State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I submitted a proposal for research to the IRB, which was approved. The approved protocol for conducting my study was strictly followed. Personal information related to the study, such as transcripts and audiotapes of the interviews as well as survey data, was stored electronically, and procedures for data security were observed. The findings were reported in a way that maintains confidentiality of the participants, their mentors or mentees, and the respective school districts.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures used in the qualitative research study. The chapter also explained the actions I undertook to establish trustworthiness and included my statement of subjectivity. Chapter 4 follows with a summary of the findings of this study for each research question.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore cross-cultural mentoring of novice assistant principals. The extant research on cross-cultural mentoring in K-12 educational leadership from the mentee or protégé’s perspective is limited—this study addressed this gap in the literature. This chapter briefly describes the participants and presents the findings for each research question, highlighting the perceived benefits and challenges to the relationship resulting from the cross-cultural dynamic.

Participant Demographics

The sample for this study included seven participants, four females and three males. Three of the participants have served or currently serve as a mentor of an assistant principal trainee in a cross-cultural mentor relationship. All mentors had been at their current school less than five years. Four participants were novice assistant principals who had no more than five years of experience at the time of the study and had participated in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Of the novice assistant principals in the study, two had moved from one school district to another within the last two years and were assigned a mentor by the school district. Additionally, two of the novice assistant principals were being mentored by their school’s principal and were also required to participate in district-level professional development as part of their contract.

Table 3 specifies participants’ demographic characteristics and years of experience in education. The table also indicates their role in the cross-cultural mentoring relationship—mentor or mentee—and the type of cross-cultural relationship. As evident in the table, with the

exception of one mentee and one mentor, the cross-cultural relationships were across multiple demographic dimensions, with race/ethnicity and gender differences occurring most frequently.

Table 3

Background Information for Study Participants

Name	Role	Race and Gender	Years of Experience in current role	Cross-Cultural Difference with Mentee(s)	Cross Cultural Difference with Mentor(s)
Ellen	Mentor	Black Female	14	Race, Gender	--
Shelia	Mentor	Latina Female	3	Age/Generation Gap	--
Alex	Mentor	Black Male	20	Race, Gender, Age	--
Nelson	Mentee	Black Male	3	--	Race, Gender
Lisa	Mentee	White Female	3	--	Gender
Dan	Mentee	Black Male	3	--	Race, Gender
Martha	Mentee	White Female	3	--	Race, Sexual Orientation

**Note: Study participants are not in dyads—that is, they are not partnered with anyone else in the study.*

Emails that included a brief description of the study and a prescreening questionnaire were sent to 13 possible participants. The purpose of the prescreening questions was to make sure each candidate’s experiences aligned with the goals of the study. The prescreening questions were:

1. Have you participated in cross-cultural (gender, race/ethnicity, religion, sex orientation, etc.) mentoring?
2. In your cross-cultural mentoring relationship, were you the mentor or the mentee?

3. How were you different?
4. How did you meet your mentor or mentee?

Seven potential participants responded to the solicitation email and agreed to participate. Also, another candidate was recommended by one candidate during the interview process, and there was one candidate who ended their participation. Before participating in the study, I told participants that they could opt out at any time during the research process and reviewed the informed consent statement with them. Participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions before signing the informed consent statement. Signed consent forms were stored on a password-protected laptop that was only accessible by the researcher. I assigned pseudonyms to ensure participant confidentiality.

Themes from Study Findings

Table 4 highlights the themes from participants' interviews. These themes were a result of deductive (a priori) coding related to the primary theoretical framework guiding this study, social capital theory, as well as inductive coding whereby themes emerged that answered the research questions but did not relate directly to concepts associated with social capital theory.

Table 4*Themes from Study Findings*

Research Questions	Themes
1. What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in cross-cultural mentoring relationships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks • Professional Practice • Trust and Honesty • Collaboration in New Environments and Roles • Time
2. What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Insights • Visibility in New Networks
3. What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race /Ethnicity • Age • Gender • Covid-19 Pandemic
4. How do mentors and novice assistant principals navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Sensitivity • Commonalities • Self-Reflection • Authentic Self/Trust

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 in this study asked: What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in cross-cultural mentoring relationships? When describing their experiences in cross-cultural mentoring relationships, participants emphasized access to social networks, professional practice, trust and honesty, collaboration in new environments and roles, and time.

Social Networks

Participants discussed how being in a mentoring relationship provided them access to social networks—people that confer new information, resources, and experiences—that they may have been excluded from due to cultural differences or limited opportunities for career

advancement. Mentees believed that their mentors' networks could contribute to their success and career advancement, and in some cases, the mentor provided the mentee access to their network. For example, when asked whether his White female mentor introduced him to influential people inside or outside of the school district, Nelson, a Black male, shared: "I was fortunate my mentor was helpful.... Oh, it helps when your mentor is well respected around the county, so she called people on my behalf for learning experiences." White female mentee Martha responded similarly when asked if her African American female mentor or White female mentor introduced her to influential people, stating, "She is connected to some great people in the district. She believes in creating opportunity and includes me whenever possible." Lisa, a White female participant described her experience with her male mentor helping her expand her professional network, explaining: "My mentor gave me opportunities to meet new people, including his boss. He let me sit in on a meeting with his boss, the area superintendent. I was like, this is pretty cool."

Interestingly, some mentors in the study indicated that they did not make an intentional effort to introduce their mentees to other influential professionals. Lack of intentionality was certainly the case for Alex, a Black male mentor whose mentee was an older White female. Alex admitted he did not introduce his mentee to influential people inside or outside of the of the district, revealing:

I really didn't think about connecting my mentee with other people. Our county structure is set up for principals and assistant principals to work on items for the school district. We worked very well together, and she did an excellent job working on areas she was assigned.

Sheila, a Latina mentor who had a generation gap with her mentee, also disclosed that she had not considered introducing her mentee to professionals in her network, in particular, as it related to job opportunities, sharing:

I really haven't thought about how to help her get a job. Positions in this county are kept like a secret. I wish they put the jobs up on the website like surrounding districts. I have told her to use her second language and it will open more doors. I guess I could share her resume with my principal friends.

Dan, a Black male mentee of both a White male and Black female mentors, also echoed the lack of intentionality of mentors to expose him to influential others. Rather, Dan would take the lead and utilize his work at the district level to establish relationships; he commented, "My personal work within the district gave me a few connections. That's how I would meet or connect with different people. If I asked my mentor, he would make a call to help me make the connection."

In spite of them not seeing themselves as being intentional about exposing their mentees to their professional networks, some mentors did expect networking, primarily through official meetings by the district. Alex and Sheila, for example, mentioned that they expected their mentees to attend all district-level meetings which would give them the opportunity to meet and interact with district-level leaders.

Professional Practice

The primary foci of the mentoring relationship were learning professional practices and exchanging ideas. Professional practice reflected the day-to-day activities of school leaders, such as teacher evaluations and the protocols, guidelines, processes, and policies that informed those actions, such as the laws related to student due process and special education services. For example, when talking about policies, Dan shared:

Certain policies, you know, I think are very important. The demographics are changing in schools and becoming more diverse. So, my mentor required me to become familiar with county policies related to diverse populations of students and to participate in the meetings, like IEPs, 504 plans, school improvement, and a few home visits with the school social worker.

In addition to learning about policies, procedures, and practices that comprised the daily duties of principals, the mentors shared resources, such as names of who to contact in the district for information regarding a topic, and provided the mentees with opportunities to collaborate and practice newly learned skills. The mentors were also pleased with the experiences they provided for their mentees and their mentees' accomplishments. To illustrate, Sheila expressed some pride in her mentees' development, sharing:

They [mentees] have so many good ideas. So, part of being a mentor is this exchange of ideas. And seeing people grow is like when you have your students, right? You see them grow. You see them develop. Sometimes when they had to do presentations for the staff, I was kind of proud too because they did well. In many instances, I said, "Oh my gosh, that's brilliant."

Trust and Honesty

Trust and honesty played important roles in the mentoring relationship for the mentors and mentees. Alex explained his approach to establishing trust:

I had the situation, now that I think about it, a type of deal. They [mentees] trusted me to give them sound advice. In essence, I had the responsibility of helping her become better, and I took that seriously. I told her it was okay to disagree with me and to improve ideas and make them her own. We needed to be honest about the mentoring experience.

Shelia considered her role as a mentor as being a “truth teller” and elaborated:

Truth tellers, I think mentors need to be truth tellers. You know, you can't, especially an administrator, just say, well, you have to grow, because they are there to learn from you. Telling them the truth is one way of making them stronger. That is part of mentoring.

Lisa likewise addressed how honesty promoted learning, remarking:

When you are in a mentoring relationship, you have to work closely with your mentor, you know. You don't always see things the same, but you are there to learn from him or her. My mentor and I talked about being open and honest and providing truthful feedback to me.

New Environments and Roles

For some participants, the mentorship relationship provided mentees with opportunities to participate and learn in a different environment or from the perspective of various positions or roles. Martha, a mentee, learned helpful strategies from assistant principals (APs) at her school related to investigating student incidents and teacher evaluations:

Handling student incidents is a new experience. There so many things to consider. During my internship (Mr. Smith) taught me how to investigate using index cards and you can write whatever you want on it, you can write, I don't know, you can turn it in blank, but everybody turns one in and that way anonymous. Reporting can be done. And then you kind of look and see if there's some similarities. I had to learn how to communicate with kids and their parents. [Mr. Alston] really helped me with doing evaluations. We would go into each one and then look at it together. He was very good at explaining things to me. With both of the APs, we shared the workload.

Sheila provided opportunities for her mentees to collaborate in a different environment:

You know, I call them assistant principals. And they attended every meeting, budget meetings, school improvement team, we have weekly meeting leadership meetings, every aspect, the only thing that I, they, didn't do too much was discipline. So, we prepare them, I think, based on giving them a lot of real, practical experience.

Alex similarly discussed providing his mentee with an opportunity to collaborate in a different environment:

Although one of mentees probably could have run the school, she still participated in learning activities. She needed to experience meetings from the perspective of a school leader, you know what I mean? She attended my principal meetings; she spent a few days at central office with human resources and the magnet office, to name a few.

Time

Time impacted the mentoring experience and was often related to building trust in the cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Both mentors and mentees in this study described how a lack of time affected their ability to build a trusting relationship. This lack of time was a result of both the way mentoring programs were designed and the busy schedules of the school day. Dan recalled the difficulty presented by his teaching schedule when he was a mentee: "Reaching out to my mentors was a challenging because of scheduling times to meet and working around my teaching schedule." Martha also noted the challenge of time due to her schedule:

I was a part-time mentee and was only in my school for half day. I came to the school on my track out weeks, and even took time off from work to participate in mentoring experiences. Cross-cultural mentoring pairs need time to find common ideas and ideas that

are important to both participants, which will allow them to bond and develop a successful relationship.

Ellen addressed the busy school day as well, remarking, “I mentored two mentees. One was full time, the other was part time. I would look up, and she was gone. That was a missed opportunity, and I feel bad about it. A lot happened during the school day.” Sheila mentioned the lack of time for the mentoring relationship due to other commitments both she and her mentee had:

This year, I have one full-time mentee, and we work together often. However, I was working on a major project for the district and was unable to work with her for a week. Plus, she went to trainings with the other assistant principals. Sometimes things come up, and time slips away from you. In situations like that, I want her to step up.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? Mentors and mentees in this study believed gaining new insights and visibility in new networks were important benefits to participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship.

New Insights

There were benefits for both the mentor and mentee to participating in the mentoring relationship. Mentors acted as a sounding board to test and explore new solutions and options and give advice based on their understanding of the policies and procedures in the school setting. For example, Ellen described how she involved her mentees in her efforts to collaborate with the middle school principal who led the school feeder school:

We developed a good relationship with our middle school principal. To improve both schools and to connect with the families, community, often times we met together and

made decisions for both schools. This was a new idea in my county, and I felt it was important to share this novel idea and learning experience with my mentees.

Mentees provide the mentor with new insights based on their own experiences, current educational research, methods, technology, and lived experiences. Nelson, for example, mentioned how he used his mentee's suggestion for staff professional development:

My mentee was responsible for presenting professional development on a protected teacher workday. She had her professor present a reading workshop to help implement a reading program for the next school. It provided a different perspective and a neutral voice, great.

Dan also elaborated on the importance of cross-cultural mentoring to broadening perspectives, and opinions:

From my perspective, I think cross-cultural mentoring is important because it provides someone with the help or guidance or perspective that you may not have. Like you may be looking from a different viewpoint that you never thought about or give you a different, you know, lens to look at something.

Visibility in New Networks

Participants indicated that participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship led to access and visibility in new networks. For example, Dan, a mentee in the study, described the importance of his access to new networks in helping him connect to the community he hoped to serve:

My mentoring experience was important because we were from different backgrounds. I think to learn the community that you're going to serve was necessary. So, you can be able to be responsive and have a relationship with the community. It is important to understand the school community, and my mentor made that happen for me when I asked questions.

Especially if you want to get a job, people have to know who you are, you understand?

Um, they will connect you to your mentor or your school. It is important that they see you.

Lisa also believed that a connection to a new community during the mentoring progress was necessary to her success. She believed it was important for her mentor to “foster” her relationship with the community by making sure she was working directly with all stakeholders.

Nelson commented on helping his mentee get recognized by influential others during the mentoring relationship, remarking, “You know working on projects helped get her out there. People will remember a face over a name.”

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? Participants pointed to challenges to being in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship that were associated with their differences in race or ethnicity, age, and gender.

Differences in Race/Ethnicity

Mentors and mentees believed that race/ethnicity impacted the mentoring relationship in some ways. They also thought that it is the responsibility of both parties to address the impact of any racial/ethnic or other cultural differences on the mentoring dynamic. As a result of the racial difference between him and his White female mentor, Black male mentee Nelson described the insight he gained into how racial structures, power, and privilege can influence cross-cultural mentoring relationships:

I can say it did provide additional insight, on understanding how Whiteness operates when it comes to power and privilege. We [Black males, Black people] always say we have to work harder to make sure that we are doing our job right. That's always been something

that's, like, always in the back of my mind. I got to work extra hard to make sure I do the best, the very best. Okay, I felt that pressure during mentoring. I saw the difference.

From her perspective as a Black mentor with a White mentee, Ellen explained how prejudice and racial perception can negatively impact the mentoring experience when she described how race and gender can influence how people think of the mentee:

If the mentee is African American and the mentor is Caucasian, the community sees this Caucasian as the top of the line. So they kind of, in their minds, say they are okay because they are working with this person. So, the mentee got to be good. Even though that may not be the case. Because who you know or who you work with can be important. Also, sometimes it makes a difference in the success of your mentoring experiences and your being appointed to that position that you want within leadership.

Dan, a Black male mentee, noted how the support from his White male mentor was at times lacking, and he wondered if it was due to their different racial and ethnic identities:

Sometimes support from my mentor wasn't there. I am not sure if it was about race or anything like that. Sometimes people are more comfortable with people who look like them. And treat other people of a different race differently or maybe they would receive a different system of support.

Ellen shared that she had a mentee who was unable to move beyond personal racial biases and prejudice and did not believe all children could succeed.

Age

Age also impacted the nature of the cross-cultural mentoring. Mentor Alex admitted that the age difference and years of experiences between him and his mentee was a challenge to the cross-cultural mentoring experience. He was a new principal learning the ropes and trying to

mentor an individual who was a member of the staff at his current school and had been in the field of education for many years. Because he was learning, he was not sure how to help her. Alex noted that he did not blame her, but said he wished things could have been better.

Martha mentioned that she felt her age could influence how she was perceived by her mentors. She felt that she was older than the “typical mentee or intern.” Likewise, Sheila was concerned about the age difference in her cross-cultural mentoring relationship, stating, “My mentee is much younger than I am. So, I have to remember to treat her like a professional peer and not like a student.”

Gender

In addition to race/ethnicity and age, gender impacted the mentoring relationship dynamic. Lisa, a mentee who had a male mentor, said, “I felt some pressure from having a male mentor. I needed to make sure he knew I was eager to learn. So, I pushed myself to work harder and take the initiative on agenda items.” Alex, a mentor was uncomfortable mentoring a female mentee, not only because of his race/ethnicity, but also because he was a male. He shared that mentoring a female mentee created additional societal pressures, explaining, “I am an African American male, so I have stereotypes that I must constantly be aware of...you know what I mean...I thought about how my tone and demeanor in every situation might be interpreted.” Alex explained that African American males are stereotyped as overly sexual and aggressive. He was concerned that these stereotypes would negatively impact his professional relationship with female mentees. He stated that the mentor mentee relationship would be scrutinized more intensely because of their gender and race differences: “Don’t get me wrong. I enjoy mentoring future school assistant principals regardless of gender or race. I just have an added level of awareness with that type of relationship.” Nelson, a mentee, felt having a female mentor could be

problematic if the two did not have mutual expectations, noting, “She was the expert, and I was there to learn from her.... I felt we had to be clear on our roles.... I think that is a societal thing.” Ellen, who was a mentor, also viewed gender as a possible hinderance to the cross-cultural mentoring relationship. She shared her perception of how her male counterparts viewed her as a female and wondered if her female mentees would be viewed the same way, pointing out, “You know we are not part of the good old boys club...Sometimes male peers see women as weak, and I wonder if they will give an opportunity to a female mentored by a female.” She explained that “good old boys club,” excludes females from positions of power or leadership.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 in this study asked: How do mentors and novice assistant principals navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? Participants discussed the importance of improving cultural sensitivity, identifying commonalities between mentor and mentee, conducting self-reflection, and sharing trust and authenticity as approaches to successfully navigate challenges associated with demographic differences between mentors and mentees.

Improving Cultural Sensitivity

Ellen acknowledged that cultural differences complicated the cross-cultural mentoring relationship and suggested that improving cultural sensitivity would mitigate cultural-based differences, opining, “If you don't have that awareness then find it read, study, go to cultural events, webinars, or whatever you can do to gain an understanding of that person's perspective. I think that's going to enhance the relationship.”

Martha shared that she felt a need to share her sexual identity with her mentors to help them understand her perspective related to issues of equity. She noted that conversations with people allowed her to recognize people with whom she could feel “safe.”

Sheila indicated that because cultural differences exist within the Latina community—it’s not a monolith—she could not automatically assume she and her mentee would see eye-to-eye on everything merely because both of them were Latina. Sheila also shared her approach to the differences with other Latina, remarking: “I would have to acknowledge and respect those differences.”

Identifying Commonalities

Whereas Ellen emphasized developing cultural sensitivity to ameliorate the impact of the demographic differences on the mentoring relationship, others emphasized identifying commonalities and using those similarities to improve the relationship. Shelia shared her strategy for promoting a connection through commonalities, explaining:

I think openness. Maybe listen to your mentee’s story and try to find what are the common threads, you know, we all have things in common. My mentee lived in the Bronx, or grew up in the Bronx. I lived in the Bronx for a big chunk of my life. So, we had that in common. So just find something in common. Again, different backgrounds and different ways but keep finding ways to keep communicating. You don't have to reveal everything in your life. Just trying to listen and telling your story. I told her a little bit about my story, just to see how much people sometimes have in common, or just to develop empathy, compassion, or just kind of like know where they're coming from maybe, knowing a little bit about their baggage if they're willing to do that. Because it helps people.

Alex also discussed the value of finding common ground when there are cultural differences in a mentoring relationship:

I would be naive to think that it would not have an impact, but also from the standpoint that if you can establish that relatability, that sense of common interests and things of that nature, maybe the challenges will not have that impact or have a greater positive impact.

Conducting Self-Reflection

Participants indicated that navigating issues in the mentoring relationship requires self-reflection. Dan explained that his self-reflection strategy was writing in a journal to summarize the events of the day and look at his responses to the events to see how he could improve. Lisa continually asked herself one question, “How can I make things better?”

Sharing Trust and Authenticity

Ellen maintained that trust in a mentoring relationship is especially important when there are differences:

One thing you may be able to say to one person, you may not be able to say to another person. So, trusting each other is very important, especially when two people are different.

I have to trust you to be my “authentic self,” and you have to trust me to do the same. We have to talk to build that type of trusting relationship.

On being his authentic self, Dan revealed:

I am a people person, so it is important for me to be authentic, I speak my mind, sometimes I shouldn't. But it is important, like to be real in the mentoring relationship. You have to talk to understand each other, you get what I am saying?

Nelson also emphasized being “real” and remarked, “You can’t learn in the mentoring relationship if you are not real with each other. It can be hard to trust each other, but you have to. It is very hard work.”

Covid-19 Pandemic

The mentoring relationships discussed by participants were primarily pre-pandemic. However, there was some mentoring during the pandemic. Though not a focus of this study, I discuss challenges to mentoring associated with the pandemic to give voice to the experiences and impact of the pandemic on mentoring.

Safety protocols for Covid-19 created an unexpected challenge for mentor and mentees. Many school districts began the school year with students learning completely virtually. School buildings were nearly empty because teachers were allowed to work from home. Both mentors and mentees wondered how they would navigate this new territory. Virtual mentoring eliminated interpersonal interactions and had the potential to hinder the bonding relationship between the mentor and mentee, because the relationship requires working together closely in multiple environments. Participants shared their experiences during the pandemic and responded to one question related to the pandemic: What kinds of personal discussions did you have about the impact of Covid-19?

Shelia shared her experience as a mentor during the pandemic:

I agreed to be a mentor before the pandemic began. I was wondering, “How is this going to work? How will my mentee learn how to be an assistant principal?” I explained to her that we would have to be flexible. Every day would be a new learning opportunity, and we would have to work together to keep the school running. She was good with the technology and had good ideas about how to set up the classrooms and other spaces in the building...She

would have to observe me completing a teacher evaluation virtually which was new for both of us. I am a very hands-on principal. Anything in person was very strict. It was a strange experience.

When Sheila was asked what kinds of personal discussions she had about the impact of Covid-19, she said that she avoided the political things about Covid-19 because of the divide in the county. She acknowledged her community's hesitancy to get vaccinated.

Ellen described her experience mentoring during the pandemic, sharing:

Covid-19 caught all of us off guard. There was so much fear and confusion. I thought about my students and their families. How could my administrative team which included my mentees create a supportive environment? Usually, you work closely in the school setting, we couldn't do that. Virtual meetings, virtual learning, and safety protocols were exhausting. Truly, we needed all of the help we could get...I think as an administrator you have to make the best of every situation...My mentees guided their learning experiences based on their level of comfort; you know...Oh, you know going into a meeting with a mask on or doing the virtual thing.

I asked Ellen what kinds of personal discussions she had about the impact of Covid-19. She replied that she found herself listening to the thoughts and feelings of the people around her, remarking, "I didn't share my personal thoughts at work. You know, some people followed the rules and wanted the vaccine; other people didn't."

Martha shared that she reached out to assistant principals and gathered ideas for her principal related to implementation of the safety protocols and she worked with scheduling students and assigning them to cohorts. She expressed that she took Covid-19 seriously and followed the guidelines. She also emphasized, "This is new, so we all have to learn from each

other.” Martha explained that she openly asked questions and shared her opinions. She was glad to take the vaccine and encouraged other people to take the vaccine. She mentioned that she knew people who lost loved ones to Covid-19 and tried to offer support.

Nelson said “Covid-19 really opened our eyes about the inequities in education. Some school districts struggled to provide technology to students and provide other resources...I am very thankful. Now, mentoring during the pandemic was different.” He further explained that his district was very strict about the protocols and took extra measures to protect everybody, stating, “My mentee learned the job mostly virtually or in small group settings. I will say this, we focused a lot on policy during the pandemic. I don’t think that has been the norm in the past, you know.” He added, “I think we did ok given the circumstances.” When asked about what kinds of personal discussions he had about the impact of Covid-19, Nelson shared that he “really didn’t, because it was so controversial. I believe my mentee and I were on the same page as it related to Covid-19.”

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 described participants’ experiences in participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship and highlighted the perceived benefits and challenges to the relationship resulting from the cross-cultural dynamic. The next chapter presents the key findings, discusses implications and recommendations related to the findings, and outlines both limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Chapter Introduction

Four research questions guided this inquiry: (1) What are the experiences of mentors and novice assistant principals in cross-cultural mentoring relationships? (2) What are the benefits for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? (3) What are the challenges that arise for mentors and novice assistant principals participating in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? and (4) How do mentors and novice assistant principals navigate issues associated with cultural differences that arise in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship? To answer these questions, I employed a qualitative research design to explore the experiences of seven educational leadership mentors and mentees in school districts in a state in the southeast U.S. who have participated in cross-cultural mentoring relationships. This chapter begins with a summary of the key findings and explains how the findings relate to social capital theory as well as other concepts in the extant literature on mentoring. The chapter also explains the limitations of the current study, provides implications for policy and practice, and offers recommendations for future research on cross-cultural mentoring.

Key Findings

The findings indicated that cross-cultural mentoring, a form of bridging social capital, can be beneficial for both the mentor and mentee. However, the findings also indicated that race/ethnicity, gender, and age diminish or even eliminate some of the benefits of the mentoring relationship. When mentees and mentors discussed the cross-cultural dynamic, they used terms and phrases such as “societal pressures,” “women as weak,” and “expectations” that indicated that cultural norms, stereotypes, and strategies to respond to racism and sexism, were informing the nature of the interactions. They also shared that at times they felt uncomfortable because of

the cross-cultural dynamic. If the cross-cultural nature of the dynamic moderates the outcomes as the current study's findings indicated, then the outcomes of the bridging social capital—the mentor-mentee relationship—can vary, and mentees in cross-cultural relationships (often women and people of color) will receive fewer benefits from the mentoring experience than their White male peers. If effective mentoring is crucial to helping assistant principals become more effective or advance their career options, then some novice assistant principals are placed at a significant disadvantage because they receive lower quality mentoring than their peers. This also means that students could ultimately be affected, and school districts would have leadership populations that remain less diverse than the populations they serve.

Cross-cultural mentoring can lead to new insights and visibility in new networks. Cross-cultural mentoring can also provide mentees with opportunities to gain access to broader and more social networks. However, although mentoring can provide access to networks and thus convey social capital, it is not necessarily always the case. Cultural differences can lead to mentors not affording mentees access to their professional ties. Of course, other factors may also lead to mentors not giving mentees access to their networks—notably, the mentor not considering it as part of their role in the mentoring process. When mentors do provide access to their networks, it can occur by different means, such as attendance at meetings, collaboration on special projects, and intentional introductions for job opportunities. Also, establishing mutual expectations, having sufficient time, and creating trust and being honest are important factors to facilitate a productive cross-cultural mentoring relationship.

Cross-cultural mentoring relationships are not without challenges. Improper pairing as well as lack of time to build trust or cultivate the relationship or collaborate impeded the achievement of potential benefits from the relationship. These results echo findings from other

researchers. Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2004), for example, maintained that forced or ineffective mentoring relationships have no benefits and may even have negative consequences. Trust is especially important in for cultivating a mentoring relationships that will lead to desirable outcomes. As Crutcher (2014) explained, the bonding process between mentor and mentee is labor-intensive, requiring time and patience. So, the extent to which trust cannot be established because of time or improper pairing needs to be examined closely and strategies to establish trust need to be identified.

While there are impediments to developing a relationship, there are also factors that enable an effective mentoring relationship. The findings indicated that establishing mutual expectations, having sufficient time, and creating trust and being honest are important factors to facilitate a productive cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Also, there are potential strategies to mitigate the negative impact of cultural differences on cross-cultural mentoring relationships. Participants suggested that identifying commonalities and understanding their personal bias helped them become more culturally sensitive and experience truly open conversations. These efforts may address or ameliorate mentors and mentees culturally-informed biased assumptions (c.f., Jordan, 1997). Zachary (2002) explained that each person in a cross-cultural relationship is shaped by their thinking, conversations, relationships, behaviors, and self-awareness of personal and cultural biases can provide the mentor and mentee with opportunities to learn about other's cultures. Developing a mutual understanding and respect enables mentors and mentees to become more trusting and supportive in the relationship. The culturally aware mentor will understand that cultural dimensions may significantly influence their intercultural interactions with mentees (Irvin, 2007).

While not the focus of this research, participants did share their experiences mentoring during the pandemic. Of particular interest was that mentors disclosed that it was difficult to bond using teleconferencing platforms. Also, certain activities and experiences were difficult to translate online (e.g., teacher evaluation). Interestingly, there was more reciprocal learning between the mentor and mentee because they were both learning to develop and navigate new experiences and protocols established in response to providing schooling during the pandemic. A surprising finding was what was not discussed between the mentor and mentee during the pandemic—Covid-19 protocols and safety measures. Because safety protocols were hotly debated and politicized throughout the state, mentors were hesitant to share personal feelings about the protocols because of fear of disagreeing with district policies or encountering a mentee with a strongly held opposing view.

Limitations of the Study

This study was not conducted without limitations. The data gathered in this study relied on participants' recollection of events, without confirmation from the mentor or mentee who was a part of the same mentoring experience. Also, as it relates to understanding social capital, the quality and quantity of both potential and actual network linkages are not conveyed. So, even if a mentor did provide access to their network, it may have not been able to yield benefits. The adage "it's who you know" echoes how much it matters that the mentor has (bridging social capital) or the information, resources, relationships, and influence persons a mentee is introduced to by the mentee (access to social network). Programming variety is another possible limitation. Different types of mentoring (such as school district-designed or graduate school-designated, formal vs. informal, voluntary or involuntary) as well as the nature of the assignment and any support for the mentoring relationship (e.g., training on mentoring, time for meetings,

expectations established by programming guidelines) could contribute to the mentoring relationship. In addition, other contextual issues, such as previous relationships, school districts, political climate, and so forth, could furthermore impact the nature of the mentoring relationship.

Lastly, the theoretical framework of social capital theory has the potential of creating a limitation for the study. Social capital theory has received criticism for being poorly conceptualized and defined in the research literature. Hean (2003) noted the multidimensionality of social capital theory—networks, trust, and social interactions—and maintained that, although they may stand independent of each other, using the components individually does not fully explain the theory. Lastly, it is difficult to tease out the extent to which facilitators and impediments of a productive cross-cultural mentoring relationship were moderated by cultural differences or other factors.

Implications of the Study

Social capital theory was the theoretical underpinning for this research. Social capital is defined as the resources that exist within social networks and how people access them and put them to use (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988, 1990). Social capital theory begins with the basic concept that interpersonal relationships are embedded within complex social structures. The components of social capital theory (networks, trust, resources, and access) provide a theoretical explanation for the various ways relationships matter and can benefit mentees. From this perspective, cross-cultural mentoring can connect a mentee to a mentor and to the mentor's connections that, in turn, provide mentees with access to information and resources that can lead to professional benefits.

This study assumed that the mentor had access to networks that could advance the career of the mentee, and the more people within the mentor's network increases the likelihood the

mentee will be successful. As Bourdieu (1986) wrote, "The volume of social capital possessed by a given agent...depends on the size of the network of connections that he can effectively mobilize" (p. 249). That is, the mentor's network and access to its resources can be utilized to improve the experiences and opportunities for the mentee. Bourdieu (1986) noted that the totality of the relationship between actors, rather than the quality of the group, creates social capital, which can translate into career advancement opportunities for the mentee. Lin (2001) maintained that social capital plays an important part in the "game" of attainment for its unseen influence on one's occupational outcomes. Participating in a mentoring relationship increases the visibility of the mentee by providing access to new networks and opportunities to connect with resources and people within the network that have influence. This becomes of critical importance in cross-cultural mentoring relationships where access is based on connecting to a network different from your own to increase professional interactions. Margolis and Romero (2001) point out that it is rarely acknowledged that "mentoring is an agent of socialization and that part of the game of mirrors is that the mentor shines by reflection" (p. 84). The mentor's ability to create connections into his or her social networks benefits both people in the mentoring relationship. In this study, there were some instances when mentors did connect their mentees with other professionals, but by and large this did not seem pervasive or intentional. The lack of facilitating access could have been due to cultural differences, other factors, or some combination of the two.

To further complicate matters, mentees may need more than simple introductions; they may need advocacy or a public endorsement. Public approval can increase a mentee's confidence to take risks, network, and explore new avenues for personal and professional growth (Thomas, 2001). Private advocacy may also play an important role. Lastly, mentees do not only need

access, but they must also take advantage of the network through exchange of information or resources. How the networks are utilized was not captured in this study.

Recommendations for Mentoring Practices

Due to changing demographics in the United States in general and the educational leadership workforce in particular, cross-cultural mentoring will continue. Therefore, policies and guidelines need to be developed to train mentors to be culturally sensitive and teach them to be open to different perspectives. Explicit training in developing mutual expectations, building trust, and open communication is key to the success of cross-cultural mentoring. As part of training on mutual expectations, districts and universities can have mentors and mentees craft an explicit statement of expectations and objectives. Because building trust and open communication is essential to quality mentoring and takes time, mentor programs may also want to consider expanding the time of the mentor relationship. As it relates to social capital, training should include the topic of networks, such as what they are, the benefits, and means for creating introductions (e.g., meetings, collaboration, special projects), thereby being intentional about ensuring mentees gain access to networks. Perhaps strategies for moving beyond simple introductions, such as how to be an advocate and sponsor or provide public recognition, should additionally be discussed in training.

Because mentors and mentees need time to build trust, mentoring programs need to provide time for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other so they can build trust. Crutcher (2014) noted that the bonding process between mentor and mentee is labor-intensive and requires time and patience; however, the benefits are immeasurable for both mentor and mentee. Due to their busy schedules during the day, though, finding the time is difficult for both parties. Additionally, given the increased job responsibilities of educational leaders and the

varied needs of mentees from different cultures, a multi-mentor model like a mentoring team could lead to better experiences and more opportunities. For example, the mentee could gain experience and insight from one mentor that another mentor lacks. From a social network perspective, mentoring teams would provide even more opportunities to increase and diversify mentees' networks. Universities should provide more educational resources on cross-cultural communications, culturally responsive interaction strategies, and tactics to address dominant cultural power dynamics in cross-cultural mentoring.

Lastly, the findings suggested that mentoring during a pandemic requires flexibility on the part of the mentor and the mentee. The pandemic revealed strong communication between the mentor and the mentee was crucial for the success of the mentoring relationship. Since the pandemic created varied emotional responses because of loss, isolation, fear, personal views on citizen freedoms, and political ideological, mentors may need to participate in training related to develop social emotional intelligence competencies to help address the different social emotional and psychological needs of mentees during times of crisis.

Future Directions for Research

Future researchers need to develop more nuanced definitions and measures of the type of social capital that can occur from mentoring, especially for educational leaders whose development and advancement opportunities may differ from mentoring based in for-profit industries. Additionally, researchers must gather additional information on context, both the macro context that includes the social, cultural, and political environment and the micro context of the mentoring experience—for example, motivation of mentors to mentor, size and location of the district, and the existence and nature of the mentoring program. Researchers will also need to design studies that can adeptly tease out whether the variation in mentoring is due to cultural

differences or other factors. Whereas this study focused on formal mentoring, future studies should focus on both informal and formal mentoring in an effort to truly understand the complexities, issues, and value of the mentoring relationship.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Solicitation Email

Hello,

My name is Tina Harper-Ball and I am a doctoral candidate with North Carolina University, working toward completion of Doctorate in Educational Leadership. As a part of completion requirement, I am conducting a research dissertation entitled: *Cross-Cultural Mentoring of Educational Leadership Trainees A Case Study (#IRB 23656)*. The purpose of this Interpretive case study is to examine the lived experiences of novice principals and aspiring assistant principals participating cross-race mentoring in southeastern North Carolina.

I am soliciting participations of novice principals and aspiring assistant principals in a cross-cultural mentoring relationships participate in a 30-60 minute face-to-face or telephone interview. Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants may with draw from the study at any time. The results of the research study may be published but participants' names will not be used. Your participation in the study will provide great understanding of cross-cultural mentoring and may inform future practices and mentoring programs.

If you choose to participate, I will send an Informed Consent Agreement letter. If you have questions concerning the research study, please contact me at xxxxxxxxxx or xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Tina Harper-Ball

Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter

Dear _____,

I am a student at North Carolina State University working on a Doctor in Educational Leadership. I am conducting a research study entitled: *Cross-Cultural Mentoring of Educational Leadership Trainees A Case Study (#IRB 23656)*.

The purpose of the research study is to examine the lived experiences o novice principals and aspiring assistant principal participating in cross-race mentoring in southeastern North Carolina.

Your participation will involve answering, digitally recorded interview questions that may take 30-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in person at a time at your convenience.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published but your name will not be used, and your results will be maintained in confidence. In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is to the greater good of future mentoring r

To participate in this study, please sign below and return this form by mail and scanned copy via electronic mail. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at _____ or e-mail me at _____.

Sincerely,

Tina Harper-Ball

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I understand the nature of the study, the potential risks to me as a participant, and the means by which my identity will be kept confidential. My signature on this form also indicates that I am 18 years old or older and that I give my permission to voluntarily serve as a participant in the study described.

Participant Signature: _____

Appendix C: Prescreening Questions

Hello,

My name is Tina Harper-Ball, and I am a doctoral candidate with North Carolina University, working toward completion of Doctorate in Educational Leadership. As a part of completion requirement, I am conducting a research dissertation entitled: *Cross-Cultural Mentoring of Educational Leadership Trainees A Case Study (#IRB 23656)*.

The purpose of this Interpretive case study is to examine the lived experiences of mentors, novice principals and aspiring assistant principals participating in cross- cultural mentoring in southeastern North Carolina.

If you choose to participate, please respond to the questions below. Additional information will be sent about the study. If you continue with the study, I will send an Informed Consent Agreement letter. If you have questions concerning the research study, please contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or tmharper@ncsu.edu.

1. Have you participated in cross-cultural mentoring?
2. In your cross-cultural mentoring relationship were the mentor or the mentee?
3. How were you different?
4. How did you meet your mentor or mentee?

Appendix D: Mentor Participant Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to learn more about cross-cultural mentoring in educational leadership. Your interview data will be kept confidential.

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any point of the interview.

The audio files will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The audio files will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2021.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

1. Tell me about how you became interested in educational leadership.
2. What was your pathway to where you are now (education, previous leadership experience, etc.)?
3. How long have you mentored other people pursuing roles as leaders?
4. From your perspective what is mentoring and why is it important?
5. What do you like about mentoring relationships?
6. What are your thoughts on the role of mentoring in the career advancement?
7. What are some of the challenges to mentoring relationships?
8. Tell me about your experiences mentoring someone who is of a different than you (gender, race/ethnicity, religion, etc.).
9. How were you different?

10. How did you meet your mentee?
11. What did you do with your mentee?
12. What did you discuss with your mentee?
13. What specific advice, information or skills did you give your mentee about being an educational leader?
14. How do you think the ethnicity/race of the mentor and mentee factors into the potential success of the mentoring relationship?
15. Did you have any apprehensions about how you were perceived because you were from a different culture of your mentee?
16. What factors do you feel challenge the success of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
17. Describe challenges to the cross-cultural mentoring relationship and the efforts that the mentor and mentee took to overcome the challenges.
18. What has been the most rewarding aspect of being in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
19. How did the mentor and mentee make the relationship successful?
20. What was the mentee's approach to the relationship?
21. What actions did the mentee take to build trust?
22. One important element of mentoring is connecting mentees to others. In your role, did you introduce your mentee to influential people inside or outside of the school district? Were they like you (in terms of cultural background)? Explain. Did you (they) follow-up?
23. Looking back as someone in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship, what advice would you give to a first-time mentor and mentee in that relationship.

24. What types of resources or support do you think those in cross-cultural mentoring relationship need to support the relationship?
25. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?

Appendix E: Mentee Participant Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to learn more about cross-cultural mentoring in educational leadership. Your interview data will be kept confidential.

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. I would like to record the interview so the study can be as accurate as possible. You may request that the tape recorder be turned off at any point of the interview.

The audio files will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The audio files will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2021.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

1. Tell me about how you became interested in educational leadership.
2. What was your pathway to where you are now (education, previous leadership experience, etc.)?
3. How long have you been mentored as you pursue educational leadership?
4. From your perspective what is mentoring and why is it important?
5. What do you like about mentoring relationships?
6. What are your thoughts on the role of mentoring in the career advancement?
7. What are some of the challenges to mentoring relationships?
8. Tell me about your experiences being mentored by someone who is of a different than you (gender, race/ethnicity, religion, etc.).
9. How were you different?

10. How did you meet your mentor?
11. What did you do with your mentor?
12. What did you discuss with your mentor?
13. What specific advice, information or skills did your mentor give you about being an educational leader?
14. How helpful did you find your mentor? About what specifically?
15. Can you give an example of a way that your mentor influenced your career interest, promotion, and advancement?
16. How do you think the ethnicity/race of the mentor and mentees factors into the potential success of the mentoring relationship?
17. Did you have any apprehensions about how you were perceived because you were from a different culture of your mentor?
18. What factors do you feel challenge the success of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
19. Describe challenges to the cross-cultural mentoring relationship and the efforts that you and your mentor took to overcome the challenges.
20. What has been the most rewarding aspect of being in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship?
21. How did the mentor make the relationship successful?
22. What was the mentor's approach to the relationship?
23. What actions did you and your mentor take to build trust?
24. One important element of mentoring is connecting mentees to others. Were you introduced to influential people inside or outside of the school district? Were they like you (in terms of cultural background)? Explain. Did you (they) follow-up?

25. Looking back as someone in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship, what advice would you give to a first-time mentor and mentee in that relationship.
26. What types of resources or support do you think those in cross-cultural mentoring relationship need to support the relationship?
27. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?