

**MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FOR
AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE DOCTORAL STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY**

By

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ABSTRACT

MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE DOCTORAL STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This dissertation examines the impact mentoring relationships, between African American women doctoral students and faculty members, has on the students' professional identity development. Of particular interest is an examination of whether matched mentoring relationships between African American women doctoral students and African American female faculty members impact the professional identity of African American graduate students. The theoretical frameworks guiding this study are critical race theory and black feminist thought. Critical race theory and black feminist thought establish the foundation for this study. This examination of African American women doctoral students' mentoring experiences and perceptions of their professional identity development allows these women to tell their story in their own words. Sixteen African American female doctoral students across various academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and education participated in this qualitative investigation. Semi-structured interviews were employed with African American female doctoral students to gain this insight and understanding on their mentoring experiences, professional identity development and satisfaction with their doctoral education experience. Findings indicate that African American female doctoral students involved in mentoring relationships are more engaged in professional development activities that address their professional identity or feel more supported in their efforts to explore and solidify their professional identity and career trajectory. Implications and recommendations for doctoral programs and faculty are discussed.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Ruby Earlene Young Curry and the late Joseph Cephus Curry, whose loving support, encouragement and kindness sustained me before, during and after this process. I am the person I am today, because of the values and morals they both instilled in me; and the diverse cultural experiences they exposed me to during my lifetime. You both shared my dream of earning a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education. Without your support and prayers our dream could not have come true. Thank you!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement/Purpose.....	4
Research Questions.....	9
Theoretical Frameworks.....	10
Critical Race Theory.....	11
Black Feminist Thought.....	12
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction.....	19
African American Women in Higher Education.....	20
Socialization in Doctoral Education.....	26
Mentoring versus Advising.....	28
Forming Mentoring Relationships.....	30
Cross-Gender and Cross-Cultural Mentoring.....	36
Mentoring and Professional Identity Development.....	40
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction.....	45
The Settings.....	46
Study Participants.....	50
Data Collection Procedure and Instrument.....	52
Data Analysis.....	53
 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	
Introduction.....	55
Part I – Thematic Discussion	
Race and Gender.....	56
Ideal Mentor Attributes.....	67
Mentoring and Professional Identity.....	70
Part II – Participant Narratives/Case Studies	
Joann – Seek and Ye Shall Find.....	78
Dominique – Knowledge Over Gender.....	86
Danielle – Roles Models Over Mentors.....	93
Diane – One Bad Experience.....	102
Patricia – A Mentor Would Be Nice.....	111

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction.....	120
Discussion.....	121
Research Question 1.....	124
Research Question 2.....	126
Research Question 3.....	129
Research Question 4.....	137
Research Question 5.....	140
Research Question 6.....	148
Contributions.....	150
Implications.....	153
Limitations and Future Research.....	156
Recommendations.....	159
Recommendations for Doctoral Programs and Faculty.....	162
Recommendations for African American Female Doctoral Students.....	163
Conclusions.....	166
 APPENDIX	
Interview Protocol.....	170
 REFERENCES	173

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Institutional Sites Comparison.....	49
Table 2: Participant Profile.....	51
Table 3: Institutional and Academic Disciplines Represented Across Participants.....	51
Table 4: Professional Identity Change Across Participants.....	142

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Interpretation of Literature on the Factors that Impact Professional Identity Development for Africa American Female Doctoral Students.....	44
Figure 2: A Model of Professional Identity Development for African American Women Doctoral Students.....	161

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Mentoring is both a relationship and developmental process usually involving two people. One, referred to as the mentor, who guides, shares knowledge, provides information and support, and is usually older and more experienced in a particular field. The other person, commonly referred to as the mentee or protégé, is typically younger and in need of advice and guidance to successfully navigate along a particular course or path in life (i.e. job advancement, career decision, and education). An understanding of cultural and gender differences is critical to the success of the mentoring process. As a developmental process, mentoring can be systemically planned and evaluated. The term mentoring has its origins and historical foundations in Greek mythology (Roberts, 1999). It is derived from the word mentor. According to Greek literature, Pallas Athena, transformed herself into an elderly man known as Mentor to become the servant to King Odysseus, King of Ithaca. Odysseus entrusted Mentor with the care of his son, Telemachus; and his kingdom, when he (Odysseus) went to fight in the Trojan War. Thus, Mentor became Odysseus's wise and trusted counselor and confidant and a tutor to Telemachus. This historical account of Mentor and his (mentoring) relationships with Odysseus and Telemachus provide a fundamental backdrop to the use and definitions of mentoring in present 20th century literature.

The definition and use of mentoring has evolved in the literature over the last 30 years. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) chronicle the stages of a young man's (protégé) life from adolescence to adulthood and the positive impact that having an older and wiser male (mentor) can have in the young man's transition to manhood/adulthood. Here, Levinson et al. define the beginning of the mentor-protégé relationship as one where the mentor

plays the role of an authoritative adult or parent figure while the protégé feels like a naïve novice (child) in comparison. The mentor sees the young man's potential, believes in him, provides him opportunities to exhibit his skills, and supports and assists him in realizing his vision for the type of life he wants to lead. Over the course of time, the mentor and protégé begin to relate as peers. It is during this time that the protégé transitions to adulthood and develops his own identity. From mentoring's impact on the personal transformation in a young man's life to its application in a corporate setting, Kram (1985) also describes mentoring as a developmental process where mentors enhance both the instrumental and psychosocial aspects of the protégé. In Kram's work the context of mentoring is in the employment sector. She defines the two developmental aspects of mentoring – instrumental and psychosocial – in terms of the protégé's professional advancement. Mentors enhance the instrumental aspect by providing sponsorship, exposure, coaching, visibility, protection and challenging assignments. Contrary to the instrumental aspect, mentors provide role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling and friendship to support the psychosocial aspect of the protégé's professional development.

The context in which mentoring occurs is important when examining how the mentor-protégé relationship is established and the roles of both the mentor and protégé. In the higher education literature, mentoring relationships are defined as complex human relationships that have played an increasingly important role in the literature of adult education in recent years (Hansman, 2002). Along with this increased role, however, have come increasingly complex definitions of mentors and mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships between students and faculty, and among students are addressed in the literature at primarily the undergraduate level (Frierson, Hargrove, & Lewis, 1994). Much of the existing research addresses the need for informal and formal mentoring as it relates to adjustment to college, attrition between the

freshman and sophomore years, and retention for students of color. For example, Lee (1999) states that African American students' interaction with faculty is essential to their retention, especially in the first year. Another area in the literature is the importance of mentoring as a bridge between institutional culture and ethnicity at the undergraduate level (Lee, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Although much of the attention related to mentoring on campus has been directed toward undergraduate education rather than graduate education, Ellis (1992) states that the success of graduate education depends on a student-faculty relationship based on trust, integrity, and support. I contend that this relationship needs to be in the form of a mentor-protégé relationship to be successful in terms of shaping a doctoral student's professional identity.

Graduate education is a developmental process. Mentors provide sponsorship, challenge, protection, visibility, acceptance and confirmation to their graduate students (Green & Bauer, 1995). Doctoral education is a unique context within this developmental process because it requires students at that level to have an advisor and/or dissertation chairman. Tinto (1993) describes doctoral students as a diverse group, in graduate education, whose needs and motivations change considerably through three distinct stages of doctoral persistence: transition and adjustment, attaining candidacy, and completing the dissertation. Examining mentor-protégé relationships at the doctoral level allows for more analysis into the distinct and combined roles of advisors, dissertation chairmen and mentors. How are these roles and the people in these roles different, the same or at what points do they intersect? Winston and Polkosnik (1984) argue that a successful graduate advisor must fulfill five essential roles and functions: reliable information source, departmental socializer, advocate, role model, and occupational socializer. The roles of mentor and friend may be desirable in an advisor, but cannot be required.

Problem Statement

There is a lack of empirical research that addresses successful mentoring relationships between African American female doctoral students (protégés) and their faculty (mentors). This study examines the issue of matched mentoring dyads' (same race and same gender) effect on the professional identity development of African American female doctoral students and contributes to the body of existing literature on mentoring in graduate education.

Although mentoring and graduate education are independent developmental processes that can be defined in stages, I posit that mentoring is vital to the success and retention of graduate students, specifically at the doctoral level, and impacts doctoral students' professional identity development. Thus, there are points of intersectionality that can occur between the two processes. The Council of Graduate Schools' (2004) Ph.D. Completion Project supports my position by declaring mentoring as one of the six identified institutional and program characteristics that influence student outcomes. Patton and Harper (2003) further support my stance by stating that mentoring is particularly imperative at the graduate level, because emerging scholars and practitioners who intend to excel in their respective professions need opportunities to make connections and learn how to successfully operate within their areas of specialization. Pairing mentors and protégés in the same department is a valid strategy for developing young scholars/junior faculty (Cox, 1997). Having a mentor is an important factor for women of color who pursue careers as administrators in higher education (Ramey, 1993)

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact mentoring relationships between African American women doctoral students and faculty members; across various academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and education; have on professional identity development. Of particular interest is an examination of whether matched mentoring

relationships between African American women doctoral students and African American female faculty members impact the professional identity of African American graduate students. Thus, this study helps to determine if race and gender matter in the mentoring experiences of African American women doctoral students. Their experiences may aid in our understanding of how women and graduate students of color are socialized in their respective discipline/field through mentoring.

As an African American female doctoral student, coordinator of an undergraduate research program for over a decade, and one who actively mentors undergraduate students in their preparation for graduate school, I have experienced first-hand and observed the positive impact that (formal and informal) mentoring has on student development, academic achievement, and career choice. Additionally, I understand the need and desire to be mentored as a doctoral student navigating the process of completing my own Ph.D.

From my professional observation, as students' transition from undergraduate to graduate education, their need for mentoring and its level of intensity needs to increase in order to socialize the students for graduate education and their professional careers. Adams (1992) and Phillip (1993) argue that the cultivation of developmental or mentoring relationships between graduate students and their professors is a critical factor in determining the successful completion of graduate programs. Despite the prominent role that the mentoring process plays in the academic development of graduate students and the professional mobility of new faculty, empirical data on mentoring – especially where African American scholars are concerned – is scarce (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). Advising relationships, at the graduate level, can transform into mentoring relationships; however, the literature at the graduate level does not concentrate on this ideal level. What the literature at the graduate level does discuss are some of the general

outcomes researched in the undergraduate literature, such as time-to-degree and degree completion (e.g., attrition and retention). Issues discussed in the graduate literature, beyond time-to-degree and degree completion, are thesis/dissertation writing, professional development engagement, research agenda, and scholarship (Tanner, 2002).

Studies focused on African American women doctoral students are extremely limited. Moreover, few studies focus on the benefits and challenges of African American student protégés having African American faculty mentors at the doctoral level. Cox (1997) reports that females who choose only one mentor, a female, has increased fourfold, whereas the number of women who choose a male mentor has decreased correspondingly. Thus, evidence exists that there is a need to study matched mentoring dyads based on gender. Additionally, little attention is paid in the academy (and literature) to underrepresented faculty members' desire to contribute actively to their racial or ethnic community (Townsend & Turner, 2000). African American female doctoral students are also confronted by unique problems. This population often feels isolated in their academic departments because they may be the only woman of color, the only African American, or the only woman in their program or cohort. Alfred (2001) states that alienation, isolation, and social marginalization characterize the African American experience in predominantly white academic institutions (PWI's). The feelings of isolation could also impact this population's professional identity development as a researcher, faculty member, or administrator. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (2001) there are 8,886 African American women in tenure stream appointments. This represents 6.7% of the total number of women in tenure appointments. Due to these low numbers, African American female faculty feel isolated, underemployed and overused by their department and/or institution (Turner, 2002). Moreover, for African American female doctoral students, social isolation plays a key

role in their satisfaction with their doctoral training experiences (O'Connor, 2002). Social isolation manifests itself through discriminatory practices by faculty and graduate peers in terms of withholding course materials or resources, less access to networks, unfair grading, and disparaging remarks made in the classroom. This added or coupled with an overall “chilly” climate for women in higher education creates obstacles and barriers for African American women doctoral students (Hall & Sandler, 1983).

Tension exists between the desire for African American female doctoral students to have a mentor who identifies with them on both race and gender, and the limited number of African American women in tenure-track faculty positions in colleges and universities in the United States. Given this tension, I approach this study with the assumption that both race and gender are salient in how mentoring relationships develop and the effectiveness of these matched mentoring relationships. This assumption is primarily supported in the business literature. Specifically, Blake-Beard, Murrell, and Thomas (2006) state that understanding interactions across different racial groups is critical given the changing nature of organizations and the composition of the people within them. These diverse interactions will certainly have implications for the intersection of race and mentoring. Clearly organizations are undergoing significant changes that are relevant to the relationship between race, gender and mentoring. One change is an increasingly diverse workforce (Bell, 2006; Cox & Blake, 1991; Thomas & Ely, 1996). As the workforce is becoming more diverse (in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender), the population of students in higher education is becoming more diverse, as well. One consequence of greater diversity on college campuses is the need to develop communities of support and cultural understanding. Mentoring is one avenue that could address this need.

Faculty members and doctoral students in matched mentoring relationships create communities in graduate education based on ethnicity, culture, and shared understanding. For the purpose of this study, matched mentoring relationships are defined as those where the mentor and protégé are of same-race and same-gender. These dyads promote role modeling, positive images of people of color and the development of social and professional networks. These communities are vital to doctoral students' academic success, identity development, and preparation as the next wave of faculty in American higher education. Bennett (2000) found that same-gender mentoring relationships were more effective than cross-gender dyads at the graduate level. African American and other protégés of color involved in cross-race (unmatched) mentoring relationships were considered by their mentors to be developmentally below the level of their white counterparts in their abilities in the same setting (Mertz, 1989). I intend to further explore race and gender in the context of mentoring and professional identity development at the doctoral level.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of this study, six fundamental questions guide this inquiry:

- (1) To what extent are African American female doctoral students involved in mentoring relationships at the doctoral level?
- (2) Does involvement in a matched mentoring (same race and same gender) dyad impact African American female doctoral students' perception of their professional identity?
- (3) Does involvement in an unmatched mentoring (different race and/or gender) dyad impact African American female doctoral students' perception of their professional identity?
- (4) How do African American female doctoral students perceive their professional identity at the beginning of their Ph.D. program?
- (5) How does African American female doctoral students' professional identity change during the course of their doctoral experience?
- (6) What are the tangible outcomes of professional identity development for African American female doctoral students?

Professional identity development will be operationalized in terms of how African American women doctoral students perceive their professional trajectory (i.e. researcher, teacher, administrator, practitioner, or clinician) from the beginning of the Ph.D. careers to the time of their participation in this study. Tangible outcomes of one's professional identity manifest themselves in the doctoral student's engagement in professional development activities (i.e. conferences and publications), involvement in departmental and university-wide programs and committees, and service in academic associations.

Theoretical Frameworks

The issues of professional identity development and mentoring must be analyzed through a set of theoretical constructs that address the unique and complex position of African American women in American higher education. Given my assumption that both race and gender play vital roles in the impact that mentoring has on professional identity development, two constructs frame this study. They are critical race theory and black feminist thought. For the purposes of this study these frameworks are preceded by a brief discussion of constructivist pedagogy, which serves as a guideline for my focused and in-depth examination of mentoring and professional identity development of African American female doctoral students.

Constructivist pedagogy is rooted in the view of constructivism as a learning theory. Resnick (1989) posits that constructivism is a theory of learning and meaning making that explicates how individuals create their own understanding on the basis of their interactions and experiences. There are two lenses with which to view constructivism - sociological and psychological. Social constructivism centers on the way in which power, economic, political, and social factors affect the ways in which groups of people form understandings and formal knowledge about the world. Psychological constructivism suggests that individual learners actively construct meaning around phenomena, and that these constructions are idiosyncratic, depending in part on the learner's background knowledge. Both lenses operate on the assumption that meaning is actively constructed in the human mind (Richardson, 2003). The approach that guides this study's theoretical and epistemological frames is social constructivism as it best captures the manner in which meaning and knowledge are formed by the mentoring relationship.

Kerka (1998) contends that mentoring reflects “the socially constructed nature of learning and the importance of experiential, situated, learning experiences” (p. 2). Constructivist pedagogy is employed to examine learning in mentoring relationships, and explain “that learning is most effective when situated in a context in which new knowledge and skills will be used and individuals construct meaning for themselves but with the context of interaction with others” (p. 2). This directly lends itself to the examination of the types of professional development activities Ph.D. students are exposed to and engaged in. Doctoral students can shape and determine their professional identity by observing their mentor and engaging in activities themselves, then drawing meaning from those observations and experiences.

Critical race theory is the other theoretical framework for this study. Critical theory, in general, is concerned with empowering humans to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender (Fay, 1987). Critical race theory is a multifaceted theory used in legal studies, education, women’s studies, and sociology. Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso (2000) state that the critical race theory framework is used for education attempts to (1) push race and racism to the foreground of research and (2) challenge the traditional paradigms, discourse and methods on race, gender, and class by exposing the intersectionality of these social constructs for communities of color.

The historical fact that race matters in the United States may be one reason why many African American female faculty feel so driven to establish research agendas that impact communities of color and women. Delgado (2001) states that race is a social construction devised to convey differences in intelligence, reliability, virtue and work ethic. Critical race theory uses counterstories in the form of discussion, archives, and personal testimonies because it acknowledges that some members of marginalized groups, by virtue of their marginal status,

tell previously untold or different stories based on experiences that challenge the discourse and beliefs of the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

Students of color establish academic and social counterspaces/communities both on and off campus by finding people who look like them, and by establishing spaces that are comfortable and hospitable for them (Solórzano et al., 2000). African American students create academic, social, racial, and gender counterspaces in response to their marginality on campus. These counterspaces can take the form of matched and/or cross-cultural mentoring relationships with faculty. For the purpose of this study, African American female faculty mentors can aid in validating African American female doctoral students' experiences and knowledge. Validation can in time contribute to these doctoral students self-confidence and how they view themselves as professionals in their chosen fields.

Given Delgado's (2001) observation, this construct of those mentoring relationships serves as a factor that contributes to the need for African American female faculty to embark on research that debunks these embedded stereotypes. Critical race theory provides some insight into the presumed difficulty in establishing matched mentoring relationships between African American female faculty and doctoral students. Given this presumed difficulty, African American female doctoral students will seek a safe haven within predominantly African American student associations, sororities, female support groups, and/or entities external to their department and university, such as church and volunteerism.

Similar to the foundational belief of marginalization in critical race theory, black feminist thought examines marginality as the "outsider within" status of African American women in American higher education (Collins, 1986). This theory is grounded in the traditional "outsider within" experiences of African American women and how these experiences shape their identity.

hooks (1989) discusses the margin and center as the position of African-Americans and whites within American society that places whites at the core and African-Americans at the periphery, with limited access to the center. Within this framework African-American women have the ability to move between the core and periphery but are not accepted as part of the established center (hooks, 1989). Collins (1986) initially constructed the term, “outsider within” to explain how a social group’s placement in the specific, historical contexts of race, gender, and class might influence its world view. The professional identities of African-American female faculty as scholars, teachers, and mentors in American higher education are contextualized by both their race and gender. Thus, the experiences of African-American female faculty can be informed by a black feminist theoretical framework that considers both their racial and gender identities (Guillory, 2001).

Black feminist thought relies on the intersecting power relationships of race, gender, and class; and is grounded in Collins (1986) definition of the “outsider within”. As Collins states, on one level, we as black women have had an “insider” relationship in majority culture as domestic workers (in the family), managers (in the organization) and faculty (in higher education systems). However, coupled with having this “insider” position, we have also “remained “outsiders” as people who never really belong in the family, organization or higher education as examples. Our position as outsiders in these contexts reflects our position as outsiders in society. Collins (1986) purports that there are common themes throughout the lives and experiences of African American women and these themes help to create a black woman’s standpoint on issues, but there is no concrete definition and set of experiences that all black women have experienced. This is primarily due in part to the diversity of African Americans’ upbringing, socio-economic class, demographics, and age. Given this, black female intellectuals are charged with producing

facts and theories about the black female experience that will clarify a black woman's standpoint for black women. In other words, black feminist thought contains observations and interpretations about African American womanhood that describe and explain different expressions of common themes.

There are three key components to black feminist thought – self-definition and self-valuation, interlocking or multiple oppressions, and African American women's culture. Of the three components, self-definition and self-valuation is the one component where we as black women define ourselves by addressing some of the long-standing negative stereotypes of black women being aggressive, overly sexual, or the objectified “other”. Being defined as “other” is dehumanizing. Defining ourselves allows us to humanize ourselves and our existence in society. Matched mentoring dyads aid in the self-definition of who we are, as African American women, in American higher education. Humanizing our existence in our respective fields and more importantly in our local academic homes (i.e. departments) is necessary to for black female survival. The second component, interlocking oppressions, allows for black feminists to determine the links among the systems of race, gender and class. Collins (2000b) explores the matrix of domination as a structuring of the experiences of multiple oppressions endured by African American women based on a unique “intersectionality” of race, class, and gender that also results in a multiple consciousness (Crenshaw, 1991; King, 1988; Wing, 1997). Instead of examining these systems as three individual entities, black feminists are charged with analyzing the linkages between the systems. In the context of higher education, I would add the area of research with race, gender and class as an interlocking oppression for African American female academics. Rollins (1985) supports my assertion, by stating that Afro-American female scholars (in sociology) are repeatedly struck by their own invisibility, both as full human subjects

included in sociological facts and observations, and as practitioners in the discipline itself. The third key theme in black feminist thought is defining African American women's culture.

Mullings (1986) defines culture as the symbols and values that create the ideological frame of reference through which people attempt to deal with the circumstances in their lives. Culture is ever-changing and transforming meaning that old experiences and traditions inform new ones.

This replicates over time. Thus, culture is not static. It is modified by material conditions. These material conditions manifest themselves in social institutions, such as church and family; creative or artist expression like music, dance and poetry; and in community/civic activities involving political, economic or social justice issues.

Culture is the key that ties the three key themes of black feminist thought together.

Although, there is no monolithic black women's culture, there are common linked experiences among African American women. These commonalities assist in providing a frame of reference for black women's experiences and helping to define and shape ourselves in the context of race, class, and gender oppression.

There are two cultural phenomena that characterize black women's culture – sisterhood and African American motherhood. The concept sisterhood addresses the experiences of black women in our interpersonal relationships with one another. The concept of sisterhood is generally understood to mean a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression (Dill, 1983). Sisterhood is expressed differently in response to different material conditions and continues to be a highlighted feature of black women's culture. White (1985) documents the ways black slave women assisted one another in their household and field chores during pregnancy or while their husbands were away, nursing children, and child-rearing as examples of dependent and supportive communities where

sisterhood was necessary and assumed for survival. In the same year, Gilkes' work on African American women in the Sanctified Church illustrated the presence of a sisterhood among black women in the church. In the early 1900's, when black women were rarely encouraged to pursue their education or assume professional positions, the Sanctified Church supported black women's efforts at educational excellence, and readily provided opportunities for black women to attain influence, leadership and political clout in the church. Their clout and status in the church was translated to their surrounding communities. Not only did the church, as a social institution, minister and support a predominantly female community and congregation, but the women themselves encouraged and supported one another's rise in power and influence.

The second interpersonal relationship that is characterized by black feminists is African American motherhood. This phenomenon examines the connections between the historical and societal messages black mothers receive regarding their significance as mothers, their influence over their children and how they rear their child to cope with competing and interlocking oppressions of race, gender and class brought on by the dominant culture. Effective black mothers are savvy mediators between the competing offerings of an oppressive dominant culture and a nurturing black value-structure (Hale, 1980). Dill (1980) provides a different perspective on the topic of black mothers. In her study on black female domestics, she reports the pressure that these women felt and the strategies these women pursued to help their children go further than they themselves had gone in terms of education and profession. Gilkes (1980) offers yet another perspective on black mothers and motherhood. She speaks to the observation that many of the black women in her study became political activists in their communities through their roles as mothers. What began as their work on behalf of their children became their work on behalf of the community's children.

Sisterhood and African American motherhood, as forms of interpersonal relationships, are important areas for black feminists to research and define as part of black women's culture. I believe that both correlate to mentoring for African American women in higher education. The concept of sisterhood is relevant in the matched mentoring dyads between African American women faculty and doctoral students. Sisterhood's relevance can be viewed in two ways: (1) as the **impetus** for the establishment of matched mentoring dyads, and (2) as the **result** of matched mentoring dyads. Sisterhood serves as the impetus for the establishment of and desire for matched mentoring dyads given the dearth of African American women faculty and Ph.D. students in US colleges and universities. Most often, when black women meet one another, there is an innate desire to "get know" each other and become acquainted in some fashion. I believe this is due in part to the concept of sisterhood; the need for black women to support each other in seemingly isolated and oppressive environments, which higher education can be for women and persons of color as discussed further in Chapter Two. As a result of matched mentoring, the concept of sisterhood can be created and/or sustained. As stated earlier, Dill (1983) reports that sisterhood is a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression. Given this, a mentor-protégé relationship between an African American female faculty member and doctoral student can produce feelings of loyalty and attachment, which develop over the course of the mentoring relationship.

The inclusion of black feminist thought, as a theoretical lens encourages black feminists and academicians to tell their own story. Thus, our identity is formed by and for ourselves. This theory is advantageous given that this study focuses closely on the stories that African American female doctoral students shared about their experiences in higher education. black feminist thought acknowledges that early theorists, who did not identify as black women, have falsely and

stereotypically shaped black women's identity. Their accounts are rooted in multiple forms of oppression. Collins (2002) states that oppressive images of self are difficult to erase when they have been reinforced over time.

Critical race theory and black feminist thought establish the foundation for this study. This examination of African American women doctoral students' mentoring experiences and perceptions of their professional identity development allows these women to tell their story in their own words. More importantly, as an African American female researcher, I too am contributing my voice to this work by offering observations and interpretations of these women's involvement in higher education and graduate education, specifically. There are five chapters total in this scholarly work. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two provides the contextual backdrop for the "outsider within" status of African American women in higher education. Chapter Three focuses on the qualitative methods used to collect and analyze the participant responses. Additionally, a brief profile is given of the 16 African American women doctoral students who lent their voices and insights into this study. Their voices and experiences are categorized in two parts in Chapter Four. Part I dissects three identified categorized themes from my interviews with the study participants. The identified themes are: (1) Race and Gender, (2) Ideal Mentor Attributes, and (3) Mentoring and Professional Identity. Part II allows for greater examination of five participants involved in different mentoring dyads. Chapter Five outlines the discussion, implications, limitations and future research, and recommendations for doctoral programs and faculty advisors/mentors.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter takes a deductive (general to specific) approach to outlining literature relevant to the examination of African American women doctoral students and their mentoring experiences and perceptions of professional identity. Six themes emerged from the higher education and business management literature as salient to this study. Themes were gleaned in the following areas: (1) African American women in higher education, (2) socialization to doctoral education, (3) mentoring versus advising, (4) forming mentoring relationships, and (5) matched and cross-cultural mentoring relationships, and (6) mentoring and professional identity development. The deductive nature of this review begins with a general inspection of the experiences of African American women in higher education. Then the review moves specifically to analyzing African American female doctoral students and their socialization to graduate education. From there, I deliberately compare and contrast advising and mentoring in order to contextualize the type of faculty-student relationship and involvement that is discussed by participants in Chapter Four. Lastly, I narrow the review to concentrate on African American female doctoral students' mentoring relationships (the manner in which the relationships are formed and with whom they are formed) and professional identity development.

Few empirical studies focus on mentoring at the doctoral level. Even fewer examine mentoring as a correlate to (1) academic success, (2) persistence for African American women doctoral students, and (3) professional identity development. Jacobi (1991) states that mentoring has long been associated with an apprentice model of graduate education, but is increasingly seen as a retention and enrichment strategy for undergraduate education. The research on

mentoring analyzes these areas separately, identifies gaps, and establishes where further research is needed.

The issue of diversity remains of interest in American higher education. Ethnic identity is a central part of campus culture since the 1960's. Students of color tend to create "communities within communities" (Altbach, Lotomey, & Rivers, 2002) for many reasons, including the absence of cultural fit on predominantly white campuses and the need for positive faculty and peer interaction. These ethnic communities can be seen in terms of a critical mass, which is significant for the retention of students of color. Research indicates that African American students are more likely to persist when there is a critical mass of African American students on campus (Lotomey, 1990). Moreover, Ward (1995) defines safe spaces as prime locations for black women to resist objectification as the "other." Alfred (2001) supports this definition by stating that there is a need for African American female academics to find a safe space where they can preserve their constructed definition of self when the environment becomes disconcerting. Additionally, hooks (1989) refers to these safe spaces as "homeplace" – a place where black people can affirm one another, a place of renewal and self-recovery. Mentoring activities between female African American graduate students and faculty members can serve as "communities within communities" or safe spaces for African American women at predominantly white institutions (PWI's).

African American Women in Higher Education

Despite the gains that African American women have made in recent years in higher education, their presence in academia remains in short supply. Pervasive attitudes of racism and sexism, and differential access and power limit educational opportunities for people of color and women in the United States. Black female academics in PWI's often feel marginalized in these

organizations (Collins, 1986). Being an African American woman and a tenured professor at a top-tier or Research I university is an example of what Sulé (2009) defines as oppositional positions, which is an awareness of being part of a marginalized group, combined with actions that challenge marginalization. This dual role can often result in social isolation for African American female faculty members. Cultural differences between African American female faculty and the culture of PWI's may lead to conflicts and misunderstandings, which often hinder the tenure and promotion rates of African American female faculty (Scheurich, 1993). Higher education reflects societal issues and trends as it relates to the treatment of African Americans in the academy. Societal inequities produce achievement discrepancies that explain the scarcity of people of color and women faculty in academia (The Nation, 1998).

To increase the proportion of African American women in academic positions, the number of African American women pursuing and earning doctoral degrees must increase. Turner, Myers and Creswell (1999) report three problems that help explain the underrepresentation of people of color on faculties in American higher education – pipeline, market-forces, and “chilly” climate. The problems that are most critical to this study are the pipeline and “chilly” climate issues.

The pipeline problem argues that there are too few qualified candidates of color for faculty openings. Data from the Survey of Earned Doctorates show that a total of 6,981 U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are members of racial/ethnic minority groups were awarded doctorates in 2008. Among U.S. citizens and permanent residents who reported race/ethnicity, Asians earned the most doctorates (2,543) of the minority groups in 2008, followed by African Americans (2,030), Hispanics (1,765), persons of multiple races (520), and American Indians (123). Although rates of change have varied between 1988 and 2008, the

historical trend has been growth in the number of doctorates awarded to racial/ethnic minorities throughout the entire 20-year period. The 20-year increases were greater for Hispanics (154%), than for African Americans (110%), Asians (106%), and American Indians (31%). These increases are encouraging, but are insufficient to combat two significant trends occurring at opposite ends of the employment spectrum - recruitment and retirement.

First, at the recruitment end, there is pipeline leak occurring for African American students at the undergraduate and Master's levels of education; and (2) at the retirement end, there is an increasing number of tenured faculty in American higher education retiring. Recruitment is a major issue due to the decreasing percentage of degrees earned from bachelors to Ph.D. for African American students over a 20 year period (Turner et al., 1999). Prior to the Turner et al. study, Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) examined the historical trends from 1977-1990 on the decreasing numbers of African Americans earning Masters' and Ph.D. degrees. From here, Turner et al. conclude that the point along the pipeline where there appears to be a leakage is at the Masters' and doctoral degree stage, especially for African Americans. Thus, the numbers of African American students are entering the higher education pipeline at all entry points is increasing. However, fewer African Americans are leaving with advanced degrees. Due to the aging of tenured faculty across the United States and proposed changes in the faculty tenure and retirement processes, the demand is present for hiring newly-minted Ph.D.s. As reported in the April 2006 edition of Policy Matters published by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, higher education faculty is aging and there will be a major bulge in retirements over the next decade. Tomorrow's faculty will be more female, more diverse racially and ethnically, and will bring different expectations to their careers. Full-time faculty members average 50 years of age, with about a third of them being 55 years of age or older.

Research indicates that while most faculty retire at around age 65, about a quarter would like to retire earlier and another quarter at 70 years or older. Most faculty members would like a phased retirement in which they continue to work part-time, according to TIAA-CREF Institute (2010). The recruitment and retirement trends address the basic laws of supply and demand. There is a limited supply of qualified African American Ph.D. graduates to meet the high demand of faculty vacancies.

Furthermore, the experiences of African American women in administrative and faculty roles is important because enrollment and persistence toward degree completion of African American students is linked to the number of African American faculty and administrators present at PWI's (Fleming, 1984; Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). These occurrences are often addressed (again) as pipeline issues, which continue to surface in the literature as major problems that impact students and faculty of color in American colleges and universities. If there are low numbers of African American students in the pipeline at all levels, especially at the secondary and postsecondary levels, then the number of new African American faculty emerging from the pipeline will reflect the low numbers (Williams, 2001). These low numbers of faculty can contribute to the difficulty that African American female doctoral students experience in establishing mentoring relationships with same gender, same race mentors.

Whereas, the pipeline trend is viewed as an external factor contributing to the low number of African American faculty members; "chilly" campus climate is seen as an internal institutional factor negatively impacting professionals of color (Turner et al., 1999). In 1990, Spann found that all 78 faculty members participating in her study identified a supportive environment as the single most important factor in determining their success in academe. The term "chilly climate" was originally coined by Hall and Sandler (1983) to describe the classroom

environment experienced by women students in US colleges and universities. According to Hall and Sandler's report, women are treated differently from men in the classroom. Women are often singled out or ignored, which causes a loss in confidence in their ability to perform well or be successful in the classroom environment. Overt examples of this treatment toward women consist of making sexist remarks/jokes about women made in class, referring to men as "men" and women as "girls" in class, disparaging women's professional accomplishments or research focused on women's issues, and making direct sexual overtures to women. This treatment can be inadvertent or intentional. Less obvious examples of this treatment is praising a male student's comments in the classroom, while dismissing or providing a lack-luster response to the comments of the female student; using an impatient or patronizing tone in response to a woman's comments/feedback in class; and gesturing in a positive fashion (nodding or leaning in) toward a male student's comments while providing little or no affirming response (physical or verbal) toward a female student's comments.

Hall and Sandler expanded their observations and recommendations to encompass the campus climate issues for women students in 1984 and climate issues for women graduate students, faculty and administrators in 1986. In 20 years of research on campus climate, it is important to note that climate issues have extended beyond the classroom environment to include undergraduate, graduate and professional students; men and women; majority and underrepresented populations; and university faculty, staff and administrators. Turner et al. (1999) examined how climate encourages or discourages the recruitment of faculty of color. This line of inquiry is important to the current study given the position that I take on the need for African American female doctoral students to be mentored by African American female faculty members. Of the 64 faculty of color that participated in their study (1999), 95% said they plan to

stay in academe. However, they repeatedly mentioned the climate issues on their respective campuses (all in the Midwest) that presented challenges to their persistence at their university. The issues were isolation, lack of direct information regarding the tenure and promotion process, unsupportive work environments, race and gender biases, language barriers, lack of mentoring, and a lack of support and guidance from their superiors. The most troubling challenges identified were race and gender biases. These faculty members of color felt burdened by additional responsibilities (i.e. serving on diversity committees and mentoring underrepresented graduate students) not experienced by their majority colleagues. The feeling of being burdened with additional responsibilities is a constant theme throughout the higher education literature on faculty of color and is mentioned earlier in this chapter. As one African American male faculty member responded in Turner et al. (1999) saying “Diversity should be everybody’s job.” Another respondent in the Turner et al. study, a male Latino faculty member said, “The minority faculty numbers ought to increase as the minority student numbers increase.” (p. 43). The National Education Association (2004) reports that “unlike the large increase in the number of women entering academic professions, the share of minority faculty members is growing at a much slower pace.” (p. 12). According to the Minorities in Higher Education 2002-2003 Annual Status Report, the nation’s colleges and universities are making steady but slow gains in hiring faculty of color (American Council of Education, 2006). If the gains of in hiring faculty of color were more consistent with the increases in students of color going graduate school, then that would aid in channeling students of color through faculty of color as protégés (Turner et al., 1999). Their comments support the study’s finding that issues of racial bias contribute to a “chilly climate”.

Findings from previous studies indicate that matches are more successful if mentors and protégés are of the same race and gender (Tidball, 1986). In this context, success is defined in terms of research productivity and publications, professional networking through conference attendance, and degree completion. In support of these findings, Leon, Dougherty, and Maitland (1997) state that mentors and mentees should be matched on similar characteristics, including race. Johnson (1998) reports that when mentors and protégés share a common base; they can establish a certain amount of trust and a similar point of reference. Using similarities in developing mentoring relationships serve as a foundation and mutual ground for open and effective communication between the two parties.

The literature lacks research on black women at the post-baccalaureate level, especially as doctoral students (Wolf-Wendel, 1998). Factors that are positive influences on African American women at the doctoral level are analyzed to fill a void in the literature, which is over-saturated with studies that focus on the under-preparedness and disadvantaged state of African American students at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Research on factors that contribute to successful African American women Ph.D. recipients provide insights to enhance the understanding of academic achievement for this segment of the graduate student population.

Socialization in Doctoral Education

Socialization is a process by which an individual becomes part of a group, organization, or community. The socialization process involves learning about the culture of the group, including its values, attitudes, and expectations (Austin, 2002; Corcoran & Clark, 1984). Incoming doctoral students are socialized to their role and expectations as doctoral students studying in a specific field. The doctoral experience is described by Baird (1995) as a process of socialization to an ultimate professional role. Faculty members are critical agents in socializing

doctoral students since they define the knowledge and disciplinary values in the students' academic field/discipline. Nyquist (2002) states that the essence of doctoral education takes place between mentors and their students. Researchers identify mentoring as a vital ingredient in the most successful faculty careers (Johnsrud, 1993). Thus, mentoring relationships benefit students while they are in graduate school and as they transition into their career field.

Unfortunately, graduate students of color often experience more isolation and less access to mentors and role-models than their majority counterparts (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2005). Blackwell (1988) states that if black students are excluded from social and educational networks and not included in the network spawned by mentor-protégé relationships, then their movement 'through and up' the professional ranks may be impeded and perhaps, unnecessarily traumatic. Research shows that the most persistent, statistically significant predictor of enrollment and graduation of African American graduate and professional students is the presence of faculty of color (Blackwell, 1981). When faculty of color are present, African American graduate students feel a sense of comfort and believe they will be accepted, supported and nurtured in the academic environment. Many graduate students further assume the nurturing they will receive will come in the form of mentoring relationships with the faculty of color. Thomas, Willis and Davis (2007) state that graduate students can benefit from the presence of faculty of color and mentoring relationships with them. Among these benefits are academic guidance, career development, personal guidance, and overall assistance in the socialization of the graduate student. Beyond becoming acclimated to the academic environment, departmental policies, and performance expectations, socialization (through mentoring) for minority graduate students can also reinforce the graduate students' competencies and legitimize them as emerging scholars in their chosen discipline. Doctoral students who are competent and confident in their

scholarship are open to professional development experiences that either reinforce or change their professional identity and career trajectory.

Socialization at the doctoral level can encompass the students' professional indoctrination into their academic department and their professional career. Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001) explore more fully the student experience of professional socialization, segregating the process into discrete stages: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal. Weidman et al. (2001) define the anticipatory stage as an initial awareness of professional norms associated with one's emerging role. The subsequent stages reflect a developing sense of self as a professional newcomer and the internalization of roles and responsibilities. Given this definition, there is a direct link between socialization and professional identity development, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Mentoring versus Advising

Advising and mentoring are often intertwined in the literature; as there is no single definition of mentoring in the graduate education literature. Some scholars use the terms advising and mentoring interchangeably, while others make clear and distinct differences between the two (Lyons & Scroggins, 1990; Rugg & Petre, 2004). For the purpose of this study, I contend that advising and mentoring in graduate education are distinct activities. Faculty advisors are viewed as integral components in students' graduate education (Baird, 1995). In most graduate programs, incoming doctoral students are assigned an advisor. In this capacity, expectations and interactions center on program requirements, academic coursework, and development of dissertation topic, to name a few. Learning how to facilitate this faculty-student relationship is central to graduate students completing their degrees (Tanner, 2002).

On the other hand, mentoring is classically defined as a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievements, and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual (or career) development of persons identified as protégés or mentees (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). Given the classical definition, mentors are characterized in a multitude of ways. They are **advisors**, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; **supporters** people who give emotional and moral encouragement; **tutors**, people who give specific feedback on one's academic performance; **masters**, in the sense of employers to whom one is apprenticed; **sponsors**, sources of information about opportunities; and **models of identity**, of the kind of person one should be to be an academic (Zelditch, 1990). Given this comprehensive definition, mentors are expected to take a much more personal approach with their protégé(s), than advisors. Mentors ease the assimilation of students to a new culture, and facilitate the integration that may improve a student's chances of successfully completing the Ph.D. (King, 2002). A recent study by Dixon-Reeves (2003) supports these multiple definitions of a mentor. She reports that 44% of recent African American Ph.D.'s in sociology identified their mentors as coaches, 17% identified their mentors as role models, 15% identified their mentors as advisers, 12% identified their mentors as sponsors, and 6% identified them as peer counselors. Advisors and mentors have different relationships with graduate students. However, both can positively affect one's knowledge of academic culture and role expectations (Alfred, 2001). Based on these definitions and findings, mentors can be advisors, but advisors are not necessarily mentors.

The role of mentor must be a personal commitment on behalf of the faculty and administrators. The institutional culture, current campus climate, and function of American higher education must foster a supportive environment for mentoring activities to occur, albeit formal or informal. Culture, climate and function are issues addressed in "Re-envisioning the

Ph.D.” funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The primary goal of research institutions is to prepare the next generation of deeply trained humanists, and social/physical scientists through mentoring, teaching and research (Austin, 2002; Nyquist, 2002). An institutional culture that promotes mentoring reduces the feelings of isolation for African American women faculty and doctoral students. African American female faculty must feel that their institution and academic department value the networks created for themselves and African American female doctoral student in the department. Kanter (1977) reveals that one crucial component in producing a welcoming environment (climate) is to increase the representation of women of color across the campus – as students, administrators, and faculty.

Forming Mentoring Relationships

Graduate students of color need to be intentional about the mentoring relations they desire and deserve. There are several considerations made when contemplating a mentoring relationship. Some of these considerations are gender, race, research interests, and personal style. These considerations viewed separately or together are compatibility factors for the mentor and protégé to explore before establishing a mentoring relationship. Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) state that it is preferable that the mentor’s personal style be compatible with the personal style of the mentee. In the management literature, Noe (1988) and Wright and Wright (1987) state that mentors tend to associate with protégés who are similar to themselves in terms of gender, race and social class; since white males generally hold the majority of upper-level positions in organizations, the number of possible mentors for women is limited. In the Tenenbaum, Crosby and Gliner (2001) study on mentoring relationships in graduate school, they found that graduate students were more likely to pick a mentor of the same gender. Specifically, women graduate students look for nurturing environments due to their socialization as

caretakers. Thus, women graduate students often seek women mentors to ease the transition into graduate school, academic department and career field. As stated in Chapter One, women in higher education historically have faced stereotypes and concerns regarding their competence and commitment (if they have or desire to have a family). These feelings of marginalization were primarily levied by Caucasian male faculty members. The same aspect of socialization (i.e. nurturing) that motivates female graduate students to seek women faculty for mentoring relationships, is the same socialization attribute that denies many women the opportunity for mentoring under the traditional mentoring model (with a male mentor) or if they desire a same-gender mentoring relationship. The traditional mentor, as described in Chapter One, involved a wiser, older and more experience male that mentors a naïve, inexperienced, younger male (Levinson et al., 1978). Women are socialized to be nurturers and caretakers; thus, this role (external to their careers) may jeopardize female graduate students finding a mentor and women faculty having the time to serve as a mentor. Chandler (1996) states that the traditional mentoring model does not adequately address the needs of women and their experiences in the academy. Career interruptions related to family or caretaker roles can impede on the formation of relationships under the traditional mentoring model (Gerson, 1987).

There is evidence that supports that women and men seek and receive different types of mentoring. Women protégés receive more psychosocial support while men protégés receive more instrumental or functional help from their respective mentors (McGuire, 1999; Chandler, 1996). As discussed in Chapter One, psychosocial support includes counseling, emphasizing and role modeling; where instrumental or functional assistance consists of exposure, coaching, and opportunities for challenging assignments. The differences between the two types of support are described by Scandura (1992) as practical (functional assistance) and emotional (psychosocial

support) forms of guidance. Chandler's chapter on mentoring and women in academia in the National Women's Studies Association Journal (Spring 1997), informs us that women protégés reported that their mentors conveyed empathy for their concerns and feelings then were men. A tangible professional outcome of a gender match in the student-faculty mentoring relationship is publishing rates. Goldstein (1979) and Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) reported that male graduate students published more if their advisors were male, and female graduate students published more if their advisors were female. Results of the Blackburn, Chapman and Cameron (1981) study indicated that mentors overwhelmingly see their most successful protégé as those whose careers were essentially identical to their own. Given this, one would conclude that faculty agree to mentor doctoral students who communicate similar career goals. This caveat to forming student-faculty mentoring relationships could have a direct impact on the graduate student's professional identity development. The results of the Chandler (1996) and Blackburn et al. (1981) studies provide evidence that there is a clear challenge for graduate students of color seeking a mentor who is their same gender and shares their career interests and trajectory.

For African American women the feeling of marginalization (based on race and gender) is doubled. Thus, their need to form mentoring relationships with other African American women is critical to their survival in academe. African American female doctoral students find it difficult to identify African American female faculty members (at PWI's) in their academic units. Thus, establishing mentoring relationships with African American female faculty can be complex. McGhee, Satcher, and Livingston (1995) and Kelly and Schweitzer (1999) postulate that demographic dissimilarity may prevent African American doctoral students from obtaining the additional support and guidance that mentoring provides. Similarly, African American women in doctoral programs tend to lack faculty role models for two reasons: (1) the small

number of African American women in tenure-track faculty positions in the American higher education system, and (2) the position of some African American female faculty and administrators who are reluctant to serve as mentors and role models primarily due to time constraints imposed upon them by their academic units. Nettles and Millett (2002) conducted a comprehensive survey of doctoral programs and doctoral students' experiences. Regarding doctoral students' mentoring experiences, Nettles and Millett found that 70% of doctoral students overall had a faculty mentor. However, 36% of African American doctoral students did not have access to a mentor. Johnson (2002) supports this issue by identifying departmental obstacles to graduate school mentorships. He states that many graduate programs have difficulty recruiting and retaining women and ethnic minority faculty members; thus, same-gender and same-race mentors are not available to women and minority graduate students.

African American female faculty members express feelings of being overburdened as junior faculty in research universities. Minor (2003) posits that the reward structure for faculty is one factor that adversely impacts the time faculty members lend to teaching and service. He states that with the dominant criteria for faculty evaluation being research in most departments with graduate programs, teaching and service usually run a distant second and third, respectively, in terms of priority and time. Additionally, the African American faculty respondents in the Turner et al. (1999) study report that African American faculty most frequently mentioned concerns about being both hypervisible and invisible, a set of paired concerns, which negatively impacted their experience on their respective Midwestern university campus. Their report is supported by Sutherland's (1990) observation that "As in other predominantly white organizational settings, composed of few people of color, the conspicuousness of skin color makes blacks invisible on occasions, and highly visible on others." Thus, African American

faculty are hypervisible because of their color and their advocacy for diversity, yet invisible, because they do not fit the campus or department “norm”. This dual sensitivity felt by African American faculty can be further framed in Patricia Hill Collins’ “Outsider Within”, which is the root of black feminist thought, one of the theoretical constructs of this study.

In an effort to advance their research agenda, fulfill tenure expectations, voice their perspective regarding the department, and participate on faculty committees, many African American female faculty do not have time to be involved in informal or formal mentoring. Nettles and Millett (2002) revealed that one reason faculty are not anxious to work with or mentor graduate students of color is due to lower GRE scores, lower undergraduate GPA’s, and degrees received from less prestigious undergraduate institutions. Contrary to this finding, Dixon-Reeves (2003) concludes that there are several reasons why African American female academics do not mentor graduate students at the same rate as their colleagues. It could easily be a result of the increased burden of familial and household duties that female academics have in addition to their scholarly responsibilities. These responsibilities, coupled with the demands of teaching, service, and scholarship, do not leave much time for the additional responsibility of mentoring. Another overarching influence on the difficulty in establishing matched mentoring relationships is the pressure that many African American female academics experience to modify their research interests to meet mainstream expectations. It has been well documented that African American faculty members whose scholarship focuses on racial/ethnic and gender issues find their work devalued and dismissed as being out of the mainstream, peripheral, and self-serving (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Bourguignon, Blanshan, Chiteji, MacLean, Meckling, & Sagaria, 1987; Collins, 2000a; Epps, 1998).

There is also growing evidence that African American female faculty, themselves, experience severe marginalization within the current structure of higher education (Aguirre, 2000; Nakanishi, 1993; Olivas, 1988; Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998). They are frequently academically, socially, and professionally alienated within higher education institutions such that they have more limited opportunities for professional development compared to their white and male counterparts (Boice, 1993). This marginalization significantly reduces their access to networks, resources and experiences necessary for gaining academic prestige. For example, research focusing on race and gender differences in academic rank shows considerable variation between groups of faculty (Astin & Bayer, 1975; Astin, Antonio, Cress, & Astin, 1997; Nettles & Perna, 1995). Among the lower rank of assistant professor, African-American women represent larger proportions of the population, while among senior-level faculty (full and associate professors) African-American women comprise a smaller segment compared to white men (Astin & Bayer, 1975; Astin et al., 1997). Other related research on tenure found that African-American females who are in faculty positions are less likely than their white/male academic counterparts to be tenured professors (Astin et al., 1997; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Finkel, 1994; Hensel, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 1997). The literature also points out that African-American female faculty are more likely to be employed at community colleges or historically black colleges, rather than large research universities and selective private institutions (Gregory, 1995).

Turner (2002) states African American women in tenure stream positions strongly support networking and mentoring as key components of individual and group success. Networking and mentoring are mentioned many times by faculty women of color as key components of individual and group success and progress. In fact, African American female

faculty members identify participation in formal and informal networks as critical to **their** persistence in academe (Aleman, 2000; Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994). Additionally, African American women administrators in higher education feel obligated to participate in the mentoring process (Johnson, 1998). African American female faculty need to make room in their already overcrowded schedules to be effective mentors for African American doctoral students. I posit that if African American female academics do not take the time and make the commitment to mentor African American doctoral students, then these students may not get mentored at all. There are several consequences of a lack of mentoring at the doctoral level. A major problem caused by a lack of mentoring revealed by Nettles and Millett (2002) was the negative impact on faculty-student relationships in the department. They concluded that a long-term impact of the lack of mentoring is a higher incidence of students of color either stopping/dropping out or being dissatisfied with the program. For African American women doctoral students not engaged in matched mentoring relationships have the opportunity for engagement in un-matched or cross-cultural mentoring relationships. As the following section reveals, involvement in cross-cultural mentoring relationships can have both benefits and challenges for African American female doctoral students.

Cross-Gender and Cross-Cultural Mentoring

Cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring relationships are more prevalent in graduate education than matched mentoring dyads for African American female doctoral students. This fact is due in part to the disparity in the growth rates for African American doctoral students and African American faculty hires in higher education. In Raymond Noe's (1988) study on women and mentoring, he presents both successes and barriers to cross-gender mentoring for women. The successes are found more in gender heterogeneous mentoring dyads. Women protégés

involved these mentoring relationships were more effective in mentor utilization, in terms of psychosocial and career support than protégés in homogeneous dyads. This finding by Noe was later supported by Thomas and Alderfer (1989) who report that cross-gender and same-race mentoring relationships last longer than same-gender and cross-race mentoring relationships.

The barriers identified in Noe's study are tokenism, lack of access to traditional information networks (i.e. old boys club), stereotyping, social norms associated with cross-gender mentoring, and reliance on inappropriate power bases were identified as barriers to establishing and maintaining effective mentoring relationships for women in management. Moreover, cross-gender mentoring dyads are at risk of gossip, jealousy, and sexual attraction or tension (Noe, 1988; Wright & Wright, 1987). The Noe, and Wright and Wright reports support the Collins (1983) research finding where a quarter of the women in her study reported having sexual relations with their male mentor.

Of the barriers listed above by Noe, the one that resonates the most for African American women in higher education is tokenism. As mentioned previously in this chapter, African American women faculty are over-burdened and negatively affected by what they (and others) deem as their token status in their academic department. This token status or label is often experienced by high achieving women and minority group members who find themselves the only woman or person of color among their (predominantly) white male colleagues (Chandler, 1996). A consequence of tokenism is an over-committed schedule that includes participation on numerous departmental and university committees, as well as, research and teaching responsibilities. This over-committed schedule leaves little time for mentoring students. Faculty of color, in Turner et al. (1999), report a sense of complacency on the part of their academic units – the belief that hiring one person of color is sufficient. This complacent attitude lends

itself to the feeling of isolation that many faculty of color and women feel in higher education. As discussed earlier in this chapter, isolation and tokenism can affect how and if a woman faculty or faculty of color responds to the mentoring needs of graduate students of color and women. Thus, causing a rise in cross-cultural and gender mixed mentoring relationships. This statement is supported by Thomas et al. (2007), who reports that most minority students will likely be mentored by someone who is racially and/or culturally different from themselves due to the dearth of minority faculty.

There are numerous tangible and intangible benefits to mentoring for the mentor – research assistance, increased power and networking, validation and pleasure in protégé’s achievement. When cross-cultural mentoring occurs, these benefits to the mentor should be expanded to include gaining cross-cultural exposure and competence in addition to making a human capital investment that will promote equity and social justice in the discipline (Thomas et al., 2007). Although there are benefits to cross-cultural mentoring, there is one over-arching challenge to these mentoring relationships - cultural competence. Chrobot-Mason and Ruderman (2004) define cultural or multicultural competence as the ability to diagnose diversity issues and resolve diversity-related conflicts and organizational problems by reaching mutually satisfying solutions. Johnson and Huwe (2002) report that faculty do not always possess the competencies and training to mentor any student and that mentoring a student across racial and gender lines may exacerbate their limited mentoring and cultural competence. At the doctoral education level, the act of mentoring and the quality of mentoring relationships are not evaluated by the graduate students. Thus, there is no evaluative data to determine the quality and effectiveness of mentoring and/or advising relationships in terms of cultural relevance and affirmation (Girves et al., 2005; Thomas et al., 2007). Instead student-faculty relationships are evaluated in regards to

tangible outcomes (i.e. publications and professional conference presentations). Beyond these tangible products of student-faculty relationships, underrepresented doctoral students also need to be mentored in ways that reinforce their competence and legitimacy as burgeoning scholars (Thomas et al., 2007). This reinforcement and affirmation may be difficult across racial and gender lines, especially if the mentor is unaware and unempathetic to the historical marginalization of women and people of color in the United States and the higher education system, respectively.

Chrobot-Mason and Ruderman (2004) suggest that to build their multicultural competence, white faculty members need to increase their awareness and knowledge of diversity issues and differences across racial/ethnic lines and improve their conflict management and interpersonal communication skills. Thomas et al. (2007) offer a related issue to multicultural competence, which is identity development for white faculty members. White identity development, a theoretical model discussed by Helms (1990), encourages white faculty to explore their own racial identity and the privileges afforded them based on their race. Without this exploration and introspection, white faculty members are unlikely to have developed the competencies needed to functionally mentor minority students.

In their study on “Mentoring graduate students of color: Myths, model and modes” Brown, Davis and McClendon (1999) state that a common myth in academe is that any faculty member will be a good mentor and any senior person can mentor a junior person. There is some truth in this statement. Mentoring minority graduate students may be viewed as the moral thing to do, but if the mentor is not culturally competent, their good intentions may have detrimental outcomes. Mentoring relationships involving African American female doctoral students (as protégés) impact their professional identity while in graduate school. Their perception is either

endorsed or changed based on their level of interaction with their mentor, professional development activities, and observation of their mentor's role and level of engagement in their academic field. In the following section, I expose the literature that connects mentoring, socialization, and engagement in the academic discipline/field to the professional identity development of African American female doctoral students.

Mentoring and Professional Identity Development

Erikson (1980) portrays identity as a fixed phenomenon to be captured and located in well-defined stages. This traditional view of identity is guided by a belief that identity is derived from a core sense of self (Gergen, 1991) and is a stable and fixed structure (Yon, 2000). However, adult learners will rarely characterize themselves as possessing a singular identity. This is due to the situational nature of identity development (Gergen, 1991; Grossberg, 1996; Yon, 2000). Identity information traditionally begins in late adolescence when a person forms and aligns their cultural background, race and gender with their experiences. Late adolescence has been theorized as a very critical period in the life cycle that is associated with important changes in identity development (Erikson, 1968).

Alfred (2001) views culture and identity as elusive phenomena that are socially and contextually constructed. Given the social construction of identity development and the context of the current study – mentoring and African American female doctoral students – it is important to address the issue of identity development in racial-cultural groups, as well as, the concepts of personal and group identities. Alfred (2001) defines personal identity as a sense of individual autonomy that allows for multiple constructions and definitions of self. On the other hand, group identity is defined as a personal affiliation with other people with whom one shares certain things in common (Cox, 1993).

The primary context in which these developmental experiences occur is familial. Campbell, Adams, and Dobson (1984) report that an adolescent's personal identity development correlates with their relationship with their parents. Thus, one's close relationships help to define their personal identity over time. For the purpose of this current study, successful mentoring relationships can be viewed as parental connections where the mentor is viewed as an older, more experienced, wiser parental figure and the protégé is viewed as a young, naïve, inexperienced dependent figure. Campbell et al. (1984) research findings lend support to the contextual and exploratory nature of identity development.

Specifically, Grossberg (1996) states that identity is not already there; rather, it is a production, emergent, in process. It shifts from context to context, and meaning is essential to the whole process of identity production. The developmental and meaning-making processes associated with identity development roots its construction in self-authorship. Self-authorship is the developmental and cognitive process people use to make meaning. Baxter Magolda (2002) developed self-authorship as a theoretical framework. She states that self-authorship is central to adult decision-making, including career decision-making, because it influences how students make meaning of the advice they receive from others. The term "others" is broadly defined as anyone who is in the person's circle of influence. Creamer and Laughlin (2004) report that women often consider other people's needs when making their own career decisions. In the context of this study, mentors and/or advisors can be viewed as others in the doctoral students' circle of influence. The theory of self-authorship provides a way of understanding the process that people use to make meaning of their experiences. Therefore, an African American female doctoral student's mentoring relationships and experiences can help shape her personal identity and solidify or change their professional identity while in graduate school. In 1968, Erikson

claims that determining an occupational (career) identity is one of the central challenges to the identity formation process of late adolescence. Subsequent research suggests a correlation between clearly defined career plans and a person's self-concept or identity (Harren, 1979; Holland, 1985).

Another outcome of the mentoring process is for protégés to engage in professional development activities associated with their career aspirations. Dixon-Reeves's (2003) study supports this position with over half of all recent Ph.D.'s in sociology were strategically involved in professional development activities that would enhance their career marketability. Moreover, Clark, Harden, and Johnson (2000); and Johnson, Koch, Fallow, and Huwe (2000) report that benefits to mentored graduate students include development of professional skills, enhancement of confidence and professional identity, scholarly productivity, enhanced networking, and dissertation guidance and success, and overall satisfaction with the doctoral experience. Levinson et al. (1978) identified the most important benefits to protégés as support, encouragement, and endorsement of the student's journey to realize their personal and professional dreams. Professional identity development involves the social construction of professional-practice expectations through mentoring, peer sharing and critique, and systematic induction (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Ragins (1997) defines mentors as people with advanced experiences and knowledge who are willing and in most cases, committed to providing upward mobility and support to their protégés' career development. Professional identity, then, is not solely about how an individual defines himself or herself but also about how they are positioned and defined by the people around them (Gee, 2000-2001). While mentors may seek to reproduce the identities they value most for themselves within the world of academia, students

enter doctoral programs and mentoring relationships with their own preconceptions, which may or may not align with their mentor's values (Hall & Burns, 2009).

Though the impact that mentoring has on professional identity development is salient to this inquiry, it cannot be measured before the issue of identity and fit in higher education are addressed. Turner (2002) discusses how multiple identities shape one's opportunities in higher education. She postulates that one's identity (identities) can serve as a barrier to their perceived "fit" as a graduate student, academic, and/or administrator in higher education. The perception of fit can be a precursor or successor to identity development. Fitting in can either "define in" or "define out" an individual or group of people. Given that African American women have and continue to be marginalized in U.S. higher education, their personal and professional identities define them out of the doctoral education setting. Thus, there is a need to examine their personal identity, socialization to graduate education, (doctoral) institutional climate, doctoral mentoring experiences, and professional development activities.

Figure I, on the following page, is my interpretation of the literature presented in this chapter. Given that I view professional identity development as the outcome of faculty-student mentoring relationships, I placed it at the core of this conceptual model. This model depicts the primary influences on professional identity development for African American Female doctoral students. These influences are (1) the students' personal identity, (2) previous and current mentoring experiences, (3) institutional and departmental climate for women and persons of color, and (4) professional development activities in graduate school.

Figure 1: Interpretation of Literature on the Factors that Impact Professional Identity

Development for Africa American Female Doctoral Students



For interpretation of the references to color in this figure, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

The current study is based on a qualitative research design due in part to its exploratory nature (Creswell, 2003), and the contextual and historical factors described in the problem statement and literature review sections of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, 1998). A qualitative approach to this inquiry allows African American female doctoral students to share their mentoring experiences and help me gain a better understanding of the potential impact that matched mentoring (same race and same gender) has on professional identity development for these women. Qualitative methods are the best way to glean how individuals make meaning of their experiences (Creswell, 1998, and Patton, 2001). Semi-structured interviews were employed with African American female doctoral students to gain this insight and understanding on their mentoring experiences, professional identity development and satisfaction with their doctoral education experience. According to Creswell (2003), this insight emerges through a detailed understanding of the development and impact that matched mentoring relationships have on African American female doctoral students. A qualitative design allows me to uncover some of the complexities of meaning (Eisner, 1981) in a variety of contexts. Peshkin (1993) corroborates both Mertens and Eisner's views, by addressing the issue of complexity in qualitative research.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact mentoring relationships between African American women doctoral students and faculty members; across various academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and education; have on professional identity development. Of particular interest is an examination of whether matched mentoring

relationships between African American women doctoral students and African American female faculty members impacts the professional identity of African American graduate students.

Factors that contribute to the difficulties found in establishing matched mentoring relationships in this population, the dynamics that facilitate the mentoring relationships, and the professional development opportunities were also assessed. Additionally, the following research questions are posed:

- (1) To what extent are African American female doctoral students involved in mentoring relationships at the doctoral level?
- (2) Does involvement in a matched mentoring (same race and same gender) dyad impact African American female doctoral students' perception of their professional identity?
- (3) Does involvement in an unmatched mentoring (different race and/or gender) dyad impact African American female doctoral students' perception of their professional identity?
- (4) How do African American female doctoral students perceive their professional identity at the beginning of their Ph.D. program?
- (5) How does African American female doctoral students' professional identity change during the course of their doctoral experience?
- (6) What are the tangible outcomes of professional identity development for African American female doctoral students?

The Settings

The study was conducted at three public Doctoral Extensive Institutions (based on the Carnegie Classifications compiled by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of

Teaching, 2010) located in the same Midwestern state. These institutions are referred to as Research I universities. In the United States, there are more than 3,500 institutions of higher education. More than two thousand of them offer only Associate or Bachelor degrees. Of the remainder, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1994 classified eighty-eight as “Research I” universities. These universities “offer a full range of baccalaureate programs, are committed to graduate education through the doctorate, and give high priority to research. They award 50 or more doctoral degrees each year. In addition, they receive annually \$40-million or more in federal support.” (<http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org>)

Because of the research universities’ commitment to create new knowledge, they consider research capability as a primary qualification for appointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty members, and they pride themselves on having world-class scholars among their ranks. Research universities also have graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in far greater numbers than other institutions, since graduate education is a major component of their mission. Another characteristic is the requisite research environment, including extensive libraries, well-equipped laboratories, sophisticated computer capabilities, and, often, university presses, all housed in appropriate facilities. Research universities characteristically have an international orientation. They attract students, particularly at the graduate level, from many parts of the world, thereby adding valued dimensions of diversity to the community.

Although, referred to as Research I’s the three universities, in this study, are distinct in terms of their institutional type and culture. **Institution I** is member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, a group of 60 U.S. and two Canadian universities regarded as the top research-intensive institutions in North America. It is located in a traditional college-town environment. Additionally, this institution is a land-grant university with a total

student enrollment over 45,000 of Fall Semester 2010. Of this number, approximately 16% are graduate (Masters' and Ph.D.; nonprofessional degree) students. These students are pursuing doctorates in each of the 14 degree-granting colleges at the institution with the largest number of African Americans pursuing Ph.D.'s in the Colleges of Social Science, Arts and Letters and Education. There are close to 5,000 faculty and academic staff members at this university (Fall 2009). There are approximately 100 African American tenure-track faculty members at this university. Of this, 40% are women (representing 40 positions throughout the university).

Institution II is focused on delivering high-quality undergraduate instruction, advancing its growing graduate division and fostering significant research activities. This institution is a newly defined Doctoral Extensive Institution with an enrollment of nearly 25,000 as of Fall Semester 2009. Graduate student enrollment represents 20% (~5,000) of this total enrollment number. There are nine degree-granting colleges on campus. This institution characterizes itself as a student-centered research university, building intellectual inquiry, investigation, and discovery into all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Prior to its current classification, this university was classified as a comprehensive institution focusing more on undergraduate and Master's level education.

Institution III is an urban research university whose mission is to discover, examine, transmit and apply knowledge that contributes to the positive development and well-being of individuals, organizations and society. This institution is the only urban research university in the state located in the largest and most diverse city in the state. It is among the nation's prestigious 3.6% of universities with Carnegie Classification of RU/VH (Research Universities, Very High research activity). This institution has 13 degree-granting schools and colleges. As of Winter 2010, the total student enrollment was over 30,000. Of this number, slightly over 8,000 are

graduate (Master's and Ph.D.; nonprofessional degree) students. As of Fall 2006, the faculty numbered approximately 2,700 who make a major contribution to research in engineering; science and medicine; arts and humanities; and social sciences. See Table 1 for an Institutional Comparison of available (public) information on each university's website. Please note that the varying dates referred to for student and faculty data were the latest dates/time frames that data was publicly available. Institution II did not publish any data on its African American student enrollment.

Table 1 –Institutional Sites Comparison

Institution Name	Total Student Enrollment	Graduate Student Enrollment	African American Student Enrollment	Women Student Enrollment	Faculty and Academic Staff
Institution I	47,131	7,619 (16%)	3,175 (6.7%)	24,902 (52.8%)	4,985
Institution II	24,576	5,029 (20%)	N/A	12,548 (51%)	1,382
Institution III	30,909	8,375 (27%)	7,806 (25%)	17,601 (57%)	2,776

Given the setting and number of study participants, semi-structured interviews were used through purposeful sampling. Patton (2001) describes purposeful sampling as a non-random method of sampling where the researcher selects information-rich cases for in-depth analysis. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. Glesne (2006) states that interviews are effective modes of data collection when the researcher is in search of opinions, perceptions, and attitudes toward a certain topic. The interview protocol found in Appendix I seeks to understand the phenomenon of establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships at the graduate level, and the impact that mentoring (particularly matched mentoring relationships) may have on professional identity development.

Study Participants

The study participants are 16 African American female doctoral students in the Colleges of Social Science, Arts and Letters (Humanities), and Education, respectively, at the three institutions described above. See Tables 2 and 3 for brief profile of the participants. Students from these three colleges were selected because they house the majority of the African American female population matriculating in doctoral programs at the three universities. I began the process of recruiting potential participants by contacting colleagues at the three institutions to request their assistance in identifying resources and individuals that would allow me entrée to my desired population. Additionally, I outreached to the Sisters of the Academy (SOTA), through a fellow doctoral student who is a member of SOTA's leadership team. Sisters of the Academy is a national organization designed to (1) create an educational network of black women in higher education in order to foster success in the areas of teaching, scholarly inquiry and service to the community; (2) establish collaborative scholarship among black women in higher education; and (3) facilitate supportive networks to enhance members' professional development. I developed a "call for participants" announcement that was disseminated on my behalf to SOTA members and individuals and graduate student organizations at the three institutions identified for the study.

Twenty-one African American women doctoral students responded to the call or were referred by to me by colleagues. Sixteen women were interviewed. The selection of students in these colleges is an example of purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling, Creswell (2003) states that researchers intentionally select individuals and sites that are rich with information. The type of purposeful sampling used in this study is snowball sampling. This technique was helpful in identifying potential study participants on referral of participants who either confirmed their participation in the study or had completed their interviews.

Factors considered and used in this purposeful sample are: Time in current doctoral program, academic discipline/college, educational attainment, previous education and work experience, and career trajectory. The fixed factors were race, gender, and involvement in a (self-identified) mentoring relationship.

Table 2 - Participant Profile

Pseudonym	Age	Institution	Doctoral (Ph.D.) Program	Year in Ph.D. Program
Joann	28	Institution I	African American and African Studies	4th
Deborah	37	Institution I	Anthropology	3rd
Diane	24	Institution I	Community Psychology	Just completed 2nd
Carol	48	Institution III	Sociology	Recently earned Ph.D.
Katherine	29	Institution III	Clinical Psychology	Just completed 2nd
Monique	25	Institution I	Marriage and Family Therapy	3rd
Alice	27	Institution II	Counseling Psychology	Just completed 1st
Lisa	27	Institution II	Counseling Psychology	Entering 5th
Nicole	41	Institution II	Counselor Education and Supervision	3rd
Patricia	28	Institution II	Sociology	3rd
Danielle	34	Institution I	Higher Education Administration	5th
Candice	32	Institution I	Education Policy	Just completed 3rd
Sheila	24	Institution I	Marriage and Family Therapy	3rd
Tara	41	Institution I	Higher Education Administration	2nd
Dominique	25	Institution II	Counseling Psychology	2nd
Betty	45	Institution III	Developmental and Social Psychology	3rd

Table 3 – Institutional and Academic Discipline Represented Across Participants

Institution Breakdown:	Discipline Breakdown:
Institution I - 8/16 (50%)	Social Sciences - 12/16 (75%)
Institution III - 3/16 (18.75%)	Education - 4/16 (25%)
Institution II - 5/16 (31.25%)	Humanities – 0*

*At Institution I the African American & African Studies Program is in the Social Sciences, not the Humanities.

Data Collection Procedure and Instrument

The qualitative data collection instrument was developed using topical interview questions. The qualitative interview method of semi-structured interviews was employed. This method gives attention to the voices of the participants, the interviewer-participant relationship, the importance of the researcher's gender in interviewing, and the roles of race, socioeconomic status, and age (Crapanzano, 1980; Gluck & Patai, 1991; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; and Seidman, 1991).

After obtaining Internal Review Board approval, the data collection process began. Topical interview questions were used because this type of interview focuses on participants' experiences and behaviors (Glesne, 2006). Moreover, questions were generated from the literature review and address the research questions stated in both Chapter One and earlier in this chapter. The interview questions focused on the participant's educational and mentoring background [i.e. academic background, previous mentoring experience, and outcome of the previous mentoring relationship(s)], as well as their current mentoring involvement, professional identity, career trajectory, and satisfaction with their doctoral experience. All questions were open-ended. Participants were interviewed once at their institution. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 40 minutes, while the longest interview lasted 2 ½ hours. My role as the interviewer was somewhat directive with regard to my interaction with the participants and how I facilitated their interviews as informal talks. Kvale (1996) states that qualitative research interviews are structured as purposeful conversations where the researcher provides the background of the study, allows the participants to answer questions, and poses additional questions based on the flow of conversation.

Participants completed a consent form prior to the interview. The letter of consent addresses the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. Care was taken to ensure that personal descriptive information will not identify anyone from their college (academic affiliation) at the university. The participants' names will be kept confidential and anonymous. Each participant was assigned a different four digit set of numbers for coding purposes to keep their personal identities confidential. Please see Appendix I to view the interview questions.

Data Analysis

One of the major purposes of qualitative research is to generate themes, patterns, and provide meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 1993). The data collected includes participants' accounts of their mentoring experiences and professional identity development. The essential elements of the data collected were broken down into manageable units to include a code list, a line by line assignment of codes, and identification of broad themes and categorizes that emerged across the 16 interviews. I summarized the interviews by focusing on the information participants shared with me and how I made meaning of what they shared. I categorized similarities concerning participants' academic backgrounds, mentoring experiences, professional identity development, and career trajectories. This categorization resulted in three thematic summaries: 1). Race and Gender, 2). Ideal Mentor Attributes, and 3). Mentoring and Professional Identity. Theme #1 and #2 (Race and Gender, and Ideal Mentor Attributes) were determined based on the prevailing and prominent areas of feedback shared by the 16 study participants. Given the study topic and purpose of this research, theme #3 (Mentoring and Professional Identity) was identified as critical to highlight from the interviews. To enhance the validity of the findings, I referenced the categories back to the participants' interviews to ensure close alignment between the two. To assist with the replication of this study, I attempted to provide

contextual information without jeopardizing the confidentiality of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).

Through further analysis of the 16 interviews, I noticed that the participants were involved in various mentoring relationships as it relates to their mentor's race and gender. I grouped the various mentoring relationships/dyads together and selected five participants to represent the following doctoral mentoring dyads: 1). Same race and gender, 2). Same race and different gender, 3). Different race and same gender, 4). Different race and gender, and 5). No identified mentor. Chapter Four provides the findings of these themes and categories for African American women doctoral students. The names of the participants and their identified mentor(s) (if applicable) have been changed to maintain the doctoral students' anonymity.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Introduction

Black feminist theory declares African American women as visible beings in society (King, 1995). Through this ideology, black women are empowered to define their own reality and tell their own story. As an African American female doctoral student, I have intimate knowledge of the issues of mentoring and professional identity development. I understand that the information the participants share with me is based on their comfort level and familiarity with me, and how I pose the interview questions.

The data from this exploratory study of African American female doctoral students' perceptions of mentoring and professional identity development are discussed in two ways. First, the findings are summarized across the 16 participant interviews to highlight common themes across the cases. This thematic summary is divided into three categories: 1). Race and Gender, 2). Ideal Mentor Attributes, and 3). Mentoring and Professional Identity. These categories represent major topics that emerged from the interviews. Second, five narratives are developed, from the 16 interviews, to highlight the different mentoring experiences of the African American female doctoral students. The five participants selected represent the following doctoral mentoring dyads: 1). Same race and gender, 2). Same race and different gender, 3). Different race and same gender, 4). Different race and gender, and 5). No identified mentor. One interview of each of the above groups will be highlighted in this chapter to provide a more personal and insightful view of the African American female doctoral students involved in matched mentoring dyads (same race and gender), cross cultural mentoring dyads, and those who do not have an identified mentor in their doctoral program.

Part I: Thematic Discussion

Race and Gender

The first theme that emerged from the data focuses on race and gender as discussed by the African American female doctoral students interviewed at the three institutions. The majority of the African American female doctoral students who participated in this study either have or seek to have a mentor who is an African American woman. These two factors (either combined or separately) were identified as important considerations when seeking a graduate school mentor. Matched mentoring dyads based on race and gender support the need for many African American female doctoral students to create a community within a community, which Alfred (2001) characterizes as finding a “safe space” – a prime location for African American women to affirm one another and resist objectification as the “other” in environments where they are the only person of their race and gender.

Although matching the race and gender of the mentor and the student were desirable, African American female doctoral students also looked to connect with mentors based on shared research interests. Luna and Cullen (1998) support this finding by stating that as important as mentoring may be among compatible individuals; cultural similarity proves to be a primary, though not exclusive, consideration in forming mentoring relationships.

One of the study participant's, Joann, a fourth year Ph.D. student in African American and African Studies at Institution I, stated that “she connects better with women” and specifically sought African American women in her field who shared her research in the Black Panther Party to serve as her mentor in her doctoral program. Joann actively sought mentors whom she could identify with in terms of race, gender and research interests. When she was first looking for a mentor, she wanted anyone; but, purposely sought an African American woman while in

graduate school. Joann states that your “blackness is against you” and “your gender is against you” at the Ph.D. level, so you need more than an advisor. The politics and barriers need to be addressed and worked on at this level, not ignored or brushed under the carpet. Joann desires and feeds off of, as she states, “woman-centered scholarly energy”.

Her advisor and dissertation chair is an African American male. Joann does not view him as her mentor. Her relationship with him is more formal because of the role he possesses in this juncture of her academic career. Joann states that “he’s not as supportive of women” compared to his male advisees. She feels he backs away from issues/politics in the department. Given this, Joann turns to another faculty member in her department, who is an African American woman and full professor, for advice on departmental politics. Minor (2006) discusses that these political issues could revolve around disparities in doctoral student experiences according to race and gender, including the availability of research and teaching assistantships while in graduate school.

Deborah, a third year Ph.D. student in Anthropology enrolled at Institution I, provided a laundry list of attributes that describe her ideal mentor. She stated,

Ideally I want someone who knows me and is specialized just for me, who knows how I work, when to motivate, leave alone and stay out of the way; someone who offers me advice, is knowledgeable, able to negotiate the present and future, and identifies themselves as a possible mentor; someone who has a vested interest in my success; someone who I can create good healthy boundaries with; and someone who is a little older.

Deborah did not mention race and gender in her initial response, but through further conversation, she stated that she would like a mentor who is an older black woman. I inquired

why an older black woman. Deborah stated that she “wants someone who can share or may have similar life experiences as me.” Deborah acknowledged that she works better with women, and confirmed that she “has fared ok with black men”, but has a “95% failure rate with white men” in mentoring relationships.

Carol, a recent Ph.D. graduate in Sociology, from Institution III, shared a somewhat different story in terms of how she became involved in a mentoring relationship. Her Ph.D. advisor reached out to her. Deborah stated that if she were seeking a mentor “gender would play a part in what I look for first and race (African American) would be a bonus”. Carol’s mentor is an African American female faculty member who is actually younger than her. It was apparent from our conversation that Carol and her mentor’s personalities mesh well.

Diane, is a second year Ph.D. student in Community Psychology at Institution I. She is one of two study participants who identified a Caucasian male as their current mentor. Diane states that a “mentor match is key” to success in graduate school. She feels that a mentor(s) should not be chosen based on race and gender because these factors do not necessarily mean that these individuals are conscious and aware of “our struggle”. The struggle she refers to is the struggle for racial and gender equality in the United States. Moreover, Diane believes her ideal mentor is family-oriented, possesses a level of conscientiousness as to what it means to be a minority, and is not a micro-manager. Different from Deborah, Diane admits to working well with white male faculty. She recounts an experience she had as an undergraduate where an African American female faculty member observed her struggling in her courses and suggested that she rethink college and graduate school and focus on a vocation such as becoming a hair stylist. She openly approached Diane and questioned why she (Diane) was in college. This

experience devastated Diane and caused her to not unconsciously and solely rely on people of color for support and positive reinforcement.

Katherine, a second year Ph.D. student in Clinical Psychology at Institution III, discussed how she sought an advisor and mentor in her doctoral program based on research interests. She did not consider race and gender in her selection. However, after further disclosure, Katherine stated that one of her primary issues in her doctoral experience is the fact that she is the only African American in her program and department. This feeling of alienation, isolation, and social marginalization characterizes the African American experience in predominantly white academic institutions (Alfred, 2001). Katherine shared her dissatisfaction with her doctoral experience in terms of feeling isolated in her program. There had not been any African American students in five consecutive cohorts prior to her enrollment in the Clinical Psychology Program. There are two African American students at the dissertation level (with more than five years in the program), but neither of them are active or visible in the program. There are no African American faculty members in the Clinical Psychology Program. Additionally, the program faculty is comprised primarily of women. Katherine revealed that she did not consider the lack of African Americans in her program and mentorship as factors when she was applying to doctoral programs. In retrospect, she admitted that she should have looked at these factors more critically in the application process. Additionally, Katherine admits that she took for granted that since Institution III is in an urban metropolitan city, she assumed that there would be an abundance of black faculty and graduate students in her department and college to network and socialize with. Katherine shared that this assumption was in fact false.

Monique, a third year MA/Ph.D. student in Marriage and Family Therapy at Institution I, identified two women that she believes fill the mentoring capacity in her current doctoral

program. Her assigned advisor, an African American female tenured faculty member outside of her program, is a strong advisor, mentor and role model for her. “She’s supportive in terms of making me the total package” stated Monique. Her second mentor is her clinical supervisor, a Caucasian woman who supports Monique’s research and clinical training. Monique’s relationships with both women are unique. Her relationship with her assigned advisor/mentor is both formal and informal in nature. Monique is selective with the information she brings to her advisor due to her advisor’s hectic schedule and time limitations when in the office. They only meet a few times per semester. Although her advisor’s time is limited, Monique does not question her advisor’s commitment to her specifically and to the African American graduate students in the department at large. Her advisor plans a social gathering for black graduate students once a semester at her home for informal conversation, fellowship and to build a community among the black graduate students in the department. Even though Monique is guarded with the information she shares with her advisor, she stated that her advisor “is very particular in protecting me from the politics of the department.” Monique’s advisor/mentor ensures that she (Monique) approaches things in the department from a methodical and strategic manner. Having a mentor to assist in managing political issues in the department is of similar importance to Monique as it is in Joann’s case.

Conversely, Monique’s relationship with her clinical supervisor is much more informal, relaxed and open. Monique reported that she can see her clinical supervisor at any time. “She’s very accommodating with her schedule”, stated Monique. They talk about issues outside of academe, such as balancing family and career. In fact, when Monique felt “lonely in the program” and was on the verge of stopping at the Master’s level, it was her clinical supervisor who told Monique’s program director of her problems; and talked Monique out of quitting and

convinced her to stay on the doctoral track. Monique views both women as sources of support and guidance at this stage of her professional development and education.

Lisa, a fifth year Ph.D. student in Counseling Psychology at Institution II, identified an African American male as her current mentor. She sought him to fill two roles – mentor and dissertation committee chairman. “The Counseling Psychology Program is the most minority saturated program on campus” stated Lisa. She feels comfortable in her program due to the diversity in terms of race and gender in the program. Lisa contributes the developmental nurturing nature of her doctoral program to the four African American faculty members in the program. As we discussed race and gender further, she admitted that she is very cognizant of her race and gender, but they are not in the forefront of her mind until confronted with them. In her program, issues of race and gender are most often raised in the contexts of research and practice. Monique stated that as a Counseling Psychology doctoral student she is being trained to assess and provide psychotherapy services, or therapeutic treatments, to clients. When colleagues discuss assessment and treatment procedures that primary focus on majority clients, Monique feels she must speak for those underrepresented or minority clients that are not usually included in the classroom or clinical discussions. These are the times when she feels confronted by race and gender.

Nicole, a third year Ph.D. student in Counselor Education and Supervision, at Institution III identified two people external to the university and academia as her mentors. First, she identified her pastor’s wife as the person she confides in and seeks support when challenges face her as a woman. As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is empirical evidence that women and men seek and receive different types of mentoring. With her pastor’s wife, Nicole sought a psychosocial support, which includes counseling and role modeling (Chandler, 1996). Moreover,

psychosocial support is categorized by a more nurturing environment than instrumental or functional assistance, which is more often sought by male protégés (McGuire, 1999; Chandler, 1996; Bauer, 1999). The other person she identified was her pastor, who has a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry. She talks to him for practical advice as it relates to navigating the graduate school process. The practical advice her pastor provides lends itself to the definition of functional assistance often sought and received by men. However, Nicole feels that a doctoral student needs a mentor, but their mentor does not need a Ph.D. She believes that a Ph.D. student's mentor needs to "think intellectually" about problems and solutions. Nicole's position is unique as compared to the other cases in terms of her mentoring experiences. Her identified mentors are an African American couple external to her doctoral program and the university. Her need to be grounded in her community and church outweigh her need for connectivity in her doctoral program and academic department. Nicole feels that the support and unconditional mentoring she receives external to her Ph.D. program help to sustain her progress in the program.

Patricia, a third year Ph.D. student in Sociology specializing in Race, Ethnicity and Applied Sociology at Institution II, did not identify a current mentor in her life. However, she shared some very strong feelings as it relates to race and mentoring in higher education. Patricia mentioned that she selected the chairman of her dissertation committee (a Caucasian female) and that they get along well. However, Patricia feels that there is no true mentoring taking place. Her chairman is good at the functional aspects of advising, providing direction with research, but nothing beyond that. Patricia admits that her chairman does her job very well, but there are cultural differences that keep Patricia from feeling that true mentoring is occurring; while her chairman may feel that it is occurring because they get along well.

Patricia characterizes herself as an independent person who does not need an abundance of support and guidance to persist through her doctoral program. She states that her program is not very diverse with one incoming Latina doctoral student, two African American and African female doctoral students, two African American male and two Asian male faculty members, respectively. Patricia feels that African American faculty, as a whole, need to make a bigger effort to help African American graduate students. She stated “we’ve never been this way; we used to have a greater sense of community or village concept where we helped each other freely.” As we continued to talk, Patricia mentioned that prior to beginning her doctoral program she met an African American female faculty member and administrator from another university on a graduate school recruiting trip. Surprisingly, I know the person, and know that she possesses a mentoring spirit. In fact, she serves as one of my professional mentors. This person is a nurturer and truly cares about people. She openly and freely shares her personal experiences as an African American female faculty member and administrator. In doing this, she uses herself as an example of what we, African American women in Higher Education, can achieve. Although this person is not Patricia’s mentor, she is someone that Patricia feels could be her mentor if they were at the same university.

Danielle, a fifth year ABD student in Higher Education Administration identified a Caucasian male and female as her current mentors. Both are faculty members at Institution I where Danielle is completing her Ph.D. Danielle states that her female mentor (also her dissertation chairperson) knows the doctoral process and understands it from a woman’s perspective. The male mentor, a faculty member in Danielle’s area of career and research interest provides her the support, funding, experience and national exposure needed to complete her program and assist with career placement after earning her Ph.D. Danielle credits her

mentor/dissertation chairperson with her completing her Ph.D. There were times when she (Danielle) doubted that she would finish the program. She stated, “the support, issues and experiences offered by both of my mentors addressed different aspects of my doctoral career.” She described both relationships as formal and informal. Though both of Danielle’s mentors are supportive, she admits that her female mentor provides the emotional support and stability needed to persist through the program. Danielle feels that gender plays a role in mentoring. This statement is supported by the empirical studies and findings of Bauer (1999), Kram (1985), Tenenbaum et al. (2001); Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) and Chandler (1996). These researchers found that mentoring dyads based on gender tend to be more effective and yield better outcomes for the women protégés than mixed gender mentoring relationships. When delving into this statement more, Danielle stated that her Caucasian male mentor shares how his work with African American female colleagues has shaped his perspective and sensitivity on race and gender issues. However, Danielle does not believe that race is a factor in successful mentoring. She does acknowledge that African Americans have always faced systemic challenges in higher education, which impede their access to and success at this level.

Candice, a third year Ph.D. student in Educational Policy, identifies three African American faculty members as her mentors. Two of her mentors are at her current institution (Institution I) are women, while one is at another institution and is male. Candice states that her early mentoring relationships were unsuccessful. She learned lessons from these encounters and now knows how to conduct herself in a way that is always professional and avoids the politics that sometime arises in academic departments. Candice specifically sought African American mentors during the doctoral process due to her social justice and activism work as an undergraduate and graduate student. She received her Bachelor’s degree at Institution I and

Master's degree at Institution III. Candice stated that each of her mentors have given her "nuggets" of wisdom and advice. The mentor who also serves as her dissertation chair and program advisor instilled in Candice a passion for qualitative research methods and assisted to solidify Candice's place as a doctoral student in her program. The mentor who is external to her academic program, but housed in the same college provides Candice with opportunities to analyze data, write and publish. The mentor who is external to the university as a whole provides Candice an entrée into different communities in Brazil where she has traveled to complete in research in comparative and international education. Candice stated that working with him legitimizes her as a young scholar in the field by way of his international reputation and position. It is also interesting that Candice credits the latter two with making her competent and confident as a researcher.

Contrary to Joann and Candice's positive experiences with multiple African American female mentors, Tara, a first year Ph.D. student in Higher Education Administration at Institution I, is currently seeking an African American woman to mentor her. Tara's academic and professional background is in business. She credits this as the reason why she has always been exposed to male mentors in her life. She admits to just "falling into" these mentoring relationships. She did not purposefully set out to meet or be mentored by men. "In the corporate world women must be leery of how they are perceived in terms of their relationships with men. Thus, I tempered these relationships" explained Tara. She continued by saying that "I want to find a woman who wants me to succeed." She feels that a woman will teach her how to manage her image and help her develop into the professional she wants to become in higher education. Tara identifies two people who she speaks with regularly – an African American female faculty member/administrator and a Chicano/Latino male administrator. Both have Ph.D.'s and are

housed at Institution I. In fact, the African American female that Tara references was also mentioned earlier in this chapter by Patricia. This African American woman truly exemplifies a mentoring spirit. She naturally outreaches to African American students, offering (unprompted) words of advice, comfort, encouragement and realism when she deems necessary. Unfortunately, Tara does not define them as mentors because of her infrequent contact with them. However, she does view them as valuable resource people who she can go to for advice. She met both people through referrals from other graduate students or employment opportunities. They meet occasionally, but they do not fill the void of what Tara refers to as a “true” mentor. As mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, although intertwined in the literature, mentoring and advising are two different activities. Advising encompasses the classical features of faculty-student interaction that include discussions on program requirements, coursework selection, and dissertation work. Undoubtedly, faculty advisors and those who serve informal advising roles are key factors in graduate student success (Golde, 2000). However, the act and art of mentoring takes advising steps further to include a more humanistic and developmental approach on the part of the faculty member as mentor. Minor (2003) identifies causes that impede the establishment of mentoring relationships – lack of time, frequency of contact, and contextual dynamics. These are critical impediments that impact the type and quality of involvement that a graduate student has with their advisor. For the graduate students finding a faculty mentor who gives of their time, talent and expertise to invest in their development and persistence in the field/discipline is a sought-after attribute. In the following section, African American female doctoral students share the ideal attributes that their mentor possesses or should possess to aid in the doctoral student’s success and persistence through their current graduate program.

Ideal Mentor Attributes

As a doctoral student, I know the importance of seeking a mentor who possesses the ideal attributes for my personal success. In speaking with African American female doctoral students, many of the attributes I look for were re-affirmed by their statements and sentiments in terms of what they are seeking from mentors during their doctoral tenure. Betty, a 45 year old third year Ph.D. student in Psychology, at Institution III, made the most compelling statement because I could personally connect with the attributes and traits she shared with me. She stated that her ideal mentor would be encouraging, flexible, possesses varying teaching styles, and understands the cultural dynamics of the African American family over education with respect to her (Betty's) age. I asked Betty to elaborate on the attribute of "understanding the cultural dynamics of the African American family". She replied,

I had to make some life decisions concerning care for my mother. She was and still is going through some serious health challenges. When all that was happening, I stepped away from my program for a few months to care for her. The person I viewed as my mentor (then) did not support my decision. I felt she didn't respect the decision. I need someone who understands that in the black community, we put family first. That's just what we do.

Betty continued to share that she sought another faculty member to serve as her mentor. Recently, she connected with a recent Ph.D. graduate from her program that has started a research group on cancer disparities. Betty believes that this person, even though younger than her, will prove to be a better mentor. They match in terms of cultural background and gender; have similar research interests; and Betty contends that from her conversations with this newly minted Ph.D. that she is emotionally driven rather than academically driven. That emotional

connection could result in a greater investment on the part of Betty's new mentor to see her complete the Ph.D. program despite life's challenges.

Previous literature on race, culture, and identity supports the need for Betty to seek a mentor who understands the cultural dynamics of the African American family. Although there is not a monolithic black race, those who support an Afrocentric worldview (Alfred, 2001; Asante, 1987; Collins, 1986; Schiele, 1994) agree that each group member is an individual with unique characteristics; however, we share core values and philosophical assumptions that originate from a shared African history.

Investment is a reoccurring theme that presented itself during the discussions with study participants on ideal mentor attributes and establishing mentoring relationships in their doctoral program. Dominique, a second year Ph.D. student in Counseling Psychology at Institution II, offered a slew of ideal attributes she looks for in a mentor. She seeks someone who is passionate for their profession, genuinely wants to see their protégé do well, selfless, humble, respectfully keeps their protégé in check, and never talks down to them. Dominique identified multiple mentors, four in total, all African American, three males and one female. Although Dominique identifies multiple mentors, only one, an African American male who serves as her program advisor, is at her home (doctoral) institution. The others are either from her undergraduate institution in Georgia or in Virginia. Establishing supportive mentoring relationships has been the cornerstone of Dominique's educational experiences. She is very strategic about networking and creating relationships with those in her field. Dominique ideally wants to be matched with an African American woman in a mentoring relationship. However, this person must meet her expectations. Thus, she values those attributes over being involved in a mentoring relationship with an African American female faculty member. Dominique continued by stating that "true

mentorship can breed success.” She contributes the outcome of success to Social exchange theory and the examination of benefits and outcomes for both the protégé and mentor. Social exchange theory proposes that social behavior is determined based on benefits and costs for the parties involved. If one party feels that the cost of the social interaction outweighs the benefits, then they terminate the relationship. Moreover, social exchanges entail unspecified obligations. If one person does a favor for another person, then the person in receipt of the favor expects a favor in return at some point and time (Gouldner 1960; Blau 1964).

As a shared theoretical construct in both social psychology and sociology, Social exchange theory is rooted in perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is the (perceived) relationship and support that an employee has with their employing organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa, 1986). Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is the level and type of exchanges an employee has with their direct supervisor (Graen and Scandura, 1987). The construct of the two is often used as a framework in the business management literature when examining topics, such as, employee satisfaction, employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, organizational commitment, and social support in the workplace.

In the context of this study, the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is most applicable to Dominique’s comments and motivation behind her mentor selections. Dominique is very explicit about the attributes she seeks in a potential mentor. She seeks someone with expertise and knowledge in their chosen field. The intentionality of her selections could be attributed to expectations she holds in terms of knowledge-sharing, professional opportunities, resources and networking provided by her mentors. Another participant, Danielle, the ABD student in Higher Education seems to fall in a similar category as Dominique. She states that “experience and

reputation in the field and the research track record they've established in their areas of interest are the top attributes I look for in a mentor". Overall, interview participants felt that having a mentor who was knowledgeable in their field led to increased professional development opportunities for them – the protégé. These opportunities help to shape the protégé's professional identity and career path as discussed in the section on mentoring and professional identity. Mentoring, whether formal or informal, can impact the protégé's professional trajectory. Often professional identity is either the impetus or result of a mentoring relationship. Potential mentors select aspiring colleagues who either share their same professional identity or who possesses qualities of the potential mentor when they were "at that age" or "in that stage of their educational or professional career." The relationship between mentoring and professional identity is analyzed in the following section.

Mentoring and Professional Identity

Mentoring relationships can nurture the professional and personal development of the protégé. Issues of professional identity stem from professional socialization and development (McGowen & Hart, 1990). Professional socialization and development is a social learning process that occurs when new skills and knowledge are acquired and the development of new values, attitudes and self-identity take shape for a certain career role (Hall, 1987; McGowen & Hart, 1990; Watts, 1987). Becoming a professional takes place on two levels: structural and attitudinal (Hall, 1968; Kerr, VonGlinow & Schriesheim, 1977). The structural level encompasses formal educational and requirements for entry into a profession. Whereas, the attitudinal level can be defined as a person's "calling" to a particular field.

Doctoral education is a professional training ground for students who enter the process either knowing or hoping to define their professional trajectory. During the doctoral tenure,

subjective self-conceptualization associated with their professional/career role is evident (McGowen & Hart, 1990). This self-conceptualization can be viewed as one's professional identity.

Here, participants discuss how their mentoring experiences in their doctoral program has impacted their professional identity. Joann, the fourth year Ph.D. student in African American and African Studies states that her professional identity has definitely changed while in her doctoral program. She started her program desiring to enter the academy as an Assistant Professor at a research institution. Now, after completing her Ph.D., Joann would like to work in an advising or outreach position at a university. She contributes this change to listening and observing her African American female mentors who are faculty members at universities other than her current institution. Her mentors share their professional triumphs, as well as, their personal sacrifices with Joann. She sees how thriving for a tenure-track position in her field could easily delay her and her husband's desire to have children within the next 2-3 years. Joann states "My professional vision has definitely changed. The future isn't as bright as it used to be. There are problems for women in the academy." She further states that "the Ph.D. process has caused a reality check." During our continued conversation Joann mentioned the concept of having multiple identities. She still identifies as a teacher and researcher. However, she wants to use her Ph.D. to help people in an advising or outreach capacity, which may be less stressful and less time-consuming than a faculty position at a Research I Institution. She wants a medium ground for her life. Her current professional goal has changed given that her priority is starting a family with her husband. Joann expressed feeling tension between the advice of her African American female mentors and her African American male advisor. Her advisor wants her to focus on preparing and securing a tenure-track faculty position, while her mentors have all

advised her to follow her passion even if it is different from what she initially wanted to do upon entering the doctoral program.

Diane's relationship and mentoring experience with her advisor, a Caucasian male, has solidified in her the professional self-identity as a researcher. However, similar to Joann, Diane wants to have balance in her life after earning her Ph.D. in Community Psychology. As she states, "at a research one, faculty life is publish or perish." Diane sees her mentor, a university distinguished professor, and admires that he's less focused on publishing and very connected to his family. Diane questions if she can be a university professor and a wife or mother. However, observing him makes it possible for her. Her mentoring relationship with him has taught her "not to get caught up in professional competition, but do what you love". Ultimately, her professional identity as a researcher has not changed. She now has some concerns regarding if she can do both successfully and balance the personal and professional aspects of her life. Katherine, a second year Clinical Psychology Ph.D. student, came into her doctoral program identifying as a clinician. She had some clinical experience prior to starting her graduate program. However, after working with her mentor, a non-African American female faculty member in her department, she identifies more as a researcher. Katherine did not really like research when she started the Ph.D. program; and did not have an idea of what research entailed. She credits this identity shift to her mentor. Katherine states, "I see myself in my mentor's role. I identify with her. She's a researcher". Katherine's relationship with her mentor has impacted her to the point where she's now mentoring an undergraduate African American male student in her department. She's engaging him in research, helping him apply to graduate schools and look for funding opportunities. Katherine stated, "I am the mentor and researcher I am today due to her current mentoring relationship".

Similarly to Joann and Diane, Candice has broadened her professional identity during her doctoral program. She contributes this to her mentoring relationship with her two mentors external to her academic program. When asked what her professional trajectory was upon entering her doctoral program, Candice states that she identified as a faculty member, but never wanted to do any international work. Her particular mentoring experiences and relationships with these people cause her to now view herself as an international researcher. Candice is allowing different experiences to happen and unfold in her life. Candice's most profound statement was that mentoring is allowing her to "illuminate her higher purpose". This statement causes me to think more critically about how doctoral protégés derive meaning from their graduate school mentoring relationships. Meaning-making is based on a constructive-developmental theory approach to learning, personal growth and constructing reality (Kegan, 1984). People derive meaning from their experiences and interactions with others. These interpersonal interactions and/or relationships help to inform one's idea of their purpose and shape their identity. Finding and defining one's purpose in the form of finding meaning in their life was echoed by Alice, a first year Ph.D. student in Counseling Psychology. When asked about her professional identity and career path, Alice stated "It bothers me that so many people in the field identify as counselors or therapists. It takes away from the profession. I wonder what I can do to make myself stand out and feel completely competent. As a black woman, I need to distinguish myself from the crowd". She followed by stating, "I am trying to find meaning in my own life".

As we continued to talk, Alice referred to our time together as therapeutic. While this participant does not have an identified mentor, she does have people that she admires in her department and college. Joann realized that she needs to seek another advisor for her dissertation because their research interests and goals for her work do not align. She feels having a mentor

would be helpful in terms of guidance and opportunities. Alice stated that when she began her Ph.D. program, she wanted to be a psychologist and open a private practice for adult clients, combining her social work management skills with private practice. After one year in the program, her professional goals remain the same but she wonders if they would be different if she had a mentor. It is clear that Alice seeks a mentor to help make meaning of her doctoral experience and solidify her purpose as a professional in the field of psychology.

She felt this was her professional trajectory based on the experiences she had as an undergraduate engaged in Sheila, the third year MA/Ph.D. student in Marriage and Family Therapy, speaks to the tension she is currently experiencing between her professional identity when she entered her graduate program and how she currently identifies. Upon entering her program, Sheila identified as a researcher with some interest in clinical work. As an undergraduate, she conducted research at her home institution and other institutions during the summers. She credits her primary mentor, a Mexican-American male faculty member in her department who also serves as her advisor. Sheila states that he has instilled confidence in her regarding her research and clinical abilities. He provides opportunities for professional development and in preparation for her scholarship. Ultimately, he is helping to normalize her experiences as a graduate student at the university. Sheila struggles with what her next steps will be after earning her Ph.D. She enjoys research, but knows from observing her mentor that she does not want the added pressure of academe. While her master's work focuses on clinical training; her doctoral work is research focused. Given this, Sheila now primarily identifies as a clinician. Her mentor is helping her process this tension. I view this tension as another form of meaning making. Sheila and Candice are both trying to define their purpose through their doctoral experiences. Their mentoring relationships are assisting them toward self-directedness

and self-directed learning (Galbraith, 2003). Based upon their disclosures, Sheila and Candice would categorize their mentoring relationships as favorable. Galbraith concludes in his 2003 study on mentoring and self-directedness that “good mentoring is about creating a mini-learning community that ultimately seeks to create for both the mentor and mentee an environment that embraces elements of critical and reflective thinking, self-direction, autonomy, creativity and praxis (p. 11).” Given this direction, both Sheila and Candice’s current mentoring relationships are helping them make meaning out of their doctoral experiences.

A lack of mentoring relationships has shaped Tara’s professional identity and made her the mentor she desires to be to others. As you may recall, Tara is a doctoral student in Higher Education who has been mentored primarily by males of the same race. She views herself as an higher education administrator, even though she taught undergraduate courses at another university prior to starting her doctoral program. She has been trained as an administrator through her education and professional experiences. Tara admits that it has been difficult to fit her business background and training into a higher education mold. “I feel like a square peg being forced into a round hole” explained Tara. She is not completely satisfied with her doctoral experience, but believes that having an African American female faculty mentor (her desire) would help to shape her professional identity and lend greater support for her research and professional goals.

Although three specific categorizes were summarized across the 16 interviews – Race and Gender, Ideal Mentor Attributes, and Mentoring and Professional Identity Development; I gleaned another theme across many of the 16 participants’ responses during our interview. That is the theme of self-authorship. As mentioned in Chapter Two under the section on Mentoring and Professional Identity Development, self-authorship is a developmental process or construct

by which individuals make meaning out of their experiences and interactions with others (Baxter Magolda, 2002; and Creamer & Laughlin, 2004). I found that many of the participants in this study were self-authoring their experiences and interactions with mentors and advisors as it relates to the development of their professional identity. Kegan (1994) first coined the phrase self-authorship, but Baxter Magolda's (1998; 2002; and 2004) on-going scholarship and reporting on how college students link self-authorship and decision making have evolved the concept to a relevant theoretical framework in American higher education. She defines self-authorship as "the ability to collect, interpret, and analyze information and reflect on one's own beliefs in order to form judgments" (Baxter Magolda, 1998).

For the purpose of this study, self-authorship plays a role in career decision making and professional identity development because it influences how African American female doctoral students make meaning of the advice they receive from mentors and advisors. As it relates to other developmental processes; self-authorship differs from agency because it is not about behavior, and it differs from self-efficacy because it is not based on one's level of self-confidence and competence. Self-authorship is about the cognitive process people use to make meaning (Creamer & Laughlin, 2004). Although self-authorship is central to adult decision-making, as I constructed this study I assumed that African American women doctoral students, ranging in age from 24-48, would have formulated their professional identity prior to beginning their Ph.D. program. My assumption was based on my knowledge of personal identity formation as it relates to developing an occupational (career) identity in adolescents (Erikson, 1968; 1980; and Gergen, 1991); and self-authorship as a theory that has been primarily applied to a young adult population (Baxter Magolda, 2002). My assumption was not supported because several of the women I interviewed were actively authoring their experiences and interpersonal interactions

with their mentors and advisors in their doctoral program. Thus, their professional identities had changed or were in the process of changing due to their exposure and engagement in professional development activities, interaction/advice from their mentors, or the self-realization that they desired and valued a different life plan (i.e. marriage and family). My understanding of self-authorship beyond adolescence and young adulthood was clarified and enhanced by my interactions with the study participants and my own cognitive processing of their lived experiences as African American female doctoral students.

Of the 16 interviews conducted, five were selected that represent the varying mentoring relationships that African American female doctoral students are involved in. These five women give voice to and provide insight into the lives of many thousands of African American female doctoral students across the country. These five cases were selected because they capture the essence of the mentoring relationships of participants in this study. The next discussion in this chapter focuses on five participants who represent the following doctoral mentoring dyads: 1). Same race and gender, 2). Same race and different gender, 3). Different race and same gender, 4). Different race and gender, and 5). No identified mentor.

Part II: Case Studies

Joann: Seek and Ye Shall Find

Joann is involved in a mentoring relationship with two African American female faculty mentors. Neither are located at her doctoral institution. As a fourth year Ph.D. student in African American and African Studies at Institution I, Joann has always been an activist and advocate for black students and their issues on college and university campuses. All of Joann's higher education experiences and academic training has been at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Of the 16 participant interviews, Joann's case represents matched mentoring relationships. These matched mentoring relationships or dyads mean that the protégé and her mentor(s) share the same race and gender.

I have known Joann since her freshman year at Institution I. She was recruited and admitted to an undergraduate research program for incoming freshman and sophomore students. I served as the program coordinator at the time of her participation. She went on to participate in another research program I coordinate for upper division students (college juniors and seniors). Since our first meeting and interaction during her freshman year, almost 13 years ago, Joann and I have developed a supportive personal and professional relationship.

As a first-generation college student, Joann sought mentors throughout her collegiate and graduate career. Although her family encouraged and supported her pursuit of a college education, they were not knowledgeable regarding issues of higher education. As an undergraduate pre-med (then health studies) major, Joann wanted desperately to become a medical doctor. She was on the medical school track – involved in pre-med associations and conducting research in two human biology labs, independently and through an undergraduate research program, respectively. She changed her major during her junior year when she realized

that her true passion was Black Studies. As the president of the undergraduate Black Student Association and Black Student Resident Aide on campus, Joann was entrenched in all things “Black” at the university. Even though she experienced this revelation as an undergraduate, she had and maintained a Caucasian female as her mentor.

Prior to starting her Ph.D. program, Joann successfully completed her master’s degree in Black Studies at a different (doctoral extensive) university located out of state from the one she attended as an undergraduate and now as a doctoral student. During her master’s degree program, Joann’s mentor was a faculty member in the English Department. She stated,

I was pushed by undergrad mentors and wanted something more than pushing at the grad level. I needed someone to help me navigate the politics and give ‘real talk’ about what to expect. I had to go outside of my department to get through grad school...I was specifically looking for someone who had a strong breadth of knowledge in black feminism and wanted a black woman, but it wasn’t a priority.

What was not a priority in during her master’s program became critically important for Joann in her doctoral program.

Joann was assigned an African American male advisor in the doctoral program whom she was very familiar with from her time as an undergraduate at the university. She felt very secure in that he would serve as both an advisor and mentor to her. Unfortunately, this relationship has not worked well. Joann contends that her advisor is not capable of mentoring her due to gender differences. Joann shared, “He’s more comfortable with men than women. I’ve talked to other Ph.D. students in the program and they say the same thing. He’ll share a lot more of himself with his male advisees than his female advisees. He backs away from issues and politics in the department.” When Joann needs that “real talk” she contacts an older African American woman

in the department who is a full professor. Joann views her as a supporter and resource, but not a mentor.

The Village Concept

When looking for someone who could help her create balance between her personal and graduate school lives, her advisor was unable to provide that “real talk” Joann needed about how to cope with multiple stressors. Thus, Joann set out on a mission to find an African American female mentor. Before moving forward, I think it’s important to conceptualize “real talk” and its place in my conversation with Joann. In the African American community, phrases such as “Keep It Real”, “Real Talk” and “Keep It 100” are used to preface conversations when people are people very honest and open about their feelings, a situation, etc. Thus, Joann’s desire for “real talk” with and from her advisor and mentor is a way of saying she wants open and honest lines of communication. These open and honest lines of communication provide a comfort zone and create a safe space for African Americans in the academy. As mentioned in Chapter Two, hooks (1989) defines a safe space as a place where black people can affirm one another, a place of renewal and self-recovery.

One of the most poignant phrases Joann shared during our talk was her rationale for seeking an African American woman as her mentor. She stated, “your blackness is against you, your gender is against you...at the Ph.D. level you need something more than an advisor like in undergrad...the politics, barriers, etc. need to be addressed and worked on to make it through.”

She initiated contact with two African American women whose research aligns with her dissertation topic on the Black Panther Party. As luck would have it, both women agreed to serve as her mentors. Both women live in two different states – Texas and Georgia, respectively. Although over 1,000 miles separates Joann from her mentors, she is confident that she has their

support and guidance not only as a burgeoning scholar in Black Studies, but as an African American woman. She admits that her contact with them is informal and infrequent, but both are accessible via phone and email; and they schedule time to meet at national conferences in their field. This mentoring trio creates what Joann referred to as, “woman-centered scholarly energy”. Joann feeds off of this energy and knows that her mentors genuinely understand her needs and want to help. Although it is from a distance, Joann has established a mentoring community for herself. Joann’s mentoring relationships with her two African American female faculty mentors create a safe space for her to share her thoughts, insecurities and have the “real” and honest dialogue she needs to persist in her doctoral program. Knowing how her dissertation/program advisor feels about her professional plans after earning her Ph.D., Joann is hesitant to speak openly and honestly with him about her career goals and family plans.

Joann is committed to keeping her advisor as he’s her dissertation chairman. However, she consults with her two African American female mentors first regarding her dissertation, coursework and funding before bringing the topics to her advisor. Joann’s mentors serve dual roles as mentors and academic/program advisors. Alfred (2001) supports the multiple dimensions and roles of mentors. It has been widely research that mentors and advisors have different relationships with graduate students. Based on Alfred’s (2001) study, one can conclude that mentors can be advisors, but advisors are not necessarily mentors. Moreover, Joann can openly and honestly speak with them about her marriage and strategies for work-life balance – topics she knows not to broach with her advisor. Joann has several supporters and resources on campus, which she calls her “village”. This village concept comes from an ancient African proverb, which states “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child.” The underlining meaning of this saying

focuses on the concept that no man, woman or child stands alone. We need a community of dedicated and caring people to help us define and achieve our goals.

Multiple Professional Identities

Joann's village of mentors, supporters and resources has led to her multiple career identities. As stated earlier, Joann came into her Ph.D. program knowing these things, "I'll be done in four years, I'll have a successful career, and I'll start my career as an Assistant Professor at a research university". After four years in the program, with a projected three more years until she earns her Ph.D., Joann's professional vision has definitely changed. This change developed through her open and honest conversations with her mentors, both who are African American women, tenured faculty at research institutions in the United States. Joann stated, "...the future isn't as bright as it used to be for women in the academy." The Ph.D. process has caused a reality check for Joann. The clear-cut path she had laid out for herself has been altered. After finishing her Ph.D., Joann may not go directly into a faculty position. She wants to do more outreach and advising than research and teaching. Her professional identity has transformed from that of a researcher and teacher to an administrator with primarily outreach and advising responsibilities at the undergraduate level. She wants to continue her research on the Black Panther Party, but not at the timed-pace required of a tenure-track faculty member at a research institution. Joann realizes that being a wife and one-day a mother are more important than a faculty position. She came to this realization through conversations with her African American female mentors. She did not want to make the personal sacrifices they made to reach tenure. Their "real talk" answers to her questions on work-life balance, career options, multiple stressors, etc. aided in this altered state.

Unsatisfied Spirit

Satisfaction with one's doctoral experience can impact degree completion and student success. Effective advising and mentoring are identified components that contribute to a doctoral student's satisfaction with their educational experience. Gasman, Gerstl-Pepin, Aderson-Thompkins, Rasheed, and Hathaway (2004) found that interacting with students inside and outside of the classroom enhances the student-faculty relationship and student satisfaction with their programs. Additionally, Gasman, Hirschfield, and Vilttago (2008) suggest that increasing the frequency and quality of meetings with African American students can enhance doctoral student success. Overall, Joann is not satisfied with her doctoral experience. She states, "...tons can be done to improve my experience, especially with my advisor. Student support is lacking at (Institution I). My Ph.D. program is much more competitive than people think. It's very hands off. The competitive nature is defeating. I need support from somewhere (peers and faculty). I'm frustrated at this point." This level of frustration and realization are not uncommon to African American doctoral students. Joann's comments speak loud and clear to her level of dissatisfaction with her relationship with her adviser. If she relied solely on this relationship, then one would conclude based on the causality between faculty-student mentoring relationships and degree completion that she would be in jeopardy of earning a Ph.D. The faculty-student mentoring relationship has been addressed as a critical function in the doctoral experience and can be viewed as one of the few formal mechanisms in this process (Nettles & Millett, 2006). The nature of faculty mentorship is considered one of the strongest determining factors of African American doctoral degree completion (Willie, Grady & Hope, 1991).

Remedies

There are two remedies (employed and asserted) that Joann mentions to reduce some of the frustration she experiences in her doctoral program. First, she actively sought (employed) African American women faculty mentors who would provide her the support and guidance she desired in her program. Although external from her Ph.D. program and university, Joann believes that these two women serve as faculty mentors because of the support, encouragement, and academic guidance they provide. The motives behind Joann's active engagement of faculty who would later become her mentors are supported in the Nettles and Millett (2006) study of more than 9,000 doctoral students, who identified mentoring as a key aspect of positive academic interactions among doctoral students and faculty. In their survey questionnaire a mentor is defined as "someone on the faculty to whom students turned to for advice, to review a paper, or for general support and encouragement" (Nettles & Millett, 2006, p. 98). According to these findings, acquiring supportive mentorship is associated with achieving post-doctoral achievement and success.

Second, Joann asserts that more outreach is needed on the part of faculty in her department, especially her advisor. She stated, "He needs to be more direct with me". Contact, either face-to-face or virtual, is an essential component of mentoring (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005). "My mentors check-in with me" reported Joann. She believes that "checking in" is a sign of a good mentor. But, she also feels that "checking in" is a reciprocal process. Thus, she contacts them periodically. Joann's actions substantiate Hoskins and Goldberg's (2005) findings from their qualitative study of counselor education doctoral students. Study participants cited connection with faculty members and peers as one of the significant factors associated with satisfaction, persistence and continuance in the doctoral program. This is supported by an earlier

study (Hawkins, 1992), that found that frequent quality of contact with faculty is associated with increased retention and positive progress toward degree among graduate students.

Dominique: Knowledge Over Gender

Dominique is a Ph.D. second year Ph.D. student in Psychology at Institution II. She was referred to me by Patricia, another study participant at Institution II. Dominique represents a same race, different gender faculty-student mentoring relationship. Her identified primary faculty mentor is an African American male professor in her department. She is an alumna from an Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in Atlanta, GA where she earned a BA in Psychology. Being raised by her grandparents in Bloomfield Hills, MI, Dominique's extended family encouraged her to ask questions to find the "undercover value" of things and in people. As a product of an HBCU, one would think that mentoring among black students, faculty and administrators is a formalized process. This was not true in Dominique's case. Dominique recalls no formal mentoring experiences during her undergraduate tenure at CAU. However, when Dominique did locate a mentor(s), the outcome overwhelmingly resulted in black male faculty members serving as her mentor(s). Thus, Dominique's case exhibits mentoring relationships comprised of same race, but different gender mentors.

Dominique shared that as an undergraduate, she sought people knowledgeable in the field of psychology to serve as resources and guide her through the program. So, she approached professors who taught various courses she took as her pool of possible mentors. An African American male tenured faculty member mentored Dominique through her undergraduate years. She states, "I had him for two psych classes. They were challenging, culturally-based and stimulating. I sought him out to be my mentor. He was approachable, accommodating, and didn't lessen his standards for me. Even now, he still mentors me". Dominique mentioned that she attempted to forge a mentoring relationship with an African American female faculty member in her department who was going up for tenure. Their relationship was not as strong as the one with

the African American male faculty member. However, this non-tenured faculty member was the clinical director for the Psychology Department. She assessed students' needs and placed students in clinical settings, or with professional mentors in the greater Atlanta area for hands on training and experience. Dominique views her as a secondary or tertiary mentor. Their contact and interaction was more isolated for the purpose of helping Dominique secure a clinical placement as an undergraduate. Thus, their contact was not as on-going as with her African American male mentor. As Minor (2003) purports, one feature of effective mentoring and mentoring relationships is frequency of contact.

Presently, Dominique identifies four people (including her undergraduate mentor) as her mentors. All four are African American; three males; and one female. Three of the relationships are informal and one is formal. The formal relationship is with her advisor and dissertation chairman. As stated earlier in this chapter, Dominique seeks a mentor for the knowledge and expertise they can share with her. This disclosure aligns with the findings of Dixon-Reeves (2003) who states that newly minted African American Ph.D.'s in sociology are sophisticated in their use of mentors and rely on different mentors to provide different functions. Given that Dominique's formal mentoring relationship is with her adviser, we talked at length about the differences being having a mentor and an adviser. Dominique is empathetic that "everyone's not a good mentor; mutual benefits sustain the relationship." She observes that many of her graduate school colleagues do not have that type of mutually rewarding relationship with their adviser. Specifically, Dominique states that "Advising is a big let-down for students. They expect mentoring, but only get advising." As discussed in Chapter Two, mentoring and advising are often mistakenly intertwined in the literature. The fact that mentoring and advising are two distinct activities; many graduate and doctoral students are left wanting and expecting their

advisor to also be their mentor. Advisors and mentors form different relationships with graduate students. Baird (1995) states that faculty advisors are integral components in students' graduate education. However, mentors make a deeper, longer-lasting investment in their protégé's short-term and long-term academic, personal and professional success (Nettles & Millett, 2006).

Mentor For Life

Are mentors born or are they made? Based on my conversation with Dominique, I support the position that good mentors are created based on their personal experiences as a protégé in previous mentoring relationships. When asked about her professional identity, Dominique took our conversation in a different direction than previous interviews. Specifically, the question, "how has your mentoring relationship impacted your professional identity?" was meant to prompt discussion on one's professional/career identity as a researcher, teacher, or administrator for example. However, Dominique's reply was different,

They have made me more prone to be a mentor in my professional identity. I know I must mentor. I work as an informal mentor on campus as the interim president of the Graduate Students of Color and I recruit perspective doctoral students to the Counseling Psychology program. I have recruited one, who just finished her first year here. I also mentor a 14 year old girl in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program in Kalamazoo.

Mentoring and giving back is what I do...it's what we all should do.

The experiences with her mentor are deep-rooted and in some ways life-altering. Dominique is paying her mentoring experiences forward. She is an intentional mentor. She actively seeks to mentor girls and women in her community or on campus. Dominique believes that mentoring is a two-way street. The relationship between mentor and protégé must be mutually beneficial.

Dominique addresses this idea of mutual benefit and reciprocity through our conversation.

Mentors, as well as protégés, are also likely to benefit substantially from mentoring.

Ragins and Scandura (1997) found in their study on mentoring and gender differences that mentors reap extrinsic rewards, such as accelerated research productivity, greater networking, and enhanced professional recognition, when their protégé(s) perform well. Additionally, important intrinsic benefits to the mentors include enhanced career satisfaction and rejuvenation of creative energy from collaboration with protégé(s) according to Levinson et al. (1978).

The premise of this mutually beneficial concept is found in social exchange theory. As noted earlier in this chapter, social exchange theory proposes that social behavior is determined based on benefits and costs for the parties involved (Johnson, 2002). Mentors and mentees prefer relationships that provide a positive camaraderie, but more importantly, a relationship where common goals are more easily achievable provides more weight (Ugrin, Odom, & Pearson, 2008). In Ugrin et al. (2008), “faculty mentors indicated that they prefer working with people that have personality traits that they like over demographic variables (p. 348). In a later study by Terry, DeMichiell, and Williams (2009), they postulate that personality traits and compatible thinking styles must be assessed by either or both (mentor and protégé) before making a mentoring commitment. Social exchange theory aids our understanding about why either a potential mentor or protégé or both decide not to enter into the exchange involved in a mentoring relationship.

Who Am I?

Regarding her professional trajectory, Dominique admits she is a little fuzzy on this. As a counseling psychologist, she wants to work with disadvantaged youth in a clinical setting, but she also wants to address some of the social justice issues she has come across in her classes and

the counseling literature as a researcher at the university level. At this point, she is trying to define her professional purpose. She has made her advisor/mentor aware of this fuzziness and he “attends to it” states Dominique. She continues saying that he addresses her fuzziness by exposing her to different opportunities that will help expand her perspective and experiences in the field. He is helping her decide, not deciding for her. Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996), state that mentoring practices commonly provide students with experiences that, while intended to help doctoral students become researchers, may replicate and normalize the mentors’ conception of research and researchers. Thus, the mentor is shaping their students’ professional identity to match their own. Dominique’s advisor/mentor is combining opportunity and access, which together will hopefully lead to a clearer career path for her.

What Dominique describes is the process of developing her professional identity. Her advisor, who also serves as her mentor, provides opportunities that will help Dominique define her professional purpose, goals and identity. In terms of doctoral students identifying in the context of a researcher, Bieber and Worley (2006) postulate that faculty mentors have particular ideas about what it means to be a researcher; and their conceptions may or may not align with their students’ assumptions. From my interaction with Dominique, it sounds like her advisor/mentor is allowing her to define her script. The term “script of the ideal” coined by Bieber and Worley (2006) has been used to describe doctoral students’ beliefs about their present and future researcher identities. Through regular interaction, discussions and professional development activities, both mentors and doctoral students become more aware of the students’ ideal scripts.

Satisfaction in the Eyes of the Mentee

Dominique is satisfied with her doctoral experience because of the mentoring relationship she has built with her advisor. She honestly reports that the training she is receiving is good, but has its hiccups. Overall, the program is serving its purpose. Dominique shared that her program is the most diverse graduate program at Institution II. She states, “Growing up in Bloomfield Hills, I wanted my graduate experience to be similar to that of an HBCU. I chose Institution II after researching the status of diversity on campus and in the program”. Surprisingly, the faculty in the counseling psychology program is more diverse, in terms of domestic minorities, than the students in the program.

Dominique believes there is a misconception that the general public holds, which is that domestic minorities have arrived. She feels that this misconception leads black students, naively into thinking that their educational and career paths will be easy. This realization does not hit many African American students until they have matriculated in their graduate program of choice. This misconception is supported by a paper entitled, “Becoming Visible: An Essay on the Experiences of African American Women in Higher Education” by Renee E. Franklin in 2002. Her paper addresses the issue of African American women becoming more visible entities in higher education. As she reports, there are people in academe and other employment sectors who believe that the time for being concerned about race and gender has passed. This thought is due in large part to the numerous bills, laws and policies enacted to create ethnic and gender equity in the United States. Faivre (2002) posits that it is counterproductive to continue to address these topics in the workplace and educational systems. Couple these thoughts with the mentality that all Americans have equal opportunities for advancement, many African American students entering graduate school will have the misconception that discrimination (in any form) does not

exist at that level in our colleges and universities. However, Gasman et al. (2008) examine African American graduate students' experiences in the classroom, and report that African American graduate students often feel academically isolated in the classroom and socially isolated outside of the classroom in their departments. The academic isolation is mostly due to a misalignment of the students' research and scholarly interests and the course professor's viewpoint of their work. This isolation is heightened when the students' work maybe be culturally focused (Margolis & Romero, 1998).

Chapter Two highlights the dual challenges (race and gender) African American women face in higher education. As I stated, higher education reflects societal issues and trends as it relates to the treatment of African Americans in the academy. Societal inequities produce achievement discrepancies that explain the scarcity of people of color and women faculty in academia (The Nation, 1998). In the same year, Margolis and Romeo (1998) noted, in their study of 26 women of color in sociology doctoral programs, that the graduate school experience "simultaneously reproduces gender, race, class and other forms of inequality" for African American women (p. 2). Moreover, social isolation is caused by "chilly" climate in the classroom, lack of mentoring, and lack of connection with peers (Golde, 2000; Hurtado, 1994; and Lovitts, 1996). Literature on the doctoral pipeline and "chilly" climate issues for people of color and women clearly and quickly debunk the misconception of "we have arrived." Thus, African American students must enter their graduate and doctoral careers not expecting an automatic mentoring relationship to blossom with their program advisor. But, from Joann and Dominique's experiences, they should expect to strategically seek supporters and establish mentoring relationships with faculty both internal and external to their academic program and department.

Danielle: Role Models Over Mentors

Danielle's mentoring experiences as a Ph.D. Candidate in Higher Education Administration at Institution I are primarily driven by her research and community development interests. She is involved in a different race, same gender faculty-student mentoring relationship. I have known Danielle since her participation in the same undergraduate research program for college juniors and seniors that I mentioned earlier regarding my acquaintance with Joann. Thus, I have known Danielle for over 15 years. Her post-secondary educational experiences have all taken place at doctoral extensive institutions in the state of Michigan. In fact, she returned to her undergraduate alma mater to earn her doctoral degree. As an undergraduate, Danielle earned her Bachelor of Science degree in urban and regional planning. This was her third major. She came to Institution I as a science major with the long-term goal of earning an MD and becoming a OB/GYN. Urban and Regional Planning was her third major. While in this field, Danielle had a role model in an internationally renowned, African American woman faculty member in urban planning. Danielle states, "She did not take me under her wing, but put me in leadership positions in my senior practicum course and after graduation. Without her doing this, I would not have gained the exposure to particular people in the field to get the post-graduate employment opportunities I did that made me marketable across my profession into my graduate education."

After graduation, Danielle went on to complete her Master's in Social Work (MSW) degree and worked for several years in Detroit, MI before returning to school to pursue her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. While in her Master's program, Danielle recounts having a Caucasian male who was her assigned advisor and mentor. Danielle said that her undergraduate role model was the reason she majored in urban and regional planning and wanted to work in community development. I asked why and Danielle replied, "I saw her engaged in the

community. She was actively researching social equity in neighborhoods and urban revitalization in Detroit; and her scholarship is and will benefit the city. I wanted to do the same one day.”

Another role model for Danielle was her advisor in her MSW program. He, a Caucasian male, is a professor of social work and urban and regional planning and is highly acclaimed in both fields, as well. Danielle shared that she “would have sought him out given his reputation, but was lucky enough to be assigned as one of his advisees.” Danielle recalls that during her Master’s program, “I worked directly with many female faculty and administrators and two male faculty with international reputations. I left the program feeling like I had not been developed in the ways I most wanted.” Danielle wanted more guidance and meaningful engagement with these individuals throughout the process. If she had these types of interactions, I am confident that one if not all of these people would have been categorized as a mentor. However, she states that the most significant benefit and relationship was the one with her advisor. Danielle states, “I have maintained contact with my advisor over time, and he has continued to provide letters of recommendation that have allowed me to become accepted into my doctoral program, and pursue faculty and other positions.”

Currently, Danielle views her advisor and dissertation chair, and her graduate assistantship supervisor, as her best two role models (who are close to being mentors). Her Ph.D. program advisor and dissertation chair is a Caucasian woman who is underrepresented in terms of her sexual orientation. Danielle states, “Dr. Merriweather is able to give perspective from an outsider’s view. She’s an underrepresented woman who knows the process and is understanding as a woman. She’s the reason I’m finishing this program.” As an advisor, Danielle feels she has done her job very well. She commented on one particular thing that her advisor did that was not mentioned consistently across the participants. Danielle states, “after experiencing a rough patch

in the program where I felt a lot of self-doubt about my abilities to complete the program, Dr. Smith reached out to me and helped me define my place in this program.” I asked what she meant by “place in this program”, she further explains that Dr. Smith reassured her that no one would be mad at her based on her decision regarding her interest and dissertation research. Danielle admits her moments of self-doubt were coupled with feelings of anxiety about other personal life choices. However, she decided to stay in the program and with Professor Smith as her advisor and dissertation chairman. In fact, Danielle shared that Dr. Smith asked her to keep her as her advisor, so they could work out any future issues together. Danielle admits that before this time she primarily looked at one’s position and experience in the discipline or field, but Dr. Smith’s “whole body” approach to advising and supporting her during this difficult time was the reason she returned to the program and is now on track to completing her Ph.D. In a qualitative study on the importance of mentoring relationships in doctoral program completion, Hoskins and Goldberg (2005) found that the counselor education doctoral students’ (study participants) lack of connection with faculty members and peers was a significant experience that led to these students choosing to discontinue their doctoral studies. I honestly believe that Danielle’s relationship with Dr. Smith was the key factor in preventing her from dropping out of the doctoral program.

Danielle’s graduate assistant supervisor is a Caucasian male who is a distinguished university professor and administrator over civic engagement and university outreach. Danielle credits him for being able to persist through her doctoral program. Her graduate assistantship in his unit addressed two of Danielle’s dire needs: 1). funding to stay in the doctoral program and 2). experience in bridging her interests in higher education and civic/community engagement and outreach. Danielle states, “Dr. Fields’ unique position at the university allowed me to merge my

interests and gain national exposure in the field, while receiving the funding to continue in the program. He has an easy-going nature that works well with mine.” Even with the presence of these two individuals, Danielle believes there is a void in her academic training and experiences as an African American woman. She has fought diligently to feel empowered and not marginalized through her tenure in graduate education. Danielle states,

The literature in higher education demonstrates (Mabokela & Green, 2001; and Cooper 2001) there are two major challenges that face African American women who pursue graduate education: 1). there simply is not an infrastructure in graduate education that has any understanding of why it is that African Americans (or most underrepresented persons of color) are not increasing/choose not to persist or pursue graduate education, and 2). for those of us who do persist, few of us become faculty members.

Given this lack of understanding, a void exists for African American doctoral students who seek a faculty mentor to provide a “road map” or guidance during the graduate training experience. Not having the desired level of support leaves many African American doctoral students to navigate the process alone or with little assistance from a mentor. Developing a skill set is necessary to maneuver this complex process called doctoral education.

Navigation Skills and Professional Identity

Throughout my conversation with Danielle she talked about the lack of infrastructure for support and guidance for black women and other underrepresented people of color in graduate education. Danielle views this lack of infrastructure as a direct barrier to the persistence rates of people of color in graduate education, especially at the Ph.D. level. From her own experience, she sees how the lack of infrastructure in terms of policies and programs for doctoral students to receive holistic mentoring and guidance in their program hindered her in both her Master’s and

the early stages of her Ph.D. program. Danielle speaks to the marginalization she felt in both her Master's and Ph.D. programs. She states,

In my Master's program, I was in the most marginalized area of Social Work practice – macro practice, centering on children, youth and families in society. This area involves learning theories and research/practice methodologies that make one a generalist across this area of practice. I had practica experiences and took courses in basic research, program evaluation, and organizational administration at the number one ranked Master's program in social work in America.

Danielle further shares that the macro practice area was under review by the dean and faculty for reform. Thus, the program was in transition during her tenure there. Danielle continues to state, “I had worked professionally for four years prior to attending the program, and so I had already developed my navigation skills - goal-setting, strategy-developing, ambition, and persistence – to persist through the program.” Danielle shares a clear memory from her Master's program, “I worked diligently with many female faculty and administrators and two male faculty with international reputations (one of whom was my advisor). I left the program feeling like I had not been developed in the ways I most wanted.”

Danielle's reliance on her navigation skills struck me as an important factor in her development as a graduate student (Master's and Ph.D.) and scholar in her field. In listening to her, I interpret her navigation skills as survivor skills. She employed these skills to persist through her Master's and Ph.D. programs. Specifically, she states, “I'm ambitious and persistent, and that's why I have persisted this far. My personal traits have gotten me from A-Z.” Danielle admits that early in her doctoral program, she let self-doubt about completing the program,

professional identity and personal relationship issues hinder her academic progress. She questioned her place in the doctoral program and in the world.

Danielle enthusiastically states, “I thought I had it!” regarding her professional trajectory upon entering her doctoral program. However, she admits that she does not anymore. When she started the Ph.D. Program in Higher Education Administration, Danielle wanted to become a faculty member and enter a tenure track position upon earning her doctorate. Specifically, she wanted to teach and conduct research on underrepresented student leadership and university-community partnerships. Now, Danielle still thinks she wants to be a faculty member of the academic freedom it affords, but is given serious consideration to the idea of doing community work and education outreach for non-profits and/or higher education agencies/foundations.

Danielle credits both her supporters – Ph.D. program advisor/dissertation chairman and graduate assistantship supervisor – as playing major roles in her changing thought pattern. However, she states that her graduate assistantship supervisor has been pivotal in this change. “He has networked me out to the big wigs in the field” says Danielle. This new professional perspective is one that her advisor supports and has encouraged her to explore. Having multiple supporters and resources while pursuing a doctoral education is vital to students’ persistence through and success in their programs (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005).

Infrastructure for Support

The common thread throughout Danielle’s higher education experiences is her desire to have a true mentoring relationship. She has been exposed to many role models (leaders) in her field, but no real mentor who encompasses all of the qualities she seeks. I asked Danielle why she does not consider her Ph.D. program advisor and current graduate assistantship supervisor her mentors, she states, “I have done a lot of foot work myself. There’s no infrastructure for

African American women to persist through graduate education.” Ideally, Danielle views this infrastructure as ‘people with power and people without power’ matched to provide opportunities for those without power.

Danielle outlined three qualities or attributes that she believes are important for successful mentoring relationships. They are: 1). professional experience, reputation in the field, and areas of interest; 2). personality and synergy; and 3). direction and guidance. Finding a mentor who possesses all these qualities is challenging. The first set of criteria represents the most important qualities to Danielle. As a burgeoning professional and scholar studying the intersection between higher education and civic/community engagement, Danielle feels that she needs a mentor who is experienced and has expertise in one or (ideally) both areas. When seeking a mentor, she looks for people who are experienced in their fields. The bigger the reputation, the better! Finding that person is usually the easy part for Danielle. However, finding the other two qualities mentioned above in that same person is more than a difficult task, it is darn near impossible. Danielle wants her and her mentor to click! Their personalities need to complement one another to create the synergy she desires.

Literature on Social exchange theory supports Danielle’s desire for synergy. From the mentor perspective, Ugrin et al. (2008) researched leader member exchange, the social exchange quality in relationships, during mentoring along with demographics of gender and ethnicity. They discovered that their qualitative follow-up interviews supported their quantitative results that “faculty members indicated that they prefer working with people that have personality traits that they like” (p. 348) even more than the variables of demographics. From the mutual perspectives of mentors and protégés, Terry et al. (2009) discussed five issues of the mentor/mentee relationship that include: a). mentoring requirements, b). compatibility of

scholarly work, c). personality compatibility, d). presentation/publication opportunities, and e). time and schedule for interaction. Within the review of the personality compatibility issue, the authors discuss the importance of the compatible thinking styles between two persons to maximize the efficiency of process and adherence to deadlines. Terry et al. (2009) cited that “personality factors do enter in the equation of collaboration and unconsciously, either or both of the workers should consider this aspect before commitment of any major effort” (p.10).

Danielle further discusses how her need for direction and guidance is critical in her desired mentoring relationship. Danielle shared that her ideal mentor would not tell her where to go, but will help her get to where she wants to go. Danielle wholeheartedly believes that she has not found her ideal mentor because she is in an emerging field in higher education. Thus, no one person has all of the qualities she is looking for.

During the course of our conversation, I found myself trying to fit Danielle’s mentoring experiences and lack thereof (from her account), into a nice and neat box. Unfortunately, I found it difficult to define her current relationships with her Ph.D. program advisor and the supervisor of her graduate assistantship. At first, I thought she viewed them as mentors then they moved from mentors to supporters. I found myself questioning her mentoring dyads and relationships. I did not question their existence, I question her integrative definition of mentor, supporter and role model. My confusion prompted me to ask Danielle if there were any last comments she wanted to share regarding her mentoring and doctoral training experiences. In response, she shared the following statement that addresses her current beliefs toward her mentoring relationships in higher education:

Mentorship is the issue that has persisted across my undergraduate and graduate education. I still have yet to find the ‘mentor’ I seek that helps me achieve my goals in an

apprenticeship manner. However, one could say that the role models I have mentioned across answers are mentors, because they have provided me with the leadership and financial support/employment opportunities that any professional needs to learn about the myriad dynamics of a field and gain a high level of competence and marketability across that field. But, the literature on graduate education in higher education questions mentorship because it is unclear still how students, especially students of color, maximize whatever related or similar opportunities they might have.

Based on this statement, I have determined that Danielle bases her definition of mentor and mentorship on the relevant literature that explores the relationship and/or connectivity between mentoring and students of color in graduate education. I believe her belief directly supports one of the premises of this and previous studies, which is the lack of desired mentoring opportunities and outlets for doctoral students of color. Moving from Danielle who has yet to find the mentor she seeks to Diane, one of my study participants, who has found greater success in defining and having a mentoring relationship in graduate school.

Diane: One Bad Experience

Diane is a second year Ph.D. student in Community Psychology at Institution I. She identified a mentor in her doctoral program, a Caucasian male who is a University Distinguished Professor in Psychology and serves as her program advisor and dissertation chairman. Thus, she represents a mentoring relationship where she and her mentor are of different race and gender. I first met Diane four years ago when she was a visiting undergraduate researcher at the institution she is now pursuing her doctorate. Diane completed her undergraduate work, in psychology, at a state university in California. From my interactions with her as an undergraduate and graduate student, I know that she is a straightforward and focused young woman. While these aspects of her personality were solidified during our conversation, others more shocking aspects were revealed.

During our meeting, Diane recalls that during her freshman year, she always heard the phrase “everyone needs a mentor.” She heard this message but it wasn’t until later in her undergraduate career that she knew how to search and select the ideal mentor for her. As a freshman, Diane was assigned a peer mentor named Susan, an upper division African American female undergraduate majoring in psychology. After interacting and knowing Diane for a while, Susan encouraged her to apply to the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at their undergraduate institution. This was specifically due to Diane being a first-generation college student. Diane was admitted to the McNair Program with the condition that she find and secure her own research mentor who needed to be a faculty member in psychology. Diane confirmed an Asian woman to serve as her mentor. She contends that this was a memorable experience, but for the wrong reasons. She states, “Most faculty wanted to work with students who fit an academic profile – good skills, and high grades and test scores.” She mentions one particular faculty member, a

Caucasian male, who had a good reputation for working with African American students.

Unfortunately, Diane continues to say, “I selected an Asian woman based on culture and personality.” For this program, which is heavily research focused, Diane admits to looking at the wrong qualifications for a mentor. “I should have focused on mutual research interests, not culture and personality. Those things could not get me through the program successfully.”

Knowing this, Diane decided to reconsider her mentor match while in the McNair Program. She completed another search and found someone who shared her research interests, Dr. Jones, a Caucasian male who is a Full Professor in the Psychology Department. Diane states, “Dr. Jones had not worked with an undergraduate for about five years. He normally works with Ph.D. students. He prayed on it and decided to mentor me. He’s a great example of how to balance life, school and family. He’s not a micro-manager.” Diane considers Dr. Jones a long-term mentor based on their mutual research interests.

These thoughts and feelings remain with Diane today. One point she vehemently shared with me was “don’t choose (a mentor) on race and gender because everyone that looks like us or who is of color is not conscious or aware of our struggle.” Diane has come to the realization, through maturity and negative experiences, that her ideal mentor is “family-oriented, possesses a level of conscientiousness as to what it means to be a minority, and not a micro-manager.” If you recall from earlier in this chapter, I conveyed Diane’s experience with an African American female faculty member at her undergraduate institution. Diane was devastated when an African American woman faculty member in the Psychology Department saw her struggling in class and suggested that she look into hair styling as a profession/vocation and questioned why she (Diane) was in college. By this time, Diane had met Dr. Jones who was her new mentor in the McNair Program. Diane states, “Dr. Jones encouraged me to go to grad school.” “I work well with white

men” she adds. Even now as she experiences adversity in her doctoral program, her mentor’s support, guidance and intervention sustains her.

Diane’s current mentor, a Caucasian male, had to handle an awkward situation regarding her Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, which was deemed racially biased. Her mentor on numerous occasions had to provide explanation to the university’s IRB Office and the Psychology Department Chairman concerning the rationale for Diane’s dissertation research. While advocating and negotiating on behalf of Diane, he also reconfirmed her identity as a researcher and reassured her that she would be able to conduct the study that she desires. Diane states, “He’s a mentor first then an advisor.” Making the contacts and following up were functions of his being her program advisor and dissertation chairman. Reconfirming her identity as a researcher and reassuring her that she belongs in this academic “space” were signs of being a good mentor. Diane’s current mentor was also her faculty mentor while she was a visiting undergraduate researcher at Institution I for two summers prior to beginning her graduate studies at the university. She admits, “I was intimidated by Dr. Johnson when I first met him as an undergraduate, but wanted very much to impress him from the start. I feel the same way now. I mentioned him in my graduate school personal statement. He sets and raises the bar high. His expectations now encompass coursework, not just research. I want to be effective all around. I’m one of his students and want him to be proud of me and my accomplishments.” The connection that Diane feels to Dr. Johnson is almost like that of parent and child. She takes pride and ownership in the fact that she is one of his students. She continues “He’s committed to working with his students. We meet weekly.” Their meetings are both formal and informal in nature. When he meets with his current group of doctoral students and advisees, it is formal in terms of giving research updates in terms of goals and writing hours. However, when they meet one-on-

one, it is more informal. During the informal meetings, she can admit her struggles to him and not feel ashamed of her self-doubts. Diane goes on to say, “Dr. Johnson describes his grads as family. There’s no competition. We support each other through peer mentoring.” It is obvious that Dr. Johnson provides a “safe-space” for Diane and his other doctoral mentees/advisees to feel supported and nurtured in their doctoral experiences. As defined in Chapter Two, bell hooks (1989) refers to these safe spaces as “homeplace” – a place where black people can affirm one another, a place of renewal and self-recovery. Mentoring activities between female African American graduate students and faculty members can serve as “communities within communities” or safe spaces for African American women at predominantly white institutions (PWI’s). Based on hooks’ definition, Dr. Johnson creates a safe community/family within the larger university for all of his doctoral students. This safe-space is vital to Diane’s persistence in the doctoral program. She states,

One of the many struggles I have is with my own biases. As an undergraduate, I was surrounded by blacks and whites in different organizations. When I came here, I decided to treat the Ph.D. process like a business or a job. I thought this was the approach to take at this advanced level. People don’t connect much with the people involved. Every insecurity is put on the table and you begin to question yourself and ask ‘am I crazy?’. You’re put in uncomfortable situations, but still want to play a meaning role in groups. I constantly tell myself, ‘you’re worthy’, ‘you should be here’. My mentor match has helped to alleviate some of these struggles and insecurities.

Diane adds that her faith and spirituality have sustained her through these struggles, as well. Her faith and spirituality are her coping mechanisms. There are several types of coping mechanisms that can be used based on the context of the situation or problem. In Diane’s case,

she uses her mentoring relationship with Dr. Johnson and her faith and spirituality to cope with the feelings of insecurity and inadequacy brought on by academic struggles. Drawing on the parent-child relationship that Diane describes with her mentor, Dr. Johnson, is a coping strategy familiar in the African American culture. African Americans are known for providing support by pulling inward or relying on the family network in times of difficulty or crisis (Nobles, 2007). As the difficulty of the program and other challenges arise, Diane draws on the support and guidance from her mentor (i.e. parent figure away from home), Dr. Johnson. The reliance on one's faith or spirituality is another coping strategy that is often times rooted in the African American experience. In Martha Morgan's (2010) dissertation entitled, *Experiences of African American Graduate Students: The Influence of Self Esteem and Coping Styles* she reports that when things become difficult in their graduate programs, African American students were able to remind themselves of who they were based on their faith experience and that this (academic) goal was not just about personal gain or benefit, it is about fulfilling God's purpose for them. Therefore, their struggles and feelings of self-doubt will work out according to God's plan (p. 75).

Diane points to cultural differences as the primary reason for her struggles. These differences are prevalent for people of color, especially African Americans, pursuing a graduate education at predominantly white institutions. For centuries, African Americans have been marginalized in the United States. The concept of being inferior to our majority counterparts has been substantiated in verbally and in writing. For some African American graduate students this ideology of inferiority continues to be part of the way she or he makes sense of their role in education. This type of ideology leads some graduate students to ascribe to the negative stereotypes that are perceived to be held by the majority culture about African Americans'

academic or intellectual ability (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). This perception of the dominant culture leads to continual mistrust of the dominant culture by African American students (Phelps, Taylor, & Gerard, 2001). Diane further states, “These differences cause you to be labeled as anti-social, stand-offish and snobby.” These labels can cause one to feel isolated and ostracized from the core group of students and faculty in their academic department. “We should not have to deny who we are to make someone else comfortable” states Diane. Communication barriers arise based on cultural differences; and these barriers can have a negative impact on one’s experience, success and persistence in graduate school (current context).

Furthermore, Diane raised the topic of one’s cultural upbringing as a communication barrier in her doctoral experience. “I was raised in a formal/respectful upbringing where we call people Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc. I am not comfortable calling my professors by their first name. Many times, I’m embarrassed to be respectful. This is a cultural adjustment or process for me. Do assimilate to fit in or stay true to my cultural principles and feel left out? What do I do?” Boyd-Franklin (2003) reports that the need for belonging in majority circles can lead to assimilating, or adopting ideas and values of the dominant culture. In order to be taken seriously in some areas of society African Americans feel pressured to take on characteristics of white culture, which is a way of coping with this difficulty. Assimilation becomes a way of coping in order to succeed for those that “make it” in these communities. Diane is still grappling with this decision.

A Well-Rounded Identity

Both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Jones go far beyond their advisor roles according to Diane. They both are family-oriented and openly bring that side of themselves to their mentoring relationships. She states, “At a Research I, faculty life is publish or perish. Dr. Johnson is less focused on publishing. He’s connected with his family.” The idea of one day having her own

family weighs heavily on Diane. She is wrestling over what her future will hold from a personal standpoint. The desire and need for her to fulfill all aspects of her identity causes her internal turmoil.

Diane is a focused young woman who clearly identifies as a researcher first then educator/teacher. “I’m always researching something. My dissertation will focus on at-risk youth. I want to answer questions for or about at-risk youth, then teach the answers to the questions.” Before starting the Ph.D. program, Diane wanted to avoid doing a post-doc. Now she views the post-doc as a strategy to advance her research agenda, not a back-up plan. She sees options to focus on research during a post-doc experience without the extreme pressure of a tenure clock; and giving her time to plan or start a family. Diane’s current mentor, Dr. Johnson, has reassured her that she can have a well-rounded identity to include both professional and personal aspects of her life. Diane shares with me that she often questions if she can be a wife, mother and researcher. She exclaims, “Mentoring has taught me not to get caught up in professional competition. I can do both successfully. I respect the ones who stress the most at the cost of something. Sacrifices are being made when you balance.” The issue of balance for women in higher education is a prevalent topic in the literature. Similarly to Joann (discussed earlier in this chapter), Diane wants a family and is actively thinking about how she can have both the personal and professional aspects of her life without sacrificing one for the other. The doctoral experience for most women typically falls during prime family formation and childbearing years, as do the postdoctoral, pre-tenure years. However, postponing pregnancy and childbirth until after the tenure decision is not a realistic option for most women who desire faculty careers, for whom the average age to receive the Ph.D. is 34 (Gappa & Austin, 2010). Similarly, the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) surveys at

Harvard University have shown that the new generation of faculty members have a different approach to work. They are willing to do the work required to achieve tenure, but they want to do it at their own pace while they maintain a manageable balance between their work and home lives (Gallagher & Trower, 2009). For African American female faculty members, the creation of work-life balance is compounded by (1) maintaining a cultural identity and balance within the African American community, and (2) re-visiting their competence and self-worth in the doctoral experience. Schwartz, Bower, Rice, and Washington (2003) support this statement with the findings from their focus group with African American women in graduate school. Of specific interest to this study, Schwartz et al. (2003) report that one of their focus group participants indicated the need for balance by stating “you have to constantly reevaluate yourself.” While another participant states “As an African American, it is important to me that my friends back home still like me; and if I put t’s or d’s on the ends of my words and speak too fancy or use ‘educated’ words, they will think I’m different and putting on airs.” Negotiating these additional barriers enhance the struggles and difficulties that African American female doctoral students experience.

Diane is actively seeking ways to develop her skills to support her professional identity as a research first, educator/teach second. At the encouragement of her current mentor, she applied and received a Teaching Assistantship for the upcoming academic year. In addition, she is teaching a quantitative methods course for the McNair Scholars Program at her graduate institution. Diane shares, “Preparing a lecture is a research experience. I need to know all angles to the material before I can teach it to someone else.” Teaching will reduce the time that Diane has to focus on her research. This is the beginning of her professional balancing act. Her next steps will be balancing her professional and personal identity. One point that Diane mentioned

that I personally found interesting was her reliance on mentoring to shape her professional identity. She states, “I am enhancing my professional path with mentoring.” Thus, Diane is making a conscious effort to form and shape her professional identity through her professional experiences and mentoring relationships with both Drs. Johnson and Jones. This conscious effort is a prime example of Diane self-authoring her professional identity. In Chapter Two, I use the Baxter Magolda (2002) definition of self-authorship that encompasses meaning making and advice from others as a core tenet of making career-related decisions. As mentioned previously, the term “others” is broadly defined as anyone who is in the person’s circle of influence. Based on Diane’s description of mentoring relationships with Drs. Johnson and Jones, I see them both playing pivotal roles in the types of professional experiences/activities she engages as a doctoral student. They are the “others” that are impacting her career-related/professional decisions. Moving from Diane’s strong mentoring relationship to our last case, that of Patricia, who feels the void of not having a mentor in her doctoral program. How is she coping and self-authoring her doctoral experiences and professional trajectory in this context?

Patricia: A Mentor Would Be Nice

Patricia, a third year Ph.D. student in Race, Ethnicity and Applied Sociology at Institution II does not have an identified mentor in her doctoral program. Patricia's experience is not uncommon for many African American doctoral students. Patterson-Stewart, Ritchie and Sanders (1997) found that African American doctoral students sought out but did not receive the type of support and encouragement they need while pursuing their degrees. In light of this void, Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) and Smith and Davidson (1992) suggest that greater cross-cultural awareness is needed among Caucasian faculty members to support African American doctoral students. Given that the number of African American women is growing in both undergraduate and graduate education (NCES, 2001) the need for more awareness and support of this population during the life of the educational pipeline is important.

I contend that African American doctoral students primarily seek African American or other faculty of color for mentoring and support. My contention is supported in Thomas Dolan's article on cross-race mentoring (2007) by Dr. Karen Butler-Purry, an African American female professor in electrical and computer engineering at Texas A&M University. She states, "People approach a possible mentor who looks like them. Most of the time, they seek you out. But sometimes I may approach them, especially women on the junior faculty level. I feel I have things I can share with them, to help them. Mentoring helps you overcome the feeling that you are one of the few."

Patricia came to Institution II to pursue her Master of Arts in Sociology after receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice at the flagship university in the same Midwestern state where this study is being conducted. She shares that she did not have a mentor as an undergraduate, but realizes that having one would have been helpful in providing her guidance

and direction regarding a career path and preparation for graduate school. Currently, she is a Thurgood Marshall Fellow at her graduate institution and teaches pre-college students through the university's King-Chavez-Parks Program.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Patricia gave a laundry list of characteristics she seeks in a mentor. Specifically, Patricia wants someone who is knowledgeable in the field, has at least a Master's degree, is willing to share their insight on how to navigate the system, provide valuable and honest feedback and advice, has "their stuff together", and is respectful of Patricia's ideas and of her as a person. Patricia recently selected her dissertation committee chairman, a Caucasian woman. Patricia states, "We get along and she helps me." She admits, "Our relationship could be better if I contacted her more. We have an informal relationship." In fact, her dissertation chairman also served as the chairman of her thesis committee for her Master's degree. Patricia feels her committee chairman does the technical aspects of her job very well, but she does not go out of her way to assist Patricia with any issues, concerns, professional development opportunities that are beyond the realm of her immediate goal, which is to complete her dissertation. Patricia went so far to say, "I have not had any professional development opportunities as a Ph.D. student here. When you don't know, you don't know what to ask." This lack of academic connectedness has made a negative impact on Patricia's experiences as a doctoral student and burgeoning young scholar in her field. Patricia relies on other sources to get the information needed to advance in her field and network with other professionals. One of these other sources is a faculty member and graduate school administrator she met years prior at a graduate school recruitment fair out of state. Ironically, this person works at Institution I and was mentioned by Tara, another participant in this study, as one of her supporters/mentors. Dr. Myers is a faculty member and administrator in Kinesiology and the Graduate School,

respectively, at Institution I. Even though, she is in a different discipline than Patricia, she encourages her to publish and stay focused on completing her degree.

Patricia stresses that she has made a concerted effort to get to know a wide array of people in her department and at the university while in graduate school. She refers to this as making “academic connections”. Patricia states, “I learned early on in my Master’s program that I was going to have to network all over campus to find out anything. One needs to penetrate the networking circles. It’s about who you know. My department isn’t diverse and we don’t operate on a cohort model. If we had a cohort model it might make things easier.” With the lack of diversity, on both the graduate student and faculty side in her department, Patricia has learned to get along with everyone. This goes back to the concerted effort she makes to get to know people at the university. One of the similarities I find between Patricia and Dominique (mentioned earlier) is that they both take a very active role in mentoring incoming graduate students in their respective doctoral program at Institution II. However, their reasons for this high level of mentoring and responsibility are vastly different. Dominique mentors because of her positive mentoring relationships as an undergraduate and graduate student. Dr. Butler-Purry in Dolan’s (2007) article on cross-race mentoring states, “I believe those who have been mentored well want to give something back.” Conversely, Patricia actively seeks opportunities to mentor others due to the lack of mentoring she has received as an undergraduate and graduate student. Presently, Patricia is mentoring a Latina woman who will soon begin the Ph.D. program. In fact, during our conversation, the young woman called Patricia for directions to campus as she was coming up for the weekend to participate in an orientation program and retreat for newly admitted doctoral students. Patricia was hosting her for the weekend. Patricia expounds on this common thread expressed by both her and Dominique further by saying, “I mentor younger

family members, as well. I always help if I can and if I know help is needed. Sharing is my way of giving back. I wish someone had helped me.”

Professional Identity: The Same Then and Now

Patricia’s professional identity has not changed while being in the doctoral program in Applied Sociology. Coming into her program, Patricia viewed herself and wanted preparation as a college/university professor and diversity consultant. This is where she saw herself professionally. Now, three years later, she sees herself in the exact same way. However, Patricia mentions that her dissertation chairman does not know her professional goals. Knowing some of the leading professional organizations in certain fields of the broader social science discipline, I inquire with Patricia about her membership in the American Sociological Association. She responds, “No, I’m not a member of ASA. I don’t want to waste my time and money.” I saw this as an odd response from someone who admits creating academic connections across campus. I wonder would her response be different if she had an identified mentor in her field or at least a closer relationship with her dissertation chairman; someone in the field who could impress upon her the importance of professional networking beyond the university setting. Patricia explains, “I don’t need much guidance. My chair treats me the same as she did during my Master’s program. She does her job well. It’s not the faculty’s job to come to you, it’s a courtesy.” The latter sentence surprised me again. Given Patricia’s disappointment in not having a mentor, I was somewhat confused by this statement. To reiterate a point made earlier in this chapter by Patricia, she places a considerate amount of responsibility on African American faculty members for mentoring and nurturing African American graduate students. Specifically, Patricia states, “black faculty need to make a bigger effort to help black graduate students. They need to show more concern for our well-being. We’ve never been this way.” As an African American woman I

interpret Patricia's statement to mean that we, as African Americans, have always tried to take care and uplift one another because we knew no one else would understand our specific challenges. In Rochelle Woods (2001) book chapter entitled, "Invisible Women", she speaks to the importance of African American women (students and faculty) supporting one another through their daily struggles with racism and discrimination in the context of higher education. Schwartz et al. (2003) support Woods' account of the dual struggles encountered by African American women by reporting in their qualitative study of African American women in graduate school that "having an African American female faculty member available, especially a woman, was very important, according to those women in the focus group who had that experience. Other faculty were generally welcoming and supportive, but as one woman put it, 'When I got a job offer, I wanted to talk to Dr. X to be sure I was doing the right thing.' It was important, she said, to know there was someone who could really understand all of the issues she faced as both an African American and as a woman" (p. 263). These findings and personal accounts sustain the need and desire for matched mentoring relationships between African American women faculty and doctoral students. Even without the mentorship and guidance from her dissertation chairman, Patricia is determined to be an active participant in her department. She states that, "visibility is key. That's why I try to be very involved. I want to be treated as a colleague. If people don't like you, you're screwed."

During our conversation, Patricia mentions the cultural difference between us (African Americans) and others (non-African Americans). As discussed in Chapter Two, when cross-cultural mentoring occurs, both mentor and protégé should benefit from the experience and exchange. Although there are benefits to cross-cultural mentoring, there is one over-arching challenge to these mentoring relationships - cultural competence. Chrobot-Mason and Ruderman

(2004) define cultural or multicultural competence as the ability to diagnose diversity issues and resolve diversity-related conflicts and organizational problems by reaching mutually satisfying solutions. Johnson and Huwe (2002) report that faculty do not always possess the competencies and training to mentor any student and that mentoring a student across racial and gender lines may exacerbate their limited mentoring and cultural competence. Having a bad mentoring experience is one outcome of a faculty mentor not being culturally aware or competent. Dr. Carrie Castaneda-Sound, a Latina assistant professor in counseling and psychology at Our Lady of the Lake University, shares in Dolan (2007) that she had a bad experience with her first actual mentor, “It just didn’t click, and one of the reasons was his insensitive ethnic remarks. When I later got to know him better, I found he was a very nice man, but he was clueless about cultural differences.” (p. 28). In the same article, Dr. Linda Castillo, a Latina associate professor in educational psychology at Texas A&M, counters with a positive cross-cultural mentoring experience. She recounts her mentoring relationships with white males who served as her mentor in graduate school and as a junior faculty member. “What was good about these mentors is that they recognized the cultural aspects that were important. Even though they couldn’t relate to issues of discrimination or prejudice personally, they understood that these are ongoing issues. They provided a safe place to talk about these things. They didn’t discount me but would listen to my concerns and help me overcome obstacles.” (p. 28). Dr. Castillo’s description correlates directly to the successful cross-cultural mentoring relationships that Diane (previous case analysis) is experiencing with Dr. Johnson.

Unfortunately, Patricia states, “My chair may feel she’s mentoring me, but I don’t feel it. She knows I don’t know certain things, but she won’t help me or provide me with the information.” She continues by saying, “if Dr. Myers was here she would be my mentor and a

good one.” In addition, to cultural differences, Patricia mentions another factor that explains the disconnect between her and her dissertation chairman. Patricia’s dissertation examines hip hop music’s impact on crime reporting in inner cities. Specifically, she wants to know do the song lyrics about “snitching” predict if someone will report or not report a crime. Due to her topic and (what she refers to as) trail blazing research in sociology, Patricia feels that her chairman is taking a hands off approach because this research is beyond her interest and scope. As mentioned previously in this chapter, one factor that contributes to African American doctoral students feeling isolated and disconnected in their academic departments is the lack of intellectual support for culturally based scholarship (Margolis & Romero, 1998). When dissertation topics focus on African American or more contemporary issues, they may be considered “unworthy” or of lesser value by some white faculty (Pruitt & Isaac, 1985, p. 534). Patricia feels supported financially by her department, but not emotionally or professionally, and not by everyone. The department faculty members do not outreach to students. This causes many of the students of color in the department to feel isolated. One of the most poignant feelings that Patricia shares during our time together is the assertion that “isolation is a function of being an African American woman in higher education.” This sentiment is supported widely in the literature on women and populations of color in higher education (Alfred, 2001; Golde, 2000; Hurtado, 1994; Kanter, 1977; Lovitts, 1996; Margolis & Romero, 1998; and Turner, 2002).

Patricia continues stating, “Sometimes, we as African American women isolate ourselves.” This statement leads me to critically think, is isolation so expected by us (African American women in U.S. higher education) that we make it a self-fulfilling prophecy? Do we (especially African American female doctoral students) automatically forfeit opportunities for visibility, growth and mentorship in our academic units? If so, why? Are there models in place

that need to be more widely adapted or adopted to provide better infrastructures of support and success for African American women in higher education? These questions will be further addressed in Chapter Five.

Purpose-Driven Experience

Upon asking Patricia if she had any remaining points she wanted to share with me regarding her doctoral experience, she hesitated at first as to think about what we have covered and what else she wanted to share. She starts by saying, “The Lord revealed that this was His purpose for me. I am meant to excel, but maybe not in an effortless fashion.” As we talked more and I asked about things not being effortless for her, she replies, “Everything seems to be on me. I’m very independent, but even independent folks need help and guidance sometimes. I have often wonder, do they want me to fail? Am I here to boost numbers?” Patricia shared with me how earning a Ph.D. was not in her immediate plans or a long-term goal. As she was finishing her Master’s degree, some faculty members in the Sociology Department encouraged her to pursue the Ph.D. Things (the application and funding) fell in place for her fairly quickly. These were seemingly effortless undertakings. However, persisting through the program has presented obstacles. Patricia believes that pursuing her Ph.D. was ordained by God and by staying in the program she is fulfilling His purpose for her. Patricia, like Dominique earlier, plans to continue giving back as a mentor. She states, “I want to create a positive chain of mentoring. It’s enough at the top for everyone. People feel threatened when they think they have to share resources. I was always taught, block your blessings and nothing good will come.” Above all, Patricia wants to pay it forward. Even though she is not satisfied with her doctoral training experience, she is employing healthy coping mechanisms – spirituality and faith – to persist through the program and overcome the feelings of isolation and lack of support. Morgan (2010) found that having a

sense of faith and spirituality were healthy ways of coping with the graduate school process for African American women. Several participants in her dissertation relied on their faith and spirituality to persist through the obstacles and challenges that present themselves at a predominantly white institution. Moreover, one's faith and spirituality positively contributed to one's self-confidence. I can definitely see that trait in Patricia as she is a confident woman. However, I wonder how much more confidence she would have if she were in a matched mentoring relationship with an African American woman faculty member.

Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with the themes and trends identified in previous research on the experiences of women and people of color in higher education, specifically African Americans. Previous studies of African American women doctoral students and faculty examined issues of mentoring, career development, and feelings of isolation as they relate to student success in doctoral education. In addition, this study found that some of the more personal issues of work-life balance, spirituality and faith, and professional identity development impact African American women doctoral students' experience and satisfaction with their educational training and influence the persistence in their respective programs. Moreover, as it relates to African American women doctoral students' mentoring relationships, the mentor's role is an important and vital part to the type of mentoring the student will receive and how that student will be developed as a professional in their field. In Chapter Five, I will discuss the findings in relationship to the six research questions used to guide this study and indicate where the findings are supported by existing literature on African American women doctoral students' mentoring relationships and professional identity development.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Contributions, Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact mentoring relationships between African American women doctoral students and faculty members; across various academic disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and education, has on professional identity development. Of particular interest was the examination of whether matched mentoring relationships (based on same race and gender) between African American women doctoral students and African American female faculty members impacts the professional identity of the doctoral students more than cross-cultural mentoring dyads. Based on the literature, a conceptual model was developed (in Chapter Two) that represents my interpretation of the factors that impact the professional identity of doctoral students. A revised model derived from this exploratory study represents the findings from the participant interviews shared in Chapter Four. This model moves from a conceptual model to a possible theoretical model that can be used to explain the components that impact and influence professional identity development in graduate education. The contextual information included in the revised model provides greater focus on the factors that impact one's personal identity (i.e. family, faith, gender and culture) and the intersection of those factors in relation to mentoring, professional developments activities and professional identity development.

This chapter explores the connection between the research questions that guided this study and my interpretation of the doctoral training and mentoring experiences of the African American female doctoral students I interviewed. This discussion will also address the implications for predominantly white institutions and graduate programs in terms of the recruitment, persistence and graduation of doctoral students of color. Finally, the chapter will include a discussion of the limitations of the study and areas for future research.

Discussion

By analyzing the findings through the lens of critical race theory and black feminist thought, I am adding depth of understanding to African American women's stories and validating their objectified experiences in American higher education. Both these ideologies help to frame my analysis of African American female doctoral students' mentoring experiences and professional identity development. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is prevalent in our society. As a framework, critical race theory allows for the creation of a safe and comfortable counterspace for marginalized groups (i.e. African American women) to share their counterstories that debunk their marginality in our society. Moreover, critical race theory serves as a liberating frame of reference because it speaks to the complexities of African American women's multiple identities based on race and gender (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). By using black feminist thought to frame this study, I am empowering black female doctoral students to define, articulate, and share their experiences as a way to derive self-authorship and empower one another. It is important to note that African American women are not part of a monolithic culture, which means their various involvement in mentoring relationships supports their unique perspectives and levels of satisfaction in their doctoral training experiences. Although unique, this study's findings suggest that African American women share core values in terms of the importance of family, culture, education, friendship, and sisterhood.

Although faculty-student mentoring relationships varied among my study participants, it is apparent that mentoring plays a critical part in how African American women doctoral students are socialized and engaged in their academic discipline; and how they derive meaning from their experiences in graduate school. Meaning-making for African American women in Ph.D. studies is essential to their professional development, professional role commitment, and

professional identity. Their interactions with supportive mentors in affirming environments are critical to their success and completion of their doctoral programs.

Additionally, the lack of mentoring or a supportive collegial environment in the students' Ph.D. programs led them to seek multiple mentors and/or mentoring relationships outside of their program or institution. The themes of isolation and invisibility, as described in black feminist thought, persist among several of the participants. Marginality and invisibility can be used to transcend boundaries that have historically held African American women back. Their marginality forces them to acquire skills to maneuver diverse settings or negotiate multiple communities (Alfred, 2001; Johnson-Bailey, 1998; and Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). One method of navigating this unsupportive infrastructure is creating a supportive network of mentors. Danielle, Candice and Dominique exemplify the use of multiple role models or mentors most effectively in this study. Danielle speaks to having two role models to assist with the academic and professional development aspects of her doctoral program and training experiences. Given the unsupportive environment and infrastructure, she developed the skills necessary to navigate through the program. Candice has two identified mentors external to her academic program that have broadened her professional identity through research abroad and publications, respectively. Similarly, Dominique has identified several mentors that aid in various aspects of her doctoral program and professional identity. Dominique has a mentor who guides her doctoral program and professional identity, assists with her clinical experiences, and guides her academic writing and publications.

Given that some of the doctoral students identified having multiple mentors at the time of our interview, there will be some overlap when reporting participant names and numbers to address the six guiding research questions. Additionally, some participants were adamant that

while they had a program advisor or dissertation chairman, they did not have a mentor(s) while in their doctoral program. Thus, these participants are categorized and reported as not having a mentor.

Research Question 1 - To what extent are African American female doctoral students involved in mentoring relationships at the doctoral level?

The majority of the African American women doctoral students that I interviewed had identified mentors. This debunks the myth that African American doctoral students do not have mentors in graduate education at the same rate as their Caucasian male counterparts (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). Most of the mentors were internal to the students' doctoral program and/or institution. However, several students mentioned the difficulty they experienced establishing these relationships especially those students who sought African American women faculty members to serve as their mentor. This occurrence is consistent with the existing literature on the desire for African American women doctoral students to be engaged in matched mentoring dyads with African American women faculty (Johnson, 1998; Leon et al., 1997; Tidball, 1986). It is of interest to note, that three of the 16 (18.75%) African American female doctoral students interviewed did not identify a mentor while in their doctoral program. In Chapter Four, Deborah, Alice, and Patricia discuss their desire to have an African American woman faculty member as their mentor; and the challenges they have experienced in securing their mentor preference. The primary barrier they shared to being involved in this matched mentoring relationship is a lack or void of African American women faculty in their doctoral program or college (Blackburn et al., 1981; Chandler, 1996; Johnson, 2002). This void and under-representation of African American female faculty in academia is due in large part to their presence in the academic pipeline. Turner et al. (1999) conclude that the point along the pipeline where there appears to be a leakage is at the Masters' and doctoral degree stages, especially for African Americans. Interestingly, the numbers of African American students are entering the higher education pipeline at all entry points are increasing. However, fewer African Americans are leaving with advanced degrees.

Thus, fewer African American females with Ph.D.'s are being recruited and retained in faculty positions, particularly in PWIs. On a similar note, Betty recently found an African American woman to serve as her mentor. Betty has high expectations for this newly developed mentoring relationship. Specifically, she hopes that her mentor will expose her to professional opportunities around their shared research interests, which was one of the factors that contributed to Betty seeking her as a mentor. The other factor was the cultural and gender match that Betty feels will promote better understanding in their relationship (Collins, 1986; hooks, 1989).

All of the doctoral students had program advisors and/or dissertation chairmen. In some cases their advisor was (one of) their identified mentor(s). Thus, this one person filled the psychosocial and career functions of the mentor (i.e. support, encouragement, socialization to the discipline, and professional development involvement in the discipline) (Kram, 1985; Scandura, 1992); and the practical functions of the advisor in terms of course selection and program plan, committee formation, research involvement, and dissertation preparation (Tanner, 2002). In other cases, the African American women doctoral students interviewed had multiple mentors. Having multiple mentors was best exemplified in Candice and Dominique's cases. From the students' perspectives, their multiple mentors serve as a support network that meets their varying emotional and professional development needs as doctoral students. Given that mentors are characterized in a multitude of ways – as advisors, supporters, tutors, masters, sponsors, and models of identity (Zelditch, 1990) having more than one person to fill these multiple roles would be desired by many doctoral students. Multiple mentors expand African American women doctoral students' network and increases their safe spaces and affirming communities, as defined by hooks (1989) and Ward (1995).

Research Question 2 - Does involvement in a matched mentoring (same race and same gender) dyad cause African American female doctoral students' to alter or solidify the self-perception of their professional identity?

Nine of the 16 African American female doctoral students interviewed - Joann, Carol, Monique, Lisa, Nicole, Candice, Sheila, Dominique and Betty - identified faculty of color as their mentors. Of this number, six identify having an African American woman serve as their mentor(s). Based on the findings of this study, there is evidence that indicates that having a mentor who shares your race and gender is beneficial for professional identity changes, identity alterations/shifts, and identity affirmation. As mentioned in Chapter Two, mentoring relationships involving African American female doctoral students (as protégés) impact their professional identity while in graduate school. Their perception is either endorsed or changed based on their level of interaction with their mentor, professional development activities, and observation of their mentor's engagement in their academic field (Brown et al., 1999). Mentoring relationships are inseparable from identity and help women gain a greater sense of their professional and personal self.

Of the three African American women doctoral students – Joann, Candice and Sheila - who's professional identity definitely changed during their doctoral program, all three of them identify having mentors of color (African American or Mexican American). Joann's mentors are two African American women faculty members external to her doctoral institution. Candice identified three African American mentors (two women and one man), while Sheila's identified mentor is a Mexican American male. Joann and Candice rely heavily on their black female mentors for socialization and exposure to the discipline/field, research and professional development opportunities, support, open and honest communication (i.e. "real talk"), and

understanding as it relates to issues around gender. King and Chepyator-Thomas (1996) discussed the value of African American faculty as mentors to African American doctoral students, “African American mentors are uniquely qualified to assist black doctoral students with academic and professional concerns through role modeling and...can perform functions that relate to the social / psychological needs of the black doctoral student” (p. 175). My findings as it relates to Joann and Candice support King and Chepyator-Thomas’s earlier work.

The three doctoral students – Katherine, Danielle, and Dominique – who experienced a shift in their professional identity while in graduate school; did not identify having an African American female faculty or staff member as their mentor. However, they did communicate their desire to be mentored by an African American woman in their department. African American women doctoral students desire to be engaged in matched mentoring relationships due to the opportunity that this preferred relationship affords the students in terms of race and gender understanding, role modeling, career advisement, and social support and networking. Although African American women are making progress in the ranks (faculty and administration) of higher education, inequity still exists. This inequity causes the absence or lack of critical mass and diversity at PWIs, and results in the difficulty that African American women doctoral students experience in locating mentors of their same race and gender.

Of the nine doctoral students whose professional identity did not change while in graduate school, only two confirmed being involved in mentoring relationships with African American women. Carol and Monique credit their mentors with helping them to solidify their professional identity by exposing them to opportunities that provide practical experiences and inform their career decisions, and increasing their knowledge and competence in the field. Their mentors’ assistance, support and guidance were based on a shared understanding of what they

(the students) needed to successfully persist through the doctoral process. Carol and Monique believe that this shared understanding is based on race and gender. They felt safe and comfortable in their academic environments because of their matched mentoring relationships. My finding is consistent with Blackwell's (1989) finding on mentoring and African American women in higher education where he concludes that mentoring can minimize alienation by helping women of color develop self-confidence, take risks, and increase competence.

Research Question 3 - Does involvement in an unmatched mentoring (different race and/or gender) dyad affects African American female doctoral students' self-perception of their professional identity?

Diane, Katherine, Monique, Lisa, Nicole, Danielle, Candice, Sheila, and Dominique identified being involved in an unmatched mentoring relationship - either cross-race, cross-gender, or both. As the literature shows us, it is not uncommon for African American woman doctoral students to be involved in cross-cultural mentoring relationships while in graduate school at predominantly white institutions (PWI's). These relationships are established in three broad ways: 1). the student seeks a mentor who can offer guidance, support and professional experiences, in their academic program; 2). the faculty member sees promise and/or relatable attributes in the student and outreaches to them offering to serve as a mentor; or 3). The dynamics of the assigned advising relationship grows into a mentoring relationship. Based on the different ways in which mentoring relationships can form, it is interesting to see that the women who identified themselves in cross-cultural mentoring relationships either sought out the faculty mentor themselves or their mentor also serves as their program advisor. I found it particularly interesting that none of the women reported that their identified cross-cultural mentor sought them out as a protégé. This is where African American women doctoral students experience a disadvantage in securing same-race and same-gender mentors at PWI's. This finding is consistent with studies that report the lack of African American faculty in US colleges and universities leaves a void for African American graduate students who want mentors who look like them with similar cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Moreover, this void puts a greater ownership on white faculty members to be more aware of cross-cultural issues (Patterson-Stewart et al., 1997; and Smith & Davidson, 1992).

As mentioned in the previous section (under Question 4), Katherine, Danielle, and Dominique experienced a shift from their core professional identity over time from the beginning of their doctoral programs to the time of our interview. They credit this shift to their protégé role with their identified mentor(s). Katherine's identified mentor is a non-African American woman who recently joined her department's faculty as an Assistant Professor. She sought her based on their mutual research interest. At the start of her doctoral program, Katherine's professional identity was that of a clinician with no interest in research or teaching. Now, she still holds that core professional identity of clinician, but has a stronger interest in research and is considering a career path that allows her to combine her interest in clinical work and research. Katherine credits her mentor with this identity shift. Katherine states, "I see myself in my mentor's role. I identify with her; and she's more of a researcher."

Katherine believes that issues around gender are more prevalent than race in terms of her socialization to doctoral education and her field of clinical psychology. This is particularly true, in her department where the majority of the faculty members are women, and the men spout sexist views in class. This tension exemplifies a "chilly climate" for women graduate students in her department.

As reported in Chapter Two, the term "chilly climate" was originally coined by Hall and Sandler (1983) to describe the classroom environment experienced by women students in US colleges and universities. According to Hall and Sandler, women are treated differently from men in the classroom. Women are often singled out or ignored, which causes a loss in confidence in their ability to perform well or be successful in the classroom environment. Overt examples of this treatment toward women consist of making sexist remarks/jokes about women made in class, referring to men as "men" and women as "girls" in class, disparaging women's professional

accomplishments or research focused on women's issues, and making direct sexual overtures to women. This treatment can be inadvertent or intentional. For Katherine, this unwelcoming departmental climate causes her social anxiety and uncomfortable feelings in the department. Even with a faculty mentor in the department, Katherine states that her department is "not a nice place to be." With no black faculty in her department, Katherine believes that the unwelcoming environment will persist and they will continue to have difficulty in recruiting black doctoral students. The lack of a diverse faculty speaks to the need for a critical mass of African Americans in the department. Baker (1991) postulates that there is a need to recruit or retain a critical mass of persons from diverse backgrounds to improve the social environment for risk taking, development of competence, and success in graduate studies. As cited in Chapter Four, Katherine did not consider the racially homogeneous psychology faculty and the lack of opportunities for mentoring relationships with black female faculty when applying to the program. During our interview, Katherine admitted that she should have examined these factors more closely in the decision-making process. Her admission supports the findings reported by Jackson, Kite, and Branscombe (1996) that African American women overwhelmingly prefer African American female mentors, but have a difficult time locating their preferred mentor match at PWI's. Jackson et al. continue by stating that for African American women doctoral students participating in a mentoring relationship with someone who looks like them, who has similar personal, professional, and scholarly interests and is devoted to the students holistic experience and personal success as a graduate student in their chosen field, is keenly important for their socialization and success.

When examining Danielle's professional identity shift through a mentoring lenses, it is relatively easy to discern the factors that influenced this transformation. As she shared earlier,

Danielle acknowledges both her mentors' distinct roles in her professional identity transformation during her doctoral program. As my findings report in Chapter Four, Danielle identifies two mentors of equal importance to her in her doctoral program – her program advisor and dissertation chairman and her graduate assistantship supervisor. She credits their involvement in her professional identity shift from that of a faculty member when she began her Ph.D. program in Higher Education Administration to a community activist with some interest in research and teaching as a faculty member at the time of our interview. Danielle's mentoring relationships represent two kinds of cross-cultural mentoring dyads. Her program advisor and dissertation chairman is a Caucasian woman, while the supervisor over her graduate assistantship is a Caucasian man. These dyads represent cross-race, same-gender; and cross-race, cross-gender mentoring relationships. Although Danielle acknowledges both her mentors with influencing her professional identity shift and career path, her words and sentiments during our interview reflect that her assistantship supervisor may have played a more integral part in her enhanced view of her professional self. As shared in Chapter Four, Danielle's Caucasian male mentor, a faculty member in Danielle's area of career and research interest, provides her with the support, funding, experience and national exposure needed to complete her program and assist with career placement after earning her Ph.D. Danielle's program advisor and dissertation chairman, a Caucasian woman comforted and restored Danielle's confidence in terms of completing the Ph.D. As she stated, "There were times when I doubted I would finish the program. The support, issues and experiences offered by both of my mentors addressed different aspects of my doctoral career." Though both of Danielle's mentors are supportive, she admits that her female mentor provides the emotional support and stability needed to persist through the program. Danielle feels that gender plays a role in mentoring. Her statement is supported by the empirical studies

and findings of Bauer (1999), Kram (1985), Tenenbaum et al. (2001); Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) and Chandler (1996). These researchers found that mentoring dyads based on gender tend to be more effective and yield better outcomes for the women protégés than mixed gender mentoring relationships.

As our conversation progressed, Danielle stated that her Caucasian male mentor shares how his work with African American female colleagues has shaped his perspective and sensitivity on race and gender issues. Thus, he possesses a level of cultural awareness and competence that aids him in effectively mentoring protégés of different races and genders. This is consistent with Chrobot-Mason and Ruderman's (2004) definition of cultural or multicultural competence - as the ability to diagnose diversity issues and resolve diversity-related conflicts and organizational problems by reaching mutually satisfying solutions. Moreover, my finding aligns with Johnson and Huwe's (2002) report that faculty do not always possess the competencies and training to mentor any student and that mentoring a student across racial and gender lines may exacerbate their limited mentoring and cultural competence. Therefore, I conclude that in order for white faculty members to gain cultural or multicultural competencies and (hopefully) be successful in cross-cultural mentoring dyads, they must actively engage in cross-race and cross-gender mentoring relationships, process their involvement in these relationships, and transfer the knowledge gained from these relationships to subsequent mentoring roles.

Interestingly, Dominique is the only one of the three who identified having African American mentors (male and female). However, it is her primary mentor who also serves as her program advisor and dissertation chairman that Dominique credits for really assisting her during this "fuzzy" time in determining her professional identity. Even though this person is an African American male, Dominique recognizes the tremendous role he is actively playing in helping her

confirm a professional identity. He is allowing Dominique the opportunity to access new professional experiences and take on academic challenges (e.g. an additional statistics course) to build competencies in her doctoral program that will eliminate some of the fuzziness she is experiencing and establish a solid career path for herself. The simple fact that Dominique's mentor is aware of and attends to her uncertainty in terms of professional identity and career path, speaks volumes in support of their mentoring relationship. As established in Chapter Two, mentoring is a key component in career decision-making and career success for protégés, especially women, due to issues of the glass ceiling and chilly climate in business and higher education sectors (Chandler, 1996; Hall & Sandler, 1983; Noe, 1988; and Ragins, 1997).

As it relates to mentoring composition and dyads, Noe (1988) reports that protégés in gender heterogeneous dyads were more effective in mentor utilization (i.e. received more psychosocial and career support) than protégés in gender homogeneous mentoring relationships. Dominique's same race, cross-gender (primary) mentoring relationship affirms the favorable findings and use of cross-cultural mentoring relationships. Even though Dominique identified having multiple mentors at the time of our interview, the relationship with her African American male advisor and mentor is the most relevant and prevalent mentoring experience she is involved in at present. This is due to their closeness and Dominique's view of him outside of the academic setting. Dominique talked about her mentor's Christian values and how he's employing those values with practical advice and guidance to help her find her purpose. Dominique admires and respects this aspect of his life and the fact that he does not hide this side of his personal identity – that of a Christian black man. Given the level of respect that she has for him, I strongly believe that their mentoring relationship is not temporary and isolated to her doctoral experience, but will last far beyond her tenure in the Ph.D. program. I most admire the manner in which

Dominique's mentor addresses the tension she is experiencing over her professional identity. She made her identity formation explicit in this mentoring relationship and that practice is supported in the literature. Hall and Burns's (2009) study on identity development and mentoring in doctoral education recommends making such issues, as professional identity, career trajectory, student success and achievement, and institutional climate be explicitly discussed between doctoral students and their faculty mentors. Specifically, discourse around identity formation in mentoring practices may reduce the possibility that individual preferences held by both doctoral students and their faculty mentors do not play out in harmful ways.

Not all of the cross-cultural mentoring relationships in this study involved such personal disclosure and communication. But, for the ones that did these African American female doctoral students experienced safe spaces that allow them to express their fears, concerns and seek assistance in addressing those issues. It is obvious that Dominique has created a community within a community between her and her mentor. Though it is a mixed-gender mentoring relationship, she is comfortable in exposing her uncertainty around her purpose and professional identity and he is comfortable and competent enough to understand and address her uncertainty. This is an example of a culturally responsive approach to mentoring and doctoral education (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Hall and Burns (2009) state that this approach requires university administrators, faculty members, and students to collaborate and consciously engage in culture building in order to broaden their perception of identity within academia, and to recognize and value a more expansive set of professional identities within an academic setting. Dominique is a good example of a successful culturally responsive approach in a same-race, mixed-gender mentoring relationship. Unfortunately, Joann is a poor example of this approach not being utilized by her program advisor and dissertation chairman, an African American male. I posit

that if Joann's advisor valued and supported her changing professional identity and career goals, she would have identified him as one of her mentors. In Chapter Four, Joann states that "he's not as supportive of women" compared to his male advisees. She feels he backs away from issues/politics in the department. Given this, Joann turns to another faculty member in her department, who is an African American woman, for advice on departmental politics. Joann expressed feeling tension between the advice of her African American female mentors and her African American male advisor. Her advisor wants her to focus on preparing and securing a tenure-track faculty position, while her mentors have all advised her to follow her passion even if it is different from what she initially wanted to do upon entering the doctoral program. Based on Hall and Burn's culturally responsive approach to culture building, it is clear to me that Joann's advisor needs to expand and adapt his view of professional identities in academia. This would allow him to shed his gender-role stereotypes and expectations, and appreciate Joann's desire to play another role in the university setting, that of student affairs professional as opposed to a tenure-track faculty member.

Research Question 4 - How do African American female doctoral students perceive their professional identity at the beginning of their Ph.D. program?

This question was addressed in the interview protocol when participants were asked about their professional trajectory upon entering their doctoral program. Overwhelmingly, the study participants had established professional identities upon entering their programs. The common responses were professional identities that matched a researcher, teacher/educator or clinician. Tara was the only participant who reported viewing herself as a higher education administrator. It was clear to me that the majority of participants' personal identity and self-authorship around their previous experiences helped to shape their professional image of themselves upon entering their Ph.D. program. As referenced in the literature (Chapter Two), Alfred (2001) defines personal identity as a sense of individual autonomy that allows for multiple constructions and definitions of self. The theory of self-authorship provides a way of understanding the process that people use to make meaning of their experiences. Therefore, an African American female doctoral student's mentoring relationships and experiences can help shape her personal identity; and solidify, enhance or change their professional identity while in graduate school.

Notably, only two of the 16 participants came into their programs with no defined image of themselves as professionals in their field. Carol, 48 years old and recently completed her Ph.D. in sociology at Institution III, states, "I had no professional trajectory or vision when I entered my doctoral program. My environment made the difference. I wasn't trying to find a job or career. My Ph.D. could be in anything, I just needed the degree for my job." In Carol's case, she began her doctoral experience detached from any conceived professional identity. She needs the degree to advance in her field of occupational therapy. It was ironic that she didn't identify as

a therapist since this is the reason for her going back to school after being away from academe for almost two decades.

In a somewhat similar vein, Betty, also at Institution III, is a 45 year old third year Ph.D. student in psychology who shared that she started her Ph.D. program because it was God's plan; not her own. Her original goal when going back to school was to only earn a Master's degree. Betty states, "God opened the doors for me to get this Ph.D. Everything has been in His plan. I continue to exercise my faith in Him through this process." It is obvious from this response and others during my interview with Betty that she began her Ph.D. program with no thoughts of herself and what she wanted to gain from this experience and process. Betty did not even have an idea of the type of career field she wanted to prepare for and venture into after completing her doctorate. However, she knew that, "at some point in my life, I want to enhance the African American population." This is a vague statement and sentiment that could lead Betty in many career directions. It is obvious to me that she needs some professional clarity and focus to successfully persist through her doctoral program and maximize the opportunities that graduate education affords.

What do Carol and Betty's stories tell us? They tell us that not all doctoral students enter their academic programs with a clearly defined sense of their "professional self." This lack of professional identity is surprising with Carol and Betty, two of the oldest participants in the study. One would imagine that younger doctoral students would possess this lack of professional identity given their limited "real-world" experiences in comparison to women who have worked, started families, and decided to return to school. The need for a mentor during one's doctoral training is crucial. Carol and Betty's stories also lead me to ponder about how they are "authoring" and making meaning out of their current doctoral experiences. Given that meaning is

essential to the whole process of identity development, I believe that Carol and Betty lack self-authorship around their professional identities. Carol needs a Ph.D. for professional advancement and Betty is following what she believes is God's plan for her life. Neither have conceptualized their professional or educational purpose; and intentionally worked to gain knowledge, experience and skills to develop a purpose or career trajectory. Thus, their situations are inconsistent with Baxter Magolda's (2002) definition of self-authorship as a central element to adult decision-making, including career decision-making. However, Betty's reliance on her faith and spirituality to persist through her doctoral program (and avoid dropping out) is consistent with the findings of Gasman et al. (2008) on the experiences of African American graduate students in an Ivy League institution.

Research Question 5 - How does African American female doctoral students' professional identity change during the course of their doctoral experience?

After being asked about their professional identity upon entering the doctoral program, I inquired with the African American female doctoral students how they viewed themselves professionally at the time of our interview. Though the participant responses varied; their “core” professional identity at the time of our interview had either (1) changed, (2) remained the same, or (3) been enhanced from when they started their Ph.D. program. Table 4, on page 142, depicts the participants’ self-reported professional identity upon entering their doctoral program, their professional identity at the time of our interview, any change in professional identity between the two points in time, and if their mentoring relationship (if applicable) impacted or influenced their professional identity at the time of our interview.

Through these interviews, I detected that majority of the African American women doctoral students had multiple professional identities; and many of them mentioned a “core” professional identity, which in several cases remained constant while the secondary or periphery identities developed, became stronger or weaker (if previously identified) over time. The solidification, emergence or decline of these secondary or periphery identities can be attributed to the type of professional development activities (i.e. publications, service involvement on association boards, and conference participation) the women were engaged in at the time of our interview. Minor (2003) states that professional development is a critical component for competitiveness in graduate school, yet students are heavily dependent on faculty advisors for such support. He contends that advising relationships have little impact on the career trajectory of the faculty mentor, which I agree, especially if the faculty advisor is not viewed as a mentor by the students. My position is supported by Ugrin et al. (2008) who posit that senior faculty

members who mentor new scholars can make their most significant contribution (beyond publications) to future generations through listening, providing advice, serving as a role model, and helping new scholars understand what it takes to be successful in the field. I speculate that these activities and quality advising/mentoring relationships can be critical in determining the career paths of doctoral students who should be viewed and trained as burgeoning young scholars in their fields.

Table 4 – Professional Identity Change Across Participants

Pseudonym	Professional ID at start of Ph.D.	Professional ID at interview	Professional ID Change	Mentor Influence
Joann	Teacher and Researcher	Unsure (Student Affairs-Advising or Outreach)	Yes	Yes
Deborah	Teacher	Teacher	No	No
Diane	Researcher, then Teacher	Researcher, then Teacher	No	No
Carol	Occupational Therapist, then Teacher	Occupational Therapist, then Teacher	No	No
Katherine	Clinician (no research or teaching)	Clinician (enjoys teaching)	Somewhat	Yes
Monique	Clinician	Clinician	No	No
Alice	Clinician (who doesn't like teaching, but enjoys research)	Clinician (who is much stronger in research)	No	No
Lisa	Clinician	Clinician	No	No
Nicole	Clinician, then Educator (not interested in research)	Clinician, then Educator (not interested in research)	No	No
Patricia	Teacher/Consultant	Teacher/Consultant	No	No
Danielle	Faculty	Faculty/Community Activist	Somewhat	Yes
Candice	Faculty (no international interest)	International Researcher	Yes	Yes
Sheila	Researcher (who wanted to gain more clinical training)	Clinician	Yes	Yes
Tara	Higher Education Administrator	Higher Education Administrator	No	Somewhat
Dominique	Counseling Psychologist	Counseling Psychologist (emerging Faculty identity)	Somewhat/Unsure	Yes
Betty	Unsure	Unsure	No	No

Three participants' professional identity was enhanced to include another view of themselves as professionals in their respective disciplines. Katherine, Danielle and Dominique's professional identities were enhanced during their doctoral tenure. Katherine enhanced her clinical identity to that of a clinician with some interest in research. Danielle's professional identity is shifting from primarily being a faculty member to (now) a dual professional identity of faculty and community activist. Lastly, Dominique's professional view of herself now incorporates a faculty identity along with that of a counseling psychologist. All three participants recognize their mentors' influence in the enhancement or emergence of an additional professional identity. This supports my assertion that mentoring relationships play a vital role in the professional identity development of African American female doctoral students. Moreover, the credit the doctoral students give their mentors in this process supports the findings of Clark et al. (2000) and Johnson et al. (2000) who report that benefits to mentored graduate students include development of professional skills, enhancement of confidence and professional identity, scholarly productivity, enhanced networking, and dissertation guidance and success, and overall satisfaction with the doctoral experience.

Three participants, Joann, Candice and Sheila, had distinct and definite changes in their professional identities from the beginning of their doctoral program to the time of our interview. Joann began her Ph.D. program in African American and African Studies four years prior to our interview knowing that she identified professionally as a teacher and researcher. After earning her degree, she wanted to pursue a tenure-track faculty position at a Research I Institution. During the course of her doctoral program and advice from her two African American women faculty mentors who are external to her doctoral program and institution; she wants to pursue a pursue an advising or outreach position serving diversity student populations at a large Research

University. “The Ph.D. process has caused a reality check” states Joann. “I still identify as a teacher and researcher, but I want to use my Ph.D. to help people. Plus, I want a family.”

Through her mentors’ advice, she realizes that she does not want to tackle the challenges that African American women faculty face in the academy.

Joann’s sentiments coincide with much of the literature that addresses the experiences of African American women faculty in the U.S. higher education system. Being an African American and African Studies scholar, I believe that Joann is well versed in the scholarship on black women faculty in higher education, as well as, privy to anecdotal information and insight into the state of black women faculty through conversations with her two African American women faculty mentors. Two other overarching considerations that I believe impacted Joann’s professional identity change were (1) her engagement and marriage, and (2) her starting a full-time job at the university while in her doctoral program. Her mentors supported these personal commitments. However, her advisor and dissertation committee chairman, an African American male faculty member, did not support either move. From Joann’s own admission, her mentor values the academic professions (i.e. teaching or research faculty) over those of student affairs (i.e. advising and outreach). Thus, he is not as supportive of her shift in professional identity. As mentioned in Joann’s case in Chapter Four, she has grown dissatisfied with her relationship with her advisor/dissertation chairman. As stated by Hall and Burns (2009),

When students’ and mentors’ conceptions of identity differ, conflict, or remain tacit, students may become marginalized. Students in unsuccessful relationships may reject or resist the capital required for success, or they may adopt identities that place them at odds with faculty mentors and cause them to experience fewer positive interactions, fewer

opportunities for practice and socialization, and greater dissatisfaction. These experiences may drive them away from the profession (p. 55).

I posit that his lack of support and understanding derive from a lack of awareness or connectedness to the gender issues and considerations of women in higher education or women career professionals, as a whole. Chandler (1996) supports my assertion in her study on women and mentoring in academia. She states that the psychosocial functions play an important role in mentoring relationships involving women as mentors or protégés. Moreover, Chandler found that common problems with women's mentoring experience were related to lack of potential mentors, the lack of access to information networks, and tokenism in male-dominated fields. Also, there was evidence that cross-gender relationships can be problematic, especially because of gender-role expectations. Joann's advisor and dissertation chairman does not understand why she (Joann) would want to take a full-time position while in her doctoral program and change her professional career trajectory to incorporate starting a family.

Candice, in her third year in the Educational Policy Ph.D. Program at Institution I talks openly about how her professional identity has changed since being in her doctoral program. Upon entering her program, Candice viewed herself as a faculty member, someone who would be engaged in research and teaching at the university level. Now, she views herself as an international researcher. Candice made a point to share with me that she had no interest in international affairs/research or travel abroad upon entering her doctoral program. She strictly saw herself earning her Ph.D. and securing a faculty position soon after. She came into her Ph.D. program with a focus on charter schools in the U.S. Now, her professional identity is that of an international researcher who desires to spend an equal amount time abroad and in the states. She credits this identity shift to her three mentors – two African American women and an African

American man. She states, “My mentors are exposing me to new and unforeseen opportunities. I am traveling and conducting research in Brazil now. That’s something I would have never thought about when I started my program. I am unsure of my plans after the Ph.D., which counters my planned mind-set, but I now know what my passion is and that’s researching women and educational policy in Brazil.” Though her career goal is uncertain, the journey to becoming an “International Researcher” has been life-changing. Candice’s experience as a doctoral student having been facilitated by her mentors is a good example of the conclusion drawn by Minor (2003) that postulates that the quality of training, professional development, and transition into the profession, for graduate students, are outcomes significantly influenced by their faculty advising relationships. Candice’s mentors provide challenging experiences while supporting her growth as a scholar. From the information Candice shared about the level of support and understanding her mentors’ exhibit toward her, I believe they understand her needs from her position as a black woman in higher education. Rhonda Munford (1996) studied the role of mentoring in the college experience of mature African American women who are re-entering college. She concludes that understanding the protégé’s needs from her own viewpoint is essential to an effective mentoring relationship. She contends that the without accurate knowledge of the protégé’s needs, the mentor is less capable of determining where she or he can actually meet those needs. Most relevant in Candice’s case, if Munford’s finding that all of the women interviewed perceived having mentors as somewhat to very important in terms of facilitating their personal growth and development, their education growth, and their career success.” (p. 18).

Sheila, a third year MA/Ph.D. student in Marriage and Family Therapy began her doctoral education at Institution I identifying as a researcher with some interest in clinical work.

Now, she identifies as a Clinician. This professional identity shift is due to the training and development she receives from her primary mentor, a Mexican-American male faculty member in her department, who also serves as her advisor and dissertation chairman. When discussing the attributes of her “ideal” mentor, Sheila specifically mentioned both the psychosocial and career support she seeks in a mentor. As it relates to her professional identity and growth in that area, Sheila’s ideal mentor is someone who will expose her research experiences and jobs in the field; and educate her on the politics in the discipline. Ultimately, “I want someone open to help me develop as a professional.”

From a cross-cultural mentoring perspective, Sheila’s mentor possesses the understanding and awareness of her professional needs and identity in order to provide her with the experiences and exposure that matched her desire to receive more clinical training in her doctoral program. He concentrated on her career path over his own. Thus, he de-emphasized his professional identity as a researcher. According to Bieber and Worley (2006), faculty mentors have particular ideas about what it means to be a researcher, and their conceptions may or may not align with their students’ assumptions or expectations. It is clear from Sheila’s description of her mentoring relationship with her mentor/advisor that they engaged in regular discussions and reflections about her professional growth, experiences and identity as a doctoral student. Austin (2002) states that providing students with opportunities to examine their developing identities is critical in helping students make sense and derive meaning from their experiences. Sheila credits her mentor for this professional identity shift over the course of time in her doctoral program. She mentions that his support and encouragement were extremely beneficial in the process.

Research Question 6 - What are the tangible outcomes of professional identity development for African American female doctoral students?

In Chapter One of this study, I defined the tangible outcomes of one's professional identity in doctoral education as a student's engagement in professional development activities (i.e. conferences and publications), involvement in departmental and university-wide programs and committees, and service in academic associations. Through the course of this study, I learned that a student's professional development activities are dependent on the composition of the student-faculty mentoring relationship. A tangible professional outcome of a gender match in the student-faculty mentoring relationship is publishing rates. Goldstein (1979) and Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) reported that male graduate students published more if their advisors were male, and female graduate students published more if their advisors were female. This finding was not carefully addressed or delineated in my study. The African American women doctoral students I interviewed talked more about their research involvement both domestic and abroad, practicum experience, and conference presentations than their number of authored or co-authored publications. The research productivity seemed consistent among the doctoral students with identified mentors. There is a noticeable decline in the mention of research involvement, conference participation, etc. among the doctoral students who did not identify a mentor in their doctoral program. Moreover, this finding is consistent for Nicole who identified her pastor and pastor's wife as her mentors. It is reasonable to believe that since Nicole's mentors have no academic ties in terms of their professions/careers, her involvement in professional development activities that strength her professional identity as clinician/educator would be minimal. The literature informs us that there are numerous tangible and intangible benefits to mentoring for the mentor – research assistance, increased power and networking, validation and pleasure in

protégé's achievement. These benefits for the mentor are more prevalent if the mentor is an academician.

As described in Chapter Two, when cross-cultural mentoring occurs, these benefits to the mentor should be expanded to include gaining cross-cultural exposure and competence in addition to making a human capital investment that will promote equity and social justice in the discipline (Thomas et al., 2007). At the doctoral education level, the act of mentoring and the quality of mentoring relationships are not evaluated by the graduate students. Thus, there is no evaluative data to determine the quality and effectiveness of mentoring and/or advising relationships in terms of cultural relevance and affirmation (Girves et al., 2005; Thomas et al., 2007). Instead student-faculty relationships are evaluated in regards to tangible outcomes (i.e. publications and professional conference presentations) achieved or accomplished by the graduate student.

Beyond these tangible products of faculty-student relationships, underrepresented doctoral students also need to be mentored in ways that reinforce their competence and legitimacy as burgeoning scholars (Thomas et al., 2007). Findings from previous studies indicate that matches are more successful if mentors and protégés are of the same race and gender (Tidball, 1986). In this context, success is defined in terms of research productivity and publications, professional networking through conference attendance, and degree completion. From the African American female doctoral students interviewed in this study, I conclude that those who have an identified mentor(s) in their doctoral program were successful based on the context and definition stated above. Thus, mentoring has a positive influence on doctoral student success in terms of research productivity and conference participation.

Contributions

This study makes several contributions to the existing body of literature as it relates to African American women doctoral students and their mentoring experiences. Specifically, when examining mentoring and professional identity development in the broader context of literature on graduate education, this study re-affirms existing perspectives and findings as it relates to the doctoral training experiences of graduate students of color and women. More importantly, it reveals several key components for success at the graduate level for all students.

Given that socialization (Blackwell, 1988; and Turner, 2002), mentoring (Boice, 1992; Duckworth-Warner, 2003; and Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008), and faculty-student interaction (Hancock, 2002) have been identified among the factors that influence the graduate student experience, this study positions faculty-student mentoring relationships at the forefront of these factors in terms contributing to the professional identity development of African American women Ph.D. students and their success during their doctoral tenure. The faculty mentor's active engagement with their protégé, willingness to share resources and networks, level of cultural sensitivity and awareness, and perspective and value placed on academic careers are paramount in effectively socializing and guiding African American doctoral women through their Ph.D. program.

Knowing the vital role that mentoring plays in career exploration and professional identity development for African American women doctoral students, self-authorship and career decision-making can now be viewed as occurrences that take place beyond young adulthood as postulated by Baxter-Magolda (2002). This study finds that women, in their mid to late 40's (years of age) are still self-authoring (developing and conceptualizing) their professional identity and career trajectory. Thus, their engagement in professional development activities is needed

just as much as women entering Ph.D. programs directly from undergraduate or in their early to mid 20's (years of age). At age 48, Carol, one of the study participants, reports that her doctoral experience and environment made the difference in how she began to view herself as a professional. Similarly, Betty, at 45 years old, is a good example of someone who self-authoring beyond young adulthood. She is forming her professional identity in adult self-authorship; and relying on the experiences with her newly found African American female mentor to help discover her professional interests and identity.

Carol and Betty's reliance on environmental factors, such as faculty mentoring, institutional culture and climate, administrative support, and departmental resources, play a significant role in their professional identity development and success in graduate school. When examining personal and professional identity development, one's environment must be addressed as a mitigating factor that influences their identity development at any age.

From those struggling to define their professional identity to those who possess multiple professional identities; this study illuminates the presence of multiple professional identities among African American women doctoral students. Among the number of women who shared their multiple professional identities, several identified having a "core" professional identity accompanied by secondary and periphery identities. These Ph.D. students look to their faculty mentors to help them explore all of the facets of their various professional identities in order to solidify their core view of themselves, develop the secondary or periphery identity, or make way for a new identity to emerge.

In their cases, this exploratory process manifests itself through travel and study abroad, scholarly activities (including and beyond the dissertation research), discipline-specific conference participation, and publishing. Through career exploration and exposure to various

professional development activities, African American women doctoral students became committed to a professional identity. Professional commitment is important during graduate education. A graduate student's commitment to their profession and professional identity is confirmed during this process. This study elucidates that involvement in mentoring and institutional culture/environment are key contributors to African American women doctoral students' professional commitment. Weiss (1981) reports that professional role commitment is an outcome of the socialization process in graduate education, and the frequency and nature of contact with faculty members is significantly related to the amount of professional role commitment in graduate students. This study confirms that Weiss's findings are applicable to African American women doctoral students. Moreover, this study adds to the existing literature evidence that involvement in mentoring relationships with faculty who (1) use a culturally responsive approach to mentoring, (2) socialize and engage graduate students to the discipline/field, and (3) possess a variety of role expectations create higher levels of professional commitment in African American women doctoral students; thus, informing their professional identity.

Implications

This study affirms that African American women doctoral students have distinct experiences in American higher education. Specifically, their experiences indicate that the climate for this population remains one that keeps them as “outsiders” within the higher educational system. Having a mentor not only affirms and provides a safe space for African American women, it is a coping mechanism for survival at the doctoral level. African American women doctoral students need advocates, resources, and social and professional networks to successfully navigate their dual identities based on race and gender.

More research is necessary to explore the various mentoring needs of African American women doctoral students matriculating at predominantly white institutions, and how these needs are or are not addressed during their doctoral tenure. It is important to note that matched mentoring dyads, though not as prevalent among African American women doctoral students and faculty, is ideally sought after by most of the doctoral students interviewed for this study. Several of the doctoral students interviewed sought African American female mentors external to their academic program, department and university. This was not necessarily by choice, but out of necessity. This finding is consistent with the earlier work of Essien (1997) who reported that given the scarcity of mentoring relationships among African American women in higher education, many graduate women go beyond their disciplines to seek out mentors for academic, emotional, and spiritual support. Common problems with women’s mentoring experience were found to include the lack of potential mentors, the lack of access to information and socialization networks, and tokenism in male-dominated fields. Additionally, there was evidence that cross-gender mentoring relationships can be problematic for the protégés, this is primarily due to

gender-role stereotypes and expectations as in Joann's case with her African American male program advisor and dissertation chairman (Chandler, 1996).

Another implication of this study is the fact that several doctoral students actively engage as mentors (themselves) to high school students, undergraduates, and younger graduate students in their academic programs. Of the four students who openly discussed their work as mentors, two have identified mentors. This finding is consistent with literature indicating that those who are mentored are more likely to serve as mentors presently and in the future (Jacobi, 1991). Conversely, it is interesting to note that two of the doctoral students I interviewed that do not have mentors themselves – Patricia and Tara – are passionate about their roles as mentors to incoming graduate students in their program and undergraduates, respectively. They both talk about giving back in ways they would like to receive. Doctoral programs could harness this passion and interest to provide structured peer mentoring programs for their doctoral students of color; specifically, pairing incoming doctoral students with more seasoned students in the program.

For the African American women doctoral students in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship(s), they all felt that it would be a rich and unique experience to have an African American woman faculty member as their mentor. Moreover, the one doctoral student (Betty) who recently secured an African American woman as her mentor has high expectations of this newly formed mentoring relationship. Betty was reluctant to contact her new mentor, but did so because she knew she was not receiving the guidance and professional cultivation needed to be successful in her doctoral program. Betty pinpointed characteristics, such as shared cultural understanding and background, similar life experiences, and an empowering attitude that would lead to greater motivation, emotional support, professional development activities, and career

decision-making in her graduate program in terms of her expectations of having an African American woman as her mentor. These characteristics align with the previous research of Gasman et al. (2008), Hall and Burns (2009), and Patterson-Stewart et al. (1997) who found African American women graduate students sought emotional support, shared cultural backgrounds, and assistance with career decision-making as some of the outcomes of matched mentoring dyads among African American women.

Though more African American women are in the higher education pipeline, still too few are persisting through to earn a Ph.D. Given this fact, mentorship should be actively promoted at every level in the academic community from undergraduates to senior level administrators, especially for African American women who are viewed as one of the most marginalized groups in higher education (Chandler, 1996).

Limitations and Future Research

This exploratory qualitative study was not meant to produce generalizable results. However, it was meant to provide voice and context to the mentoring relationships, doctoral training experiences at PWIs, and professional identity development of the 16 African American Ph.D. students who participated in this study. As an African American woman doctoral student myself the interview sessions proved to be cathartic for both the participants and myself. I could have easily conducted a self-interview and reported on 17 women's doctoral experiences. Our interviews were similar to conversations – colleagues and sisters, coming together to talk about where we have been, where we are going, and the people we have met and interacted with (or not) along our journey of earning a Ph.D.

The limitations in this work are attributable to time and methods. It would have been helpful to identify incoming doctoral students and conduct two interviews with them during their tenure in their doctoral program. Ideally, the first interview would be conducted at the beginning of their doctoral program and the second interview would be conducted two years later. The two-year interval will allow the doctoral students time to be fully engaged in coursework and professional development activities, such as conference participation, research involvement, and possible publishing activities; and begin their dissertation research. Conducting interviews at these time intervals will also help to isolate the impact that mentoring has on the doctoral students' professional identity development. Additionally, a two-year interval allows the doctoral students to make meaning of their experiences in the context of professional identity formation. Moreover, it would be interesting to see if the student's relationship with their program advisor (at the start of their program) evolves to that of an identified mentoring relationship two years later.

Existing literature indicates that professional identity formation and development are individual maturation processes that begin during one's training for the profession (Brott & Kajs, 2001). Thus, professional identity is formed in the early stages of a graduate student's doctoral program and shaped by their early engagement and socialization to the discipline. I believe that mentoring not only has a positive influence on a student's engagement and socialization in their discipline, but mentoring can also impact how a student makes meaning of their experiences and chosen professional identity in the discipline or field. It is advantageous for African American women doctoral students to be involved in mentoring relationship early in their doctoral training experience.

My assertion that mentoring is important for African American women doctoral students' socialization and engagement in professional activities is supported when examining professional identity formation in the management and psychology literature. McGowen and Hart (1990) state that professional identity stems from professional socialization and development, which are social learning processes that include the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills required for their professional role and career path. In 1985, Holland found that person-environment fit is important to job involvement and organizational commitment. While, the developmental process of maturation reported by Kuzmic (1994) is critical to molding a professional identity. Given the issues and challenges for African American women in higher education, I contend that this population ultimately would benefit from being involved in a matched mentoring dyad with an African American female faculty member or administrator in their program, department, institution or academic discipline. Knowing the dearth of African American women in tenure-track faculty and administrative positions on our college and university campus, minimally African American female doctoral students need culturally aware mentors to assist them along

their professional identity development process. Mentors are critical in the professional identity development process in terms of - socialization, person-environment fit, and maturation – mentioned in the management and psychology literature.

Recommendations

Given the discussion and assertions brought forth earlier in this chapter and a more in-depth examination of personal identity development based on the findings of this study, my original interpretation (see Figure I on page 44) of the relevant literature on professional identity formation for African American female doctoral students has been modified. The impetus for this modification is the lived experiences shared by the 16 African American women doctoral students who participated in this study. Their collective voices led me to reconsider the previously held belief that one's personal identity (culture, familial, values, etc.) is formed and solidified during adolescence (Erikson, 1980; and Gergen, 1991). I contend, for the purpose of this study, that professional identity formation is an outcome of faculty-student mentoring relationships. However, it is evident from the findings that one's professional identity develops as their personal identity develops (Blustein, Devenis, & Kidney, 1989).

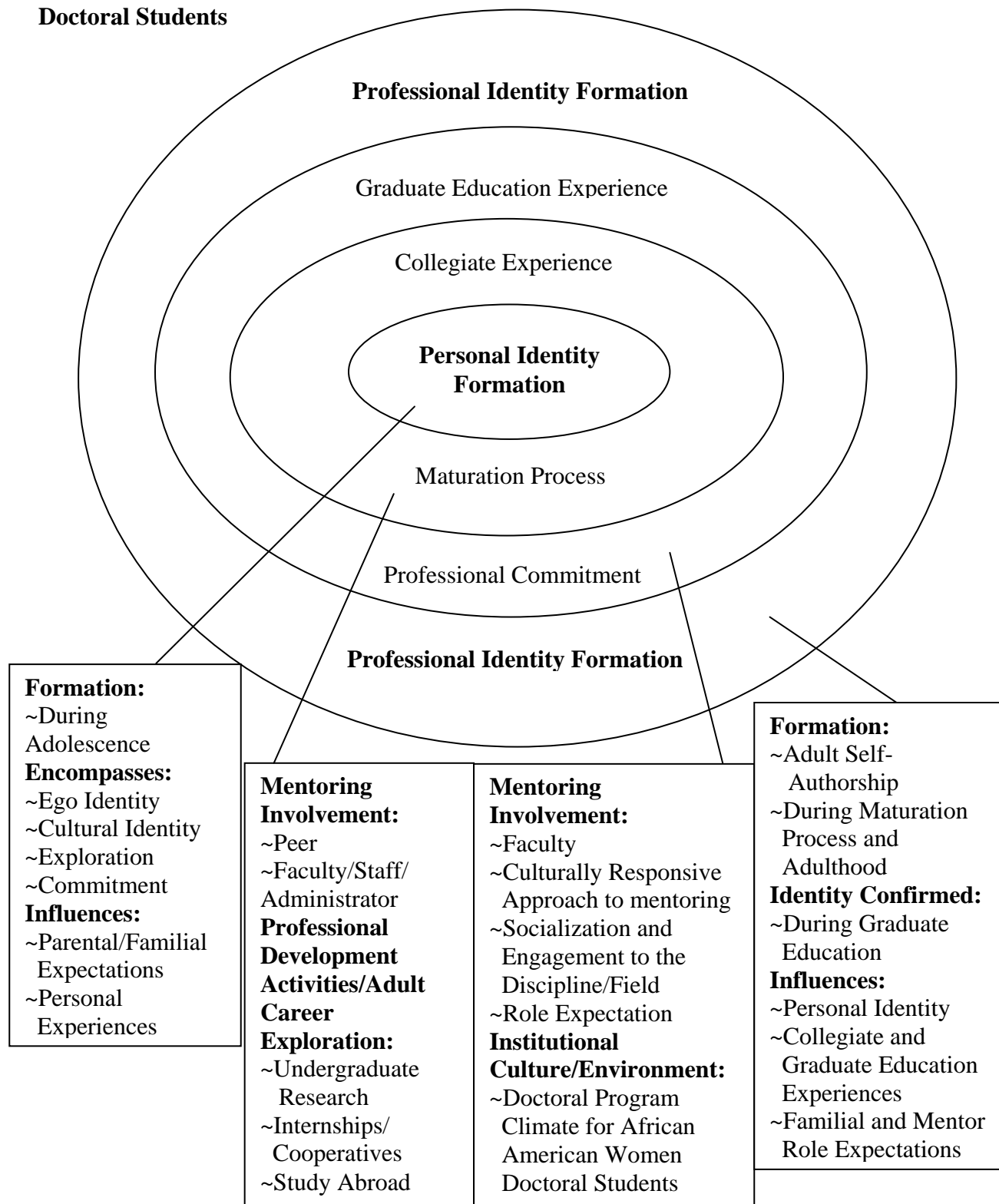
Findings indicate that some of the African American female doctoral students' professional identity changed and some did not. Why? Is it prolonged exploration, a lack of commitment to a given profession and career path, or is it self-authorship in post-baccalaureate adults? Exploration and commitment are pivotal dimensions referenced in the literature on career development and ego identity formation (Erickson, 1968; and Marcia, 1966). Marcia defines exploration as the active consideration of alternatives encompassing ideological issues (pertaining to philosophical, career, religious and political domains) and interpersonal issues (pertaining to friendships, intimate relationships, gender roles, and recreational domains). Whereas, commitment refers to the attainment of a clear sense of self-definition or ego identity across these various domains (Grotevant & Adams, 1984; and Waterman, 1985).

Based on my findings, I examine professional identity formation through an adult self-authorship lens. I place self-authorship later in this model because several of the study participants were constructing their professional identity far beyond their undergraduate years. The study findings and this interpretative model imply that self-authorship should be explored and promoted in graduate education. Baxter Magolda (2007) report that self-authorship is being infused in the Student Personnel M.S. Program curriculum at Miami University and as a guiding principle in student affairs practice at The University of Michigan. Rogers, Magolda, Baxter Magolda, and Knight-Abowitz (2004) found that when self-authorship is employed, students consistently report learning a great deal about themselves. They collaborate effectively with others, learn to critically analyze multiple perspectives, and self-author their own professional beliefs. Moreover, they report that faculty members continue learning from their mutual partnerships with students. This finding indicates that self-authorship can positively influence both mentors and protégés in mentoring and advising relationships.

My revised interpretation of the literature based on the findings of this study is depicted in Figure 2 on page 161. This conceptual model uses an ecological systems approach to professional identity development for African American female doctoral students. I selected this configuration to represent the natural formation of professional identity, which emanates from personal identity. Thus, personal identity is at the core of this revised conceptual model, and professional identity formation is placed in the outermost sphere because it represents the outcome or goal of this developmental process.

Figure 2: A Model of Professional Identity Development for African American Women

Doctoral Students



Recommendations for Doctoral Programs and Faculty

Based on the findings of this study, I have several recommendations for doctoral programs and their faculty members to address the mentoring needs of African American women doctoral students and assist this population with their professional identity formation. The first recommendation is for doctoral programs to complete a formal assessment of the professional and social support needs of their newly admitted African American women doctoral students. This assessment will allow the program administrators and faculty members to determine the students' professional identity, career trajectory, applicable professional development activities, mentoring needs, and the value the students place on the psychosocial and career functions of mentoring as it relates to their professional identity and career success. Knowing the incoming doctoral students beyond their academic record, application materials, and possible work history will assist program advisors in how to best advise, socialize and (possibly) mentor their advisee.

The second recommendation is for doctoral programs to create an atmosphere of active mentoring and engagement between the advisor and advisee (Duckworth-Warner, 2003). Given that the literature supports the findings of this study that the roles of advisor and mentor are operationalized differently on the part of the faculty member in the role, it would be most helpful if the relationships between advisors and advisees placed emphasis on mentoring, socializing the student to the expectations of the disciplines/field, and developing the student as a professional in the field (Minor, 2003; and Shears, Lewis, & Furman, 2004). Often, these are things void in an advising relationship. Doctoral programs should offer intentional mentoring experiences for African American female doctoral students, rather than expecting students to seek out these relationships for themselves (Jones, 2001). These intentional mentoring experiences could be built around the students' professional goals and include activities that inform the students'

professional identity. As reported in Chapter Four, having a mentor is a key component to success and overall satisfaction for African American women doctoral students. Thus, making advising relationships more intentional in terms of mentoring the students will positively impact students' time-to-degree and attrition in the doctoral program. As stated earlier in this chapter, several of the women interviewed in this study serve as mentors themselves to pre-college, undergraduate, and incoming doctoral students. It would be advantageous for doctoral programs to investigate a peer mentoring structure for doctoral students of color. An intentional and internal peer support structure for these students would be ideal in fostering an atmosphere of active mentoring in the doctoral program, department and college.

The third recommendation is for faculty members who serve as mentors to receive on-going training for mentoring diverse doctoral students. The training sessions should include: (1) literature on effective cross-cultural mentoring practices, (2) opportunities for mentors to reflect on their mentoring relationships (as protégé and mentor), (3) identity theory with emphasis on professional identity formation, (4) evaluate their mentoring practices. Incorporating these factors on an on-going training basis will help build a culturally responsive approach to mentoring and interacting with diverse doctoral students (Hall & Burns, 2009; and Ladson-Billings, 1995). Faculty mentors must appreciate the diversity of thought and professional identity held by their protégé(s). Professional identity must be explicitly discussed during interactions between mentor and protégé. These explicit conversations will help faculty members and doctoral students to collaborate and consciously engage in culture building in order to broaden the faculty member's perception of professional identities within academia. Faculty perceptions impact the value they place on various academic professions, which in turn shapes how they engage and socialize doctoral students to the discipline.

Recommendations for African American Female Doctoral Students

During the process of facilitating this study, I realized that African American female doctoral students and doctoral students of color, in general, need to employ various strategies for securing a faculty mentor while in their program. Based on the findings of this study, I have three recommendations of doctoral students in their pursuit of mentoring relationships.

The first recommendation is for African American female doctoral students to conduct a self-assessment of their personality traits, needs as a protégé, expectations of your mentor, and expectations for the mentoring relationship. This self-assessment would be beneficial for doctoral students because it allows for introspection and goal-setting prior to establishing mentoring relationships.

The second recommendation is for African American female doctoral students to be purposeful in their selection of a mentor. African American female doctoral students must know the ideal attributes they seek in a mentor and look for people who fulfill those attributes. Deborah, one of the study participants, outlined her ideal mentor attributes as the following,

Ideally I want someone who knows me and is specialized just for me, who knows how I work, when to motivate, leave alone and stay out of the way; someone who offers me advice, is knowledgeable, able to negotiate the present and future, and identifies themselves as a possible mentor; someone who has a vested interest in my success; someone who I can create good healthy boundaries with; and someone who is a little older.

Deborah's statement encapsulates diverse attributes that she is looking for in a mentor.

Unfortunately, she had not secured a mentor at the time of our interview. Based on the literature, I recommend that doctoral students of color take The Ideal Mentor Scale, developed by Rose

(2003), which is a brief self-report instrument grounded in Levinson et al.'s (1978) theory of adult development and also informed by Anderson and Shannon's (1988) comprehensive model of mentoring. It was developed for the purpose of clarifying more precisely what a mentor is and does in the context of doctoral education, from the student's perspective. This self-administered instrument provides an opportunity for doctoral students to think about and process mentor characteristics prior to searching and securing a mentor.

The third recommendation is to be open to having a mentor and support network that are external to your academic department. This recommendation is supported by the findings of this study, especially in the cases of Joann, Nicole, and Betty who are examples of African American doctoral students who have found satisfying mentoring relationships with faculty members and administrators who are external to their academic departments. Essien (1997) supports this recommendation by stating that the scarcity of mentoring relationships among African American women in U.S. higher education causes many graduate women to go beyond their disciplines to seek mentors for academic, emotional, and spiritual support.

Conclusions

Learning about the mentoring and professional development experiences of African American female doctoral students has been an enriching and cathartic experience for me. As an African American woman completing a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration, I have reflected on my personal mentors through my educational journey. I recognize that my true mentors, the ones that kept me in college, motivated me to pursue a Master's degree and then a Ph.D. have all been African American women faculty or administrators. I look at these women as mothers. The mentor role can easily be viewed as a parental role (Erikson, 1968). My mentors helped shape my professional identity through their guidance, advice, role modeling, and experiential opportunities from undergraduate to the present. From this study, I realize that self-authorship carries on into adulthood; it is not confined to adolescence or young adulthood (pre-college) (Baxter Magolda, 2002). Similar to the women in this study, I continue to make meaning of my experiences, which help inform my professional trajectory and identity.

I have what many of the women I interviewed want...a mentor who shares my same race and gender. When African American women experience difficulties in securing a matched mentoring relationship, they seek other means of assistance. This is where cross-cultural mentoring becomes a vital source of support for African American women doctoral students. As the most marginalized group in U.S. higher education, African American women are entering the educational pipeline at rates equivalent to our majority counterparts. However, we are exiting the pipeline at much higher rates than the majority population. African American women doctoral students cannot afford to be without a mentor to help them navigate the rigors of a doctoral training experience and complete the degree. Thus, having a faculty member or administrator satisfy some of the ideal attributes that African American women doctoral students seek in a

mentor is critical in their persistence and satisfaction with the doctoral program. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the study participants in general desire mentors who are knowledgeable and established in their field, expose and engage the protégé to various professional development opportunities, freely offers advice and resources, possess a genuine concern for the protégé's well-being, and share similar life experiences or has a deep understanding of the lived experiences of African American women. Coupled with being knowledgeable of one's academic field/discipline, is the need for African American female doctoral students to have a mentor who can address the "politics" and conflicts (that may arise) in the department. In many cases, if an issue arises where the protégé needs their mentor to advocate for them in a particular situation, that mentor needs to possess a certain amount of influence, power and leverage in the department (Kenen & Kenen, 1978). The possession of departmental power and knowledge of departmental operations are important for mentors to have because it allows them to be stronger, more effective advocates for their mentees. Thus, having a mentor who has reached tenure and status within the department is more advantageous for a doctoral student of color. This is evident in both Joann and Monique's cases. At particular times during their doctoral program, both women needed strong advocates to help them negotiate and navigate departmental politics. Their situations were resolved with the assistance of a tenured faculty member.

Conversely, junior or untenured faculty have not established themselves in their academic departments, thus they may experience feelings of isolation. Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin (2000) suggest that although new faculty members enter the profession with an idealistic vision of freedom, autonomy, and opportunities for intellectual discovery and growth; this vision does not fully match what they actually experience over time. During these early stages, junior or untenured faculty may have the desire to mentor doctoral students as a way of immediately

giving back or paying it forward. However, the problem is with their possession of departmental power. Graduate and undergraduate students, research associates, untenured faculty, and staff at all levels of the organization have limited rights in comparison to tenured faculty and senior administrators (Roper, 2010). Can junior or untenured faculty members effectively mentor African American female doctoral students? Yes, based on the literature. Can junior or untenured faculty members effectively advocate, challenge, and/or change departmental politics, practices and barriers that their protégé might face during the course of their doctoral program? No, not as effectively as tenured faculty; based on the findings of this study.

Tenured faculty and administrators who venture into cross-cultural mentoring relationships must be keenly astute and culturally aware of the issues and challenges facing African American women. Possessing this knowledge and awareness will provide a culturally sensitive approach and atmosphere to mentoring and advising doctoral students of color.

As it relates to professional identity development, findings from this study indicate that having a mentor positively influences the professional identity development of African American female doctoral students. Although having a mentor of the same race and gender is important for the majority of the African American female doctoral students interviewed, many of these women were not in a matched mentoring dyad. However, for those that were in established, or in the early stages of a matched mentoring relationship, it is essential to note that they experienced feeling a comfort and a “safe space” to share and explore their emerging or changing professional identities.

Another interesting take-away from this study is my observation that self-authorship and meaning-making occur far beyond adolescence. Several of the women in this study shared that they are still grappling with the age-old question of “what do I want to be when I grow up?” This

leads me to believe that one's personal identity, as well as their professional identity, continues to develop well into adulthood. My observation is supported by the findings of Samuel and Kohun (2010) who conclude that identity formation develops as doctoral students become subject matter experts regarding their dissertation and can sometimes result in doctoral students transitioning from job perspective to a career perspective. Given that most doctoral students begin their dissertation research in the third year of their program, the Samuel and Kohun finding lends credibility to my future research suggestion to interview doctoral students twice – as incoming Ph.D. students and two years later after they have (hopefully) engaged in professional development activities and began their dissertation research. When exploring professional identity development of African American female doctoral students, it is imperative to assess the students' professional view of themselves in terms of a securing a job or having a career after earning their Ph.D.

My initial intention, for this study, was to explore the relationship between mentoring and professional identity development of African American women Ph.D. students. Specific analysis was placed on the matched mentoring relationships (same race and same gender) of these doctoral students. I hope that the voices of the 16 African American women shared in this study provide greater insight into the mentoring relationships and professional identity of African American women in U.S. higher education. Moreover, this study re-confirms that African American women continue to face the challenges of isolation, and a lack of academic and cultural support in their doctoral training programs. It is my hope that doctoral programs, administrators and faculty members begin to assess the cultural climate of their academic departments; and derive some strategies, from this study, for developing a culturally responsive approach and environment to mentoring African American women Ph.D. students.

Appendix

APPENDIX

Mentoring and Identity Development Interview Questions [Doctoral Student]

Your Name _____
Assigned Code _____
Age _____
Academic Program _____
Year in Program _____

Background:

1. Please tell me about your academic background. Did you have a mentor while an undergraduate or in your master's program? How did having a mentor or not having a mentor affect your undergraduate/master's experience?

2. Describe the ideal mentor. Do you currently have someone that you identify as your mentor? If so, could you provide me with their name and contact information? I would like to schedule an interview with them, as well.

3. How was the mentoring relationship established? Who initiated the first contact? How often do you see your mentor? What are some of the issues you discuss with your mentor? Would you describe your relationship with your mentor as formal or informal? Is your mentor also your program advisor? Please explain your response.

4. How has your mentoring relationship impacted your perception of your professional identity?

5. What was your professional trajectory upon entering your doctoral program? What is it now? Has your professional path changed or been enhanced through your mentoring relationship? How do you identify as a professional (i.e. teacher, researcher, consultant, faculty member)?

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current doctoral training experience?

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