

Female Managers' Perceptions of Developing a Mentoring Program:
A Phenomenological Study

by
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Abraham S. Fischler School of Education
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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Acknowledgments

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you O Jacob, And He who formed you O Israel: fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor will the flames set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior.....

– Isaiah 43:1-3 (NKJV)

This has been a long arduous journey, filled with the most difficulties I have ever experienced that left me stranded at a crossroad not knowing which direction to take or how to formulate thoughts onto paper. Somehow, my God heard my prayers and answered me, here I am my child. I will never leave you nor forsake you, trust in me. All glory and praise to God Almighty, who called me by my name and told me I am his, (Isa: 43). I would not have made it without God Almighty's loving kindness during some very dark nights of the soul; hallowed be his name. I love you Lord.

To my committee chair; Linda Gaughan, thanks for your patience and encouragement, and the willingness to advocate for me. Your corrections were hard to accept at first; but when I realized they were for my benefit, it was easier to continue. I wish you the best always.

A special thanks to the managers who gave of their time and effort to share their beliefs and perceptions. For those special people who always kept me in prayers, always reaching out without being asked, I thank you. Hallelujah, I made it. To my God be all the glory.

To my parents, Benjamin and Theodosia Witherspoon, I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices they made, and I thank the Lord each day for such wonderful parents—may their souls rest in peace.

Abstract

Female Managers' Perceptions of Developing a Mentoring Program: A Phenomenological Study. Naomi Witherspoon, 2014: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler School of Education. ERIC Descriptors: Mentoring Program Development, Mentoring Women, Women Career Development, Mentoring in the Workplace, Mentoring and Organizational Development, Mentoring and Leadership

Despite the increased rate of women in the workplace and more women acquiring advance degrees, there are still barriers in the workplace that hinders the advancement of women. The focus of this qualitative study was first to understand the perceptions and beliefs of six female managers' experiences during the developmental process of an all-female mentoring program. The second focus was to provide information on the importance of mentoring in the development and advancement of women in the workplace. Utilizing a phenomenological methodology, a descriptive approach was employed to examine and describe the thought processes and subjective views of the participants' role, understanding, and expectation of the program development.

The purpose of this applied dissertation was to examine and describe from the participants' perspectives the factors that hindered the successful development of the mentoring program. Based on the analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, four themes emerged: (a) purpose for mentoring program development, (b) perception of barriers to mentoring program development, (c) perception of management role in program development, and (d) perception of program outcome.

The data collected as a result of this study revealed five findings: (a) mentoring programs are an important human resource intervention, (b) the lack of top management support and commitment adversely affected the successful development of the mentoring program, (c) the successful development of a mentoring program requires the clear establishment of the program goals and objectives, (d) research does not fully support the findings that women in senior positions will advocate for women in lower ranking positions, and (e) the top management role is an essential component in the continued success of mentoring programs. This study offers insight into female managers' perceptions of the barriers that affect mentoring program development and insight into the development of successful mentoring program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the 1980s, a significant amount of attention has been paid to the impact of mentoring on women's career development (Allen & O'Brien, 2006; Bower, 2007; Chao, 2009; Ehrich, 2008; Sorcinelli & Jung, 2007), organizational culture (Cummings & Worley, 2009), workforce diversity (Toosi, 2006), and gender inequality (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Evidence in the literature indicates that mentoring is a powerful tool, and the practice of mentoring leads to the development of talent, increased business performance, improved staff retention, and a high performing culture that creates a competitive advantage (Connor & Pakora, 2007; Kottke & Agars, 2005; Kram & Ragins, 2007). Mujtaba (2007) advocated that mentoring is highly effective in developing and advancing women's careers, as well as offsetting such deterrents as the glass ceiling, which hinders the advancement of women into top-level positions within the workplace. The term *glass ceiling*, as defined by Mujtaba, is a metaphor used to describe an invisible barrier that prevents professional women and ethnic minorities from advancing into top leadership positions within an organization.

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2009) reported that 59.2% of women working within various industry sectors (e.g., finance, education, health services, leisure and hospitality, and retailing) continue to earn less than men and are underrepresented in top leadership positions (Linehan & Scullion, 2008). Similarly, Catalyst (2011) reported that women held only 7.5% of executive officer top-earner positions, whereas men accounted for 92.5% of top earners. Burke and Davidson (2011) advocated, "having more women in decision-making positions will help to change the decision-making process, and more decisions will take women's needs into account and improve not only their lot in life but organizational and societal performance" (p. 15).

Despite such widely acknowledged issues, organizational leaders are aware that their companies can benefit by developing and using the talents of women (Catalyst, 2008). It was noted in a 2008 report by Catalyst that organizations employing higher percentages of women on their boards of directors outperformed organizations with lower percentages of female board directors. According to the report, increasing the number of women on an organization's corporate board is necessary for both financial and gender diversity. Having more women in top leadership positions enables an organization, on average, to outperform those with fewer women, and organizations with female board directors most likely would have more female corporate officers (Catalyst, 2008). However, the persistence of the glass ceiling (Mujtaba, 2007) is still prevalent in the workforce (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) and keeps women from achieving positions of power. The challenge is for organizations to address gender gaps and disparities to change the dynamics of the organizational culture by accommodating more women in leadership.

According to Mihail (2006), the inequities encountered by women in the workplace reduce the effectiveness of human capital. However, Ehrich (2008) noted that the integration of mentoring helps to address these inequities and empowers women to leverage their skills to their full potential. Furthermore, research has indicated that integrating mentoring programs as part of organizational human-resource development strategies helps to retain high-quality employees, improve workplace learning, and prepare individuals for senior management and leadership positions (Burke & Davidson, 2011).

Dougherty, Haggard, Turban, and Wilbanks (2011) conducted a study on the career outcomes of men and women who had mentors. Those who had mentors with high

status received greater compensation than either men or women whose mentors did not have high status. Likewise, even the men and women who did not have mentors with high status received more compensation than those without mentors, thus indicating that mentoring is beneficial to the development of both men and women. With the increased awareness of the value and impact of mentoring on performance and career development, organizations and businesses that involve mentoring as an alternative method to workplace learning have been able to highlight the positive and significant impact of mentoring on individuals' career development and psychosocial support (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Career development goes beyond the whole person, which includes providing coaching or mentoring programs, establishing job descriptions that generate new opportunities for individuals to grow, and providing training and leadership opportunities (Johnson, 2007). Career development provides exposure and visibility, sponsorship, coaching, and networking activities that assist in the development of the mentees' careers (Griffin & Ayers, 2005; Hopkins, 2005). Psychosocial support, which is unique to each individual, represents a form of relational learning that mentors use to help build mentees' self-efficiency, self-esteem, and self-confidence to aid in the mentees' development, self-worth, and competency (Bouquillon, Sosik, & Lee, 2005).

Using a qualitative methodology, the researcher explored (a) the female managers' perspectives on the developmental process of the Women on Women (WOW) mentoring program; (b) the managers' experiences and expectations relating to the program; (c) the female managers' thoughts concerning the program operations, processes, and outcomes; and (d) the perceived changes that influenced the female managers as a result of participation in the development of the mentoring program. The

business being studied is located in the southeastern United States, with local stores in different states that are further subdivided into district clusters and several international chains located around the world. The company's headquarters are located in Boston, Massachusetts.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this research study involved the failure of a service retail business to successfully develop an all-female mentorship program in 2009. *Failure* as defined by this study is the unsuccessful accomplishment of the mentoring program's intended purpose, which was to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster. To date, the program is non-existent. This is noteworthy because Wolfman (2007) reported that most organizations do not recruit, promote, or support women workers as much as they do men. Additionally, Catalyst (2010, 2011) reported there is a limited supply of successful mentoring programs specifically established for women, due in part to a critical shortage of women in senior positions to serve as role models.

Acker (2009) stated the following:

When women fill the top jobs, other women may benefit in some ways. As research is beginning to show (e.g., Cohen & Huffman, 2007; Hultin & Szulkin, 2003), when women occupy high managerial positions, the gender wage gap at lower hierarchical levels tends to be lower than when women are not present at the top. (p. 200)

Acker (2009) cautioned these changes occur only if women at the top can go beyond interventions in individual cases to promote larger economic changes that abolish or limit inequalities. Wolfman (2007) expressed that, if women at the top can unite, their contributions could be of tremendous assistance to women who are talented and ambitious and help them move up the corporate ladder at a faster rate. Gender inequities may be reduced when women occupy managerial positions and when women are in

higher managerial positions.

Researchers have posited the relevance and importance of mentoring (Bower, 2007; Gibson, 2006; Kram & Ragins, 2007). In addition, Hayes (2005) affirmed that the integration of mentoring helps to promote individual career advancement and enhances educational and professional development. Gardiner, Tiggemann, Kearns, and Marshall (2007) alluded to the successful outcomes of women who are involved in training and development. Gibson (2006) promoted mentoring as a career-development support tool designed to be used by women and minorities to gain access to informational networks. Additionally, Allen and O'Brien (2006) affirmed that businesses and organizations often use mentoring to attract new talent.

Even with the increased rate of women participating in the workplace and the number of women acquiring advanced degrees and occupying leadership positions (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), women continue to experience invisible barriers in advancing their careers and climbing the corporate ladder to top management and leadership positions. Although women have not overcome existing barriers, the number of women in the labor force continues to grow faster than the number of men: 7.5% growth from 2008 to 2010 for men compared to 9.0% for women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that there were 16 female chief executive officers in Fortune 500 companies and 19 female chief executive officers in Fortune 1,000 companies.

Phenomenon of interest. Increased numbers of women in the workforce are obtaining advanced degrees and professional training; however, they are still encountering invisible barriers that impede a faster and smoother transition to top management positions. Women are marginalized in the workplace, and they have been

given low-level jobs that lack key corporate responsibilities (Berry & Franks, 2010).

With this current trend, it will take a longer time for women to achieve parity with men in top management and leadership positions in the workplace. According to Barsh and Yee (2011), the presence of women in the workforce helps to improve the economic performance of organizations and the nation, and, without the increase of women in the labor force, the economy would be 25% smaller. Because an expanding workforce and rising productivity drive the economy, women are critical to both forms of growth. Furthermore, Catalyst (2011) revealed a correlation between an organization's financial performance and the representation of more women in top leadership positions.

As noted earlier, with the increase in the workplace coupled with the disproportional representation of women in management and certain fields of work, mentoring has been referenced as a key tool for advancing women's careers. However, despite the increasing interest in mentoring and the popularity and prevalence of the mentoring relationship over the past 20 years (Allen & Eby, 2007; Kram & Ragins, 2007), women are still not benefiting from mentoring, which could be used to improve their career advancement and psychosocial support.

To help facilitate the continuing progressive development of women, organizations need to develop criteria and strategies that can be used to set standards against the glass ceiling and "good-old-boy" network mentalities. Employing mentoring as a governing standard becomes an accelerator for organizations because mentoring has been successfully linked with many companies; however, not all individuals within the organization have been mentored, and the employees who lack mentoring opportunities tend to be women and less skilled workers (Washington, 2011). Creating a mentoring culture to promote and sustain women's career development and psychosocial support

creates a conceptual and practical opportunity for women to accomplish their goals, gain visibility, and expand, which leads to organizational benefits and growth opportunities for the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

The objective of the study was to investigate and describe the challenges, opportunities, and constraints encountered by six service-retail female managers during the design and unsuccessful development of an all-women mentoring program to recruit and retain women into the service-based local district cluster. The findings should ultimately provide answers to the four research questions: What is the overall perception of the female managers' regarding the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the district cluster? What is the overall perception of the female managers' regarding the reason for the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program? What is the overall perception of the female managers' regarding top management's role in the design, development, and support of the mentoring program, and how did it affect the program outcome? What effects did the failure of the mentoring program have on the female managers' personal life, work performance, and working relationship with top management?

The program's key stakeholders were six female managers who were appointed by senior management in 2009 to develop a program to mentor new recruits. For the purposes of this study, mentoring was limited to the perceptions and understanding of the six female managers assigned to develop the mentoring program. According to Allen, Eby, O'Brien, and Lentz (2008), there is a need for mentoring research that highlights the effects of such programs from the mentor's perspective. Focusing on the perspectives of the female managers produced an indepth understanding of their involvement in the developmental process, relational process, and the impact on their working and personal

life relationships.

The research site was intentionally chosen for the study because of the unsuccessful development an all-female mentoring program. Even though Catalyst (2011), a nonprofit organization that works to advance women's careers, stated that having a mentoring program does not guarantee career success, the company's claim is that mentoring helps to reduce the inequality gap and provide exposure and visibility needed to promote women's careers.

Background and justification. The integration of learning within any organization promotes the overall general knowledge of the organization, which can result in changing attitudes and new behaviors in the organization (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Mentoring is a tool through which learning can be enhanced. Holland (2009) argued that the use of workplace mentoring is a critical factor in workplace learning, especially when the organization employs mentoring to improve the culture and address many of the social and career barriers that hinder the development of women and minorities within the organization. According to Darroch (2006), mentoring is distinctly beneficial to women and minorities because it helps women to overcome informational barriers and hindrances in the business world. The importance of mentoring women was also emphasized in a 2008 *Wall Street Journal* interview of top women executives who stressed the criticalities of mentoring women and minorities in order to promote their advancement in organizations (Hymowitz, 2007).

A review of related literature indicated that individuals who have been mentored could expect to achieve high performance ratings, faster career advancement, and assistance in navigating through social and organizational context. Acquiring a mentor is by no means the panacea to enhancing career development; nevertheless, when the

mentor is influential and has a high-ranking position within the organizational culture, mentoring provides avenues and networking possibilities that can guide the career of the person being mentored. More importantly, the advantages of being mentored far outweigh not having a mentor (Hymowitz, 2007).

Furthermore, women who have mentors are equipped to overcome barriers and glaring disparities while advancing their careers (Hymowitz, 2007). Mentoring is crucial because it facilitates the training and development of employees. Additionally, mentoring increases the potential for groups and individuals to perform certain duties and responsibilities and become familiar with technology and new techniques (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). Moreover, mentoring serves a vital role in the planning, training, and transferring of institutional and organizational knowledge, and it is considered by Catalyst (2011) as a major determinant in the career advancement of women who have had influential mentors or sponsors.

A study performed by Gray (2005) showed that 70% of companies with above-average financial performance cited employee development, mentoring, and financial stability as the building blocks to their corporate success. The best companies were stated to have three things in common: They took more steps to engage employees in business, they considered employees' quality of life, and they ensured a supportive and inclusive organizational culture.

Notwithstanding the numerous benefits of mentoring, there are also negative challenges that are reported as to how women seek, attain, and experience mentoring that psychosocially makes it undesirable (Tharenou, 2005). Regardless of the negative aspects, the positive outcomes outweigh the negative aspects of mentoring, which, according to Kram and Ragins (2007), vary in the satisfaction and the effectiveness that

they provide.

To determine the reason for the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program, the researcher used a phenomenological approach to explore the female managers' views and thoughts to help develop meaning and understanding of their perceptions and experiences during the development process, as well as how they ascribed those meanings to variables such as commitment, team dynamics, and support. The assumption of this study was that organizations play a constructive role in facilitating women's career advancement, and mentoring is a key strategy organizations can use to contribute to increased opportunities for workers, especially women (Catalyst, 2011).

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is inductive and holistic, and it is oriented toward generating and understanding phenomena by describing events as they happened and constructing meaning from them (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), it is a relevant methodology when the aim of the researcher is to develop a more complex understanding. It provides an understanding from the ground up and occurs in a naturalistic setting that provides descriptive, interpretive reasoning. The qualitative approach of the study enabled the female managers to give systematic and step-by-step accounts of the reality of developing the mentoring program, the effect it had on their work-life activities, and lessons learned that could be applied to future program development within their district cluster. Second, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to incorporate the perspectives of the WOW team's thoughts on the importance of using the mentoring program to recruit and retain more women into the business.

The researcher's objective was to examine the problems and issues that impacted

the female managers during the planning and design of the WOW mentoring program and establish an understanding from the ground up, a commitment required of a qualitative researcher in order to study the human experience. The focus of the study was on the experience of the female managers, from a discovery and interpretative approach, to collect full and rich detail of the phenomena. All preconceived notions or assumptions about the phenomenon was bracketed, setting aside all beliefs, feelings, and perceptions in order for the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). As such, the perceptions of the female managers constituted the primary source of knowledge in this study, affixing textual descriptions to explain what was experienced in the development of the program and structural descriptions to explain how it was experienced. Bracketing was accomplished through journaling and reflection (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007).

Relevance to the Discipline

Using a phenomenological strategy of inquiry positioned the researcher to capture data relating to the expectations of the female managers and to provide an understanding of their experiences, beliefs, thoughts, and concerns, as well as insight into their perspectives about changes that influenced their personal and working lives. Qualitative research is oriented toward generating and understanding phenomena by describing events as they happened and constructing meaning from them (Creswell, 2007). Establishing an understanding of the female managers' perceptions of the need for the program, their investment in the program, the program-development process, and the resources allocated for the program development helped to generate a rich understanding of the operations, controls, processes, and support that influenced the program outcome and the female managers' perceptions.

Moreover, developing a ground-up understanding highlighted both positive and negative feedback that generated lessons learned to help streamline and ensure future development needs. In order for organizational growth to occur, effective mentoring programs must (a) promote the careers of women, (b) improve the retention rate of female workers, (c) create a highly performing culture that offers a competitive advantage for female employees, (d) acclimatize new recruits into the organizational culture, and (e) promote leadership development among managers who are mentoring female employees (Kram & Ragins, 2007). However, the central focus of the study was not on the development of the mentoring program but in the meaning or essence of the female managers' lived experiences and perceptions with the planning, decision making, and the developmental process that influenced the managers' management style and the program outcome.

Deficiencies in the evidence. The search for information about mentoring in service retail businesses produced limited information. Key word searches and title searches for available literatures were performed against the following databases: ERIC, ProQuest, ABI/INFORM Global, PsychINFO, and EBSCOhost. Search criteria were limited to gender and peer reviews within the last 7 years. Specific searches were conducted individually or with a combination of terms, including mentors' perceptions, mentoring in service retailing, mentoring and organizational culture, mentoring and women career development, the effect of mentoring on mentors, and mentoring programs.

Specific to women in retailing, information on the effect of mentoring on the career development of women in this industry was limited, with the exception of a more general career opportunity in retailing (Miller, 2011). There were only a few studies in

the manufacturing industry that attempted to break down segments of the industry according to the services that they provide; however, in nonretail organizations, academia, nursing, and business, the research on mentoring and women's career development was extensive. Because of a paucity of data, the researcher integrated data from across the various disciplines of business, academia, health, and service-based industries to support the study on mentoring and women's career development in retailing.

Audience. The study served as a guide to design, develop, and implement the mentoring program. The audiences of this research study were the first line managers at the targeted retail store, top management of the targeted retail store, and other businesses and organizations that need to develop a formal mentoring program, especially tailored towards women. The female managers benefited when they shared their experiences and perceptions about the design and development of the mentoring program. The managers gained knowledge of successful models and structures that were used to implement successful mentoring programs. Top management had the opportunity to socialize with, and directly help in, the development of lower employees they might otherwise never work with. According to Budd (2007), it is essential that leaders create a continuous mentoring relationship with their subordinates, it is the key to increase organizational performance. Organizations and businesses can learn to customize the processes discussed in this study to design and implement successful mentoring programs tailored to their own organizations.

Experiential context. The researcher has always been interested in mentoring, and her interest was two-fold. The researcher has never been formally mentored and believes that her chances for promotion have been severely limited due to not having a

mentor. This was evident in the workplace when individuals with less education and skill sets were being promoted after being mentored by supervisors and managers. Secondly, originating from West Africa, the old adage, “it takes a village to raise a child,” is a common everyday occurrence, which is a form of informal mentoring; however, the researcher believes that there is a lack of formal mentoring that could benefit African women. It is the hope that through mentoring, the researcher would play a part in helping to empower indigenous women in West Africa.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of the completed study, the following terms were used as defined.

Bracketing. This term refers to the process of setting aside assumptions and presuppositions and remaining neutral in the existence of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

Career development. This term refers to the ongoing processes and lifelong sequences that an individual undergoes toward changes in performance, job position, promotion, and a better relationship with management in any organization (Chao, 2009).

Epoche. This term refers to an analytical process in which the researcher engages at the beginning of a study to enable the researcher to view through a different lens, holding back all previous knowledge, or learning without judgment (Patton, 2002).

Formal mentoring. This term refers to a structured, purposeful, and intentional program that is usually formulated to have employees working together by the organizations (Mujtaba, 2007).

Glass ceiling. This term refers to a metaphor used to describe an invisible barrier that prevents professional women and ethnic minorities from advancing into top leadership positions within an organization (Mujtaba, 2007).

Horizontalization. This term refers to taking the list of significant statements

provided by the research participants and treating each statement with equal value while forming nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping statements (Creswell, 2007).

Informal mentoring. This term refers to a program that is spontaneous, casual, and intimate because both the mentor and mentee have, by choice, agreed on the relationship and have common interests and goals (Mujtaba, 2007).

Mentor. This term refers to an excellent teacher, listener, coach, role model, and advisor who can provide the protégé with knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and support in the pursuit of becoming a full member of a profession (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

Mentoring. This term refers to a powerful tool that can be used to accelerate the development of talent, improve staff retention, and create a high-performance culture that offers a real competitive advantage (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

Organizational culture. This term refers to the manner in which things are performed in an organization and passed on to new employees through the process of socialization that influences their behavior at work. Organizational culture includes taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Phenomenology. This term refers to the study of the world as it appears to individuals when they position themselves to understand the meaning of experiences of individuals who have experienced or lived the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

Sponsorship. This term refers to the value of mentor behaviors that support the protégé's initiatives and publicly acknowledges the protégé (Catalyst, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the completed phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences and perceptions of six female managers assigned to design and

develop the mentoring program as a development readiness tool to recruit and mentor more women into their district cluster. The secondary purpose was to discover and understand why the program development was unsuccessful and hopefully provide data that could help to ensure that mentoring programs that are especially directed towards women, are well planned and successfully implemented.

Ensher and Murphy (2005) posited that most organizations do not assess why mentoring fails or the implications of the failure. According to Baugh and Fagenson-Eland (2007), formal mentoring programs are an integral part of an organization's human resource development. Zachary (2005) expressed that more organizations are providing environments where mentoring thrives; and researchers are studying and probing deeper into the dynamics of mentoring relationships (Eby, 2007; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007); however, formal mentoring programs are not always successful (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland, 2007). Ensher and Murphy stated that to understand and improve upon mentoring, new ideas are critical and vital to its success.

The goal of the researcher was to add to the body of evidence the importance of mentoring in the career development of women from all demographics in the workplace and show that effective mentoring is important and contingent upon the successful design and development of a structured and well-planned mentoring program to which top management is committed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this study and a synthesis of the current literature was reviewed. The first section of the literature review provided an overview of mentoring. In the second section, the researcher discussed the role and function of mentoring, the importance of mentoring in the workplace, the influence of mentoring on the organizational culture, and women's career development. The focus of the third section was on the benefits and growth of mentoring programs with suggestions for developing and implementing successful mentoring programs, which was foundational to the study. The study concluded with a look at service retail organizations and how to bridge the equity gap in any business or organization. The topics discussed in the literature review addressed the benefits and drawbacks of mentoring programs and their role in organizational culture.

Rationale

The rationale of the now completed study was to investigate and develop an indepth understanding of the perceptions of six female managers within a service retail business who were tasked to establish the Women of Workforce (WOW) mentoring program. Informed by qualitative data, a rich description of the program need, mentors' experiences and expectations, team dynamics, management expectations, and operational controls were examined to provide data and an understanding of the developmental processes that influenced the program's outcome. Because women are still encountering the invincible glass ceiling that impedes their progress, the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program could be viewed as another setback to women's success and possibly have a negative effect on the female managers who served as mentors. Affirmed by Dinolfo and Nugent (2010) and Allen and Eby (2007), the lack of any mentoring

opportunity is a barrier to the advancement of women. Mentoring is an effective strategy to advance the career of women and minorities, to help them gain access to informational networks, and to improve organizational performance and commitment (Gibson, 2006).

Research studies have indicated the importance of mentoring across the broad range of businesses and organizations (Bower, 2007). Mentoring is a powerful tool that can help to promote individuals' growth, self-esteem, and positive mental health, as well as create greater role collaboration across businesses and organizations (Allen & Eby, 2007). Mentoring, if done well, forms a dyadic, reciprocal relationship from which both mentor and mentee benefit through the significant amount of time and energy that they devote to the process (Allen & Eby, 2007; Underhill, 2006). Allen and Eby (2007) claimed that effective mentoring is usually successful and is based on having frequent interactions characterized by positive effects that have an ongoing affective concern within the mentoring relationship. To ensure that such mentoring relationships exist requires mutual respect between the mentor and the mentee, which leads to emotional closeness, trust, positive outcomes, and interpersonal comfort (Allen & Eby, 2007).

Historical context. Mentoring in the 21st century is viewed as a necessary learning and developmental tool to recruit, retrain, and retain employees with the purpose of improving their potential to increase their skill sets, duties, and job responsibilities (Hansford & Ehrich, 2006). The concept of mentoring became popular in the last decade based on the work of Kram (1985), entitled *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*, a comprehensive analysis of the traditional nature of mentoring in organizational culture. This study brought to the attention of businesses and organizations the importance of mentoring and set the stage for the study of developmental relationships that have a profound impact on all aspects of human

relationships (Allen & Eby, 2007).

People have often invested their time and resources to help other individuals achieve their dreams and develop their potential. Whether it is a formal or informal relationship, mentoring is always occurring (Allen et al., 2008), and Zachary (2005) pointed out that such an investment is invaluable and worthwhile, and the endeavor is priceless because it usually creates a profound and far-reaching rippling effect for extending mentoring toward developing others. Mentoring is a generational experience that dates back through history to a Greek legend whose name and suggested role was a mentor, an entrusted friend, a teacher, and a guardian who cared for Odysseus's son, Telemachus (Allen & Eby, 2007).

Mentoring can also be seen in biblical times with Moses mentoring Joshua (Exodus 24:13; Numbers 27:18), Paul mentoring Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:2), and Jesus mentoring His disciples (Matthew 13:10-23; John 1:37-2:12), thus developing the concept of mentoring through time to what is known as apprenticeship by the middle ages (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewé, 2008). The idea of mentoring has since evolved from the traditional concept of an older, more experienced person providing advice, professional and career support, or psychological and emotional support to that of a younger person. The new context of mentoring encompasses peer groups, network mentoring, and the apprenticeship form of mentoring (Ferris et al., 2008), in which the mentee shadows the mentor to gain valuable skills and knowledge needed for a productive work environment.

Mentoring became an important organizational concept with the work of Levinson (1978), who popularized the concept through the publication of *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, with the mentor acting as a teacher, adviser, sponsor, guide, and counselor.

Mentoring was initially understood as a one-on-one relationship, with a more senior person (i.e., the mentor) assisting a junior person (i.e., the mentee). However, with the advent of Kram's work in 1985, mentoring was viewed through the lens of the organizational context, which introduced a psychosocial function to enhancing an individual's career development. Through time, mentoring has taken on the broader context of role modeling, providing acceptance and confirmation, counseling, promoting trust and confidentiality, networking into the old-boys club, and facilitating needed exposure and visibility for women and minorities, all essential to career progression. Mentoring is complex within its functions and roles, and it provides inherent supports for a multiplicity of uses that vary based on purpose and function, as well as the context in which it is applied in different organizations.

Within the complexities of mentoring, the roles and functions represent a dyadic process in which the responsibilities of the mentor and mentee are different (Kram & Ragins, 2007), with different benefits (Eby, Durley, & Evans, 2008) and different costs (Kram & Ragins, 2007) during the mentoring process. Because of its dyadic process, information obtained from mentoring functions and roles can yield a thorough understanding of the entire process. Mentoring helps to create a learning organization and represents a form of on-the-job training (Cummings & Worley, 2009); it promotes mutual growth, learning, and development within a person's career (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

The process of mentoring has been found to increase job satisfaction (Allen & Eby, 2008; Underhill, 2006), identify effective strategies for career development (Schwille, 2008), transfer skills and knowledge (Fowler & O'Gorman, 2005; Kram & Ragins, 2007), enhance learning (Holland, 2009), and develop and promote individual careers (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Mentoring is posited to form a developmental

relationship in which a mentor provides numerous career development and socioeconomic supports for the mentee (Dougherty et al., 2011).

As such, both the mentor and the protégé can benefit, influence, and learn from each other in a mentoring relationship. In brief, research informed that positive mentoring experiences are normally associated with favorable attitudes and are dependent on the quality of the mentoring relationship that is developed between the mentor and the protégé (Eby et al., 2008). However, both the mentor and the protégé can create an unpleasant mentoring experience when there is a mismatch between the mentor and protégé.

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring, which originated from three specific fields of study (i.e., education, management, and psychology), can be used to develop the culture of an organization to help develop leaders who can meet and change the organizational goals (Zachary, 2005). According to Allen and Eby (2007), there is no single universal definition of mentoring, primarily because mentoring is a social relationship that “always occurs in a social environment and among specific people with different individual attributes” (p. 376). The definition of mentoring varies depending on the context in which mentoring is used across the various disciplines of business, academia, health, law, and faith. Mentoring is used by various organizations and businesses as a developmental tool to promote the exchange of knowledge that enables individuals to take part in meaningful and collaborative activities within organizations. From an organizational standpoint, mentoring is used to improve organizational functions, accelerate career development, and improve leadership development. According to Hagemann (2008), this effort increases bench strength and generates a pool of talent for succession planning.

From a business perspective, mentoring is viewed as an avenue that supports career success, a vehicle to help women and minorities gain access to informational networks, and a tool to improve organizational performance and commitment (Gibson, 2006). In academia, mentoring is used to improve the socialization, orientation, and employment outcomes of faculty, as well as to assist in the development of novice educators with their management skills, and professional development (Smith & Zsohar, 2007). In the health industry, mentoring is viewed as a primary component of nurses' leadership (Grossman, 2007) and is used to grow and develop leadership potential in other nurses as a work-based learning relationship in a structured and formalized framework (McCloughen, O'Brien, & Jackson, 2006).

From the perspective of a faith-based organization, mentoring is intentional and empowering, and it forms a unique relationship that identifies and promotes the work of God's spirit in others' lives, assisting them to access God's resources for their growth and strength in spirituality, character, and ministry (Lewis, 2009). Mentoring, when used across different disciplines as an effective strategy for career growth and development, has been shown to improve socialization, orientation, and career advancement, as well as improve equity for women (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

In an effort to show the importance of mentoring for women, the framework of this study is based upon the functions and relationship of mentoring, as well as the three broad areas constructed from Gibson's (2006) definition of mentoring. These three areas involve the importance of mentoring to support women's careers, the use of mentoring as a vehicle to help women gain access to informational networks, and the use of mentoring as a tool to improve organizational performance and commitment. Gibson's definition is important to this study for several reasons. First, it alludes to the inherent nature of

mentoring to develop and promote successful careers. Second, it affirms that mentoring is crucial in the career development of women and minorities because it helps them gain support, visibility, exposure, and access to various informational networks that would otherwise be inaccessible, but which are necessary for career advancement. Third, it enumerates the organization's role in the development of a mentoring culture to enable employees to create a sense of identity that cultivates loyalty, retention, productivity, and a more engaged and productive workforce.

Despite the various definitions of mentoring, there is still more to learn about the scope and concept of mentoring as well as its roles and functions. However, regardless of the various definitions, certain basic characteristics are common among them. Predominant among these, mentoring is designed primarily to (a) support growth and development; (b) serve as a catalyst; (c) transform, instruct, and guide; and (d) facilitate the development of others (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Therefore, based upon the various definitions of mentoring, the researcher examined the impact of a mentoring program in the work environment, the success or failures that are contingent upon a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the mentors, mentees, and the organization.

Functions of Mentoring

Mentoring as a tool can be used to develop and accelerate the careers of individuals by providing guided observation and practice into social and informational networks in which it provides greater visibility for the individual and informs decision makers of mentees' strengths and potentials (Kram & Ragins, 2007). The process of mentoring is provided by a mentor who is an excellent teacher, listener, coach, advisor, and role model who provides individuals with knowledge, advice, challenges, counsel, and support in the pursuit of becoming a full member of a profession (Kram & Ragins,

2007; Smith & Zsohar, 2007). These processes and functions provided for mentees and organizations are historically classified as career-oriented, psychosocial, and organizational functions (McDowall-Long, 2004).

Career-development functions. The career-oriented functions help to promote and assist in the career progression of mentees and address career-development opportunities to equip and encourage the mentees by providing sponsorship, promoting exposure and visibility (i.e., networking), coaching, protecting, and offering challenging assignments. Sponsorship, according to Catalyst (2011), is the resource and support provided by mentors who are influential in the decision-making process of the organization and who can protect and fight for the career advancement of individuals (i.e., mentees) during the process of providing protection while leveraging their own power and reputation.

Coaching provides advice and generates feedback, which helps to improve the decision-making process when executing and accomplishing various tasks. However, when the mentees master their skill and improve their performance, the exposure and visibility that they receive from the mentor will highlight their talents to management and top leadership. According to Catalyst (2011), this could help to promote mentees' careers and propel them up the organizational ladder, resulting in the empowerment and development of mentees to operate in any organizational environment.

Psychosocial functions. Conversely, the psychosocial support function is intended to build the self-confidence and self-worth of mentees in areas that provide social support and enhancement to the mentees' sense of competence, sense of identity, professional development, and psychosocial development (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Central to the psychosocial functions is providing guidance, counseling, friendship, and

role modeling, as well as validating mentees through confirmation and acceptance (Allen & Eby, 2007). According to De Vries, Webb, and Eveline (2006), the psychosocial function of the mentor-mentee relationships is an enabler of the career development of women in the workforce because it empowers them to build a sense of self as they experience the mentors' confirmation and acceptance.

Organizational functions. The third type of mentoring function provided by a mentor is the organizational function. According to Kram and Ragins (2007), a key function of the organization is knowledge sharing. The sharing of knowledge can help new employees to adjust to the social behavior of the organization. When accomplished across any discipline, this can help in minimizing the overall concerns of the organization toward high turnover of new hires. Compared to the other two functions provided by a mentor, the organizational function is not as highly perceived as career-oriented and psychosocial because the focus of mentoring is centered on the development of the mentee and how he or she can benefit the organization. However, the organization plays a significant role in the development and nurturance of employees through empowering mentoring relationships that are beneficial to all participants and the organization.

Mentoring Relationships

There are two specific types of mentoring relationships: formal and informal. Mentoring relationships either occur naturally between the mentor and the mentee or are assigned by the organization, which makes them formal by nature, structured, purposeful, intentional, and usually helpful in producing teamwork among employees (Mujtaba, 2007). The success of the relationship is dependent on the ability of both the mentor and mentee to establish a sense of partnership fostered through mutual respect. The mentoring relationship should be continuously nurtured in order to provide learning and

development.

Formal relationships. Formal mentoring relationships within organizations are usually structured in nature. They are either determined by the need of the organization to improve employee performance or are initiated by the participants. Additionally, formal mentoring programs should be aligned with the organizational goals and mission (Reiter, 2008). Formal mentoring programs support the objective and subjective career success of individuals (Eby et al., 2008) and are assigned the mentor-mentee dyads that facilitate and support developmental relationships. Egan and Song (2008) conducted an experimental study and learned that mentees in formal mentoring programs reported greater job performance and organizational acclimatization than those in informal programs.

According to Zachary (2005), formal mentoring relationships are usually structured between a mentor and a protégée based on the standard norms, ongoing action plans, time frame, and objectives of the organization. They create positive work attitudes and organizational commitment (Dawley, Andrews, & Bucklew, 2010) and facilitate in the creation and sharing of organizational knowledge (Bryant & Terborg, 2008). Kram and Ragins (2007) described formal mentoring relationships as being consistent, planned, and formally initiated by the organization. In today's workplace, organizations establish formal mentoring programs to realize benefits for the organizations. According to Allen et al. (2008), businesses such as Bank of America, Marriott International, and Charles Schwab have established formal mentoring programs to attract, retain, and develop employees and create high-performing businesses.

Informal relationships. Conversely, informal relationships are mostly spontaneous, casual, and intimate, and they have existed over time in the form of

counseling, guardianship, teaching, coaching, and advising (Payne & Huffman, 2005). They occur in all facets of life and serve as different support systems that can have an impact and make a difference in individual lives. Allen and Eby (2007) explained that organizations that do not undertake formal mentoring programs could still have naturally occurring mentoring relationships. This kind of voluntary mentoring relationship is formed mostly without the benefit of formal programs and involves a one-on-one dyadic relationship between a junior and a senior person.

The uniqueness of informal mentoring relationships is that they form out of mutual interest and are not structured by the organization. According to Allen et al. (2008) and Sosik and Lee (2005), informal mentoring relationships have more effective results than formal mentoring relationships. However, the result of any mentoring relationship is to achieve the optimal outcomes of enhancing individual career and psychosocial development and organizational experience (Brashear, Bellenger, Boles, & Barksdale, 2006).

Mentoring Outcomes

Outcomes for mentees. Mentoring is the vehicle that management can use to provide knowledge, support, and guidance to a less experienced individual (Erdem & Aytemur, 2008). It can occur between a senior member of an organization and a less experienced worker, subordinate, or protégé, in which the senior member provides or shares career guidance, technical knowledge, decision-making insight, and career support (Erdem & Aytemur, 2008).

One of the benefits provided to the mentee comes directly from the psychosocial functions of the mentor. The social support provided especially to new employees can help them to adapt to the stress and challenges of assimilating into a new work

environment. This can be seen when a mentor introduces the mentee to the right people who can help to provide greater visibility and exposure. Socialization, especially for new employees, provides role clarity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the adaptation of the behavior and patterns of the organizational culture.

The benefit of career development represents the greatest outcome for the mentees. To develop employees is to develop their careers, and Sinclair (2009) explained that career development is a holistic concept that inextricably intertwines with work and an individual's personal life. Taking control of one's own career development represents a lifetime personal ambition that is dynamic, and, with the advances in technology, people can constantly improve and upgrade their skill sets in order to accommodate career changes and adjustments in the new workplace context.

In today's workplace, organizations are always finding ways to retain their greatest assets and to create new and innovative ways to attract and retain new talents. An organization's greatest assets are the employees; however, organizations do not have power over employees' careers. Instead, the power lies within individual employees to become more proactive in shaping their careers. When individuals are constructing their own career development, they act as free agents in developing and marketing their personal skills, focusing on employability rather than on job security and learning to take full responsibility for the direction and expansion of their own careers (Baruch, 2006; Baruch & Sullivan, 2009). However, organizations should also take an interest in the career development of individual employees. Baruch (2006) further explained that career development covers vertical and horizontal movement within organizations, which enables clearly defined plans of action to help ready employees for the future and preserves the organization's ability to meet its needs. Thus, career development

sometimes becomes a shared responsibility of individuals and organizations (Baruch, 2006).

Career development is viewed as a multidirectional and multileveled construct because of the paradigm shift in the modern workplace. Fowler and O’Gorman (2005) explained that career development and advancement are influenced by individual characteristics, but evidence suggests that environmental and organizational factors also play significant roles in this developmental process. The concept of career development originated with Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) with the belief that a person’s career development was achieved when he or she reached early adulthood; however, it was later realized that career choice was inherently linked to individual decision-making activity, which is a lifetime process. The words *career* and *job* are used interchangeably, but they are different.

A *career* is defined as a combination of a person-relevant experience both internal and external to the organization (Baruch & Sullivan, 2009). The career is a lifetime process that becomes the responsibility of each individual to define, mold, and develop for his or her own value and future development (Kram & Ragins, 2007). A career is a process, an extension of an individual lifetime journey, of building and making proper use of personal skills, knowledge, and experience. Sinclair (2009) suggested that a career should be viewed differently from a job because the essence of a career can be articulated across an individual’s life span that ultimately links the behavior with interventions in the person’s life.

A *job* is defined as labor that is performed for pay (Baruch & Sullivan, 2009) and does not necessarily provide advancement or gratification. According to Gunlu, Aksarayli, and Percin (2010), there is a strong link between job satisfaction and the

commitment to the organization. Generally, there are three approaches to an employee commitment towards the organization: (a) affective organizational commitment, (b) continuance organizational commitment, and (c) normative organizational commitment. Gunlu, Aksarayli, and Percin (2010) posited that job satisfaction has a significant effect on an employee's affective commitment and normative commitment that culminates into a continuous commitment by the employee to the organization (Yang, 2010). Employees with affective commitment will remain with the organization because they desire to do so; whereas, employees with normative commitment will feel a sense of obligation to remain with the organization.

Conversely, a high level of job satisfaction increases workers' performance and responsibility and encourages them to perform at their optimal level (Meisinger, 2007); whereas, a low level of job satisfaction results in a high rate of job turnover and decreased productivity. Job satisfaction is influenced by salary, working environment, organizational commitment, promotions, and recognition, which ultimately affect the organization.

Outcomes for mentors. Amelink (2009) purported that mentors assist the organization by monitoring other employees and ensuring that (a) their jobs are performed up to standard, (b) organizational knowledge is transferred, and (c) organizational values and practices are understood. According to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), the benefits that mentors receive from mentoring others include (a) renewed role as an expert; (b) a greater understanding of the barriers experienced at lower levels of the organization; (c) enhanced skills in coaching, counseling, listening, and modeling; (d) a more personal style of leadership; (e) demonstration of expertise and sharing of knowledge; and (f) increased generational awareness. Mentors benefit from

mentoring relationships in that they are learning and growing as they share their professional knowledge and experiences with the mentees. Notably, the mentoring relationship is as valuable to the mentor as it is to the mentee.

Outcomes for organizations. Studies have established numerous benefits associated with mentoring relationships and formal mentoring programs. When organizations invest in the advancement of their employees, the return on investment is a highly productive and skilled working force. Organizational benefits are profound and can be widespread throughout the organization in the form of organizational change (De Vries et al., 2006), managerial knowledge (Geisler, 2007), organizational development (Hezlett & Gibson, 2007), and engagement of high performers (Satter & Russ, 2007). According to Schaffer (2008), one of the primary benefits to organizations is the advancement in technology that enables organizations to stay competitive and helps them to recruit, retain, and retrain their workforce. Consequently, organizations that create mentoring programs do experience an increase in morale because of the increased organizational productivity that results in positive benefits for the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

Organizations that incorporate mentoring as a business strategy benefit from increased business performance, diverse cultures, loyal employees, increased retention, and the leadership of women who are the fastest growing demographic population currently in the labor market (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Research shows that organizations benefit when employees exhibit satisfaction and commitment. Additionally, organizations benefit because mentoring helps to develop the skills and competencies of the organization's workforce, thus enabling them to thrive in today's competitive workplace. Consequently, most businesses and organizations now identify mentoring as

an influential tool in the promotion and career development of both men and women (Office of Personnel Management, 2008).

According to Burke and Davidson (2011), there are a number of benefits that accrue for organizations with women in senior-level positions. These benefits include (a) higher profits, more risk awareness, less competition, and a greater ability to survive financial downturns; (b) policies that contribute to individual and societal health education, families, and entrepreneurship; (c) a stronger integration of work and family, leading to higher productivity and quality of life; (d) increased commitment to both personal and corporate responsibility and broader and more long-term planning; and (e) management that reflects 21st-century teamwork and participative decision making.

Additional benefits reported, according to Gray (2005), were by organizations with above-average financial performance that cited employee development, mentoring, and financial stability as the building blocks to their corporate success. The best companies were stated to have three things in common: They took more steps to engage employees in business, they considered employees' quality of life, and they made an effort to create a supportive and inclusive organizational culture. Mentoring contributes to the success of organizations by helping to support professional development, organizational development, organizational culture, diversity, and organizational policies. The mentoring experience can become a change agent that inspires growth and development that can have significant and positive effects on an organization (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Summarily, benefits gained by organizations are the transformation of an effective mentoring culture into a learning environment with an improved competency that benefits the organization and enhances employee learning (Kram & Ragins, 2007).

Impact of Mentoring

Benefits. The benefits derived from mentoring are numerous. According to Dougherty et al. (2011), mentoring provides many benefits, it empowers and builds confidence, increases job satisfaction, and promotes career advancement. With reference to women, mentoring supports women and helps them to develop career strategies, learn organizational politics, build networks, handle conflicts, and balance work-and-life activities that delay progress (Williems & Smet, 2007). However, according to Billimoria, Joy, and Liang (2008) and Kram and Ragins (2007), mentoring programs are usually taken on only by larger organizations and professional and governmental organizations.

Kram and Ragins (2007) affirmed that individuals benefit more from a mentoring relationship than those who do not have the opportunity of such a service because it becomes the most influential and vital tool in guiding the career development of individuals. For example, in a survey of 1,251 senior executive women, four of five indicated that a significant part of their success could be attributed to having a mentor. A study conducted by Blickle, Witzki, and Schneider (2009) revealed that the existence of a positive relation between participants of the program and benefits came from the mentoring relationship, with the result of the study disclosing an increase in job satisfaction, high organizational visibility, and exposure acquired through networking. As such, mentoring becomes critical in the career development and advancement of individuals.

For instance, Underhill (2006) studied the benefits of mentoring in the workplace and the careers of individuals who were mentored and those who were never mentored. This work supported other studies confirming that mentoring does have an impact on

career outcomes for individuals who have been mentored as compared to those who have not been mentored. Career outcomes cited by Allen et al. (2008) and Underhill (2006) included (a) self-esteem, (b) understanding of alternative employment opportunities, and (c) tenure in the organization. However, regardless of the benefits, mentoring relationships will encounter both positive and negative experiences and interaction, but these experiences should be distinct from one another (Eby et al., 2008).

Developmental benefits of mentoring programs are promising and can be integral to business organizations (De Janasz & Forret, 2005) because they are used to promote cognitive development and purposeful learning. Hagemann (2008) posited that in order for organizations to benefit and retain talents, they must develop strategies to provide skills training, professional-development programs, cross-pollination of talents, and mentoring programs. When employees are trained and developed, organizations benefit and their return on investment increases. Trained employees gain an edge over their competitors. However, Allen and O'Brien (2006) cautioned that even though research have identified some organizational benefits from mentoring, more studies should be performed to identify the full impact of mentoring.

Employee learning. When individuals are employed, it requires the initiative from both the organization and the person in order to provide maximum benefit. Love (2004) posited that mentoring is widely recognized as a valuable method for staff development, transmission of corporate culture, and socialization that, when properly designed, can be a useful and structured way to communicate and transfer information of different management approaches to help new and existing employees. A well-designed career-development plan can help to develop the careers of employees by utilizing their knowledge, skills, and experience for the benefit of the organization and the benefit of the

individual, resulting in job satisfaction, job commitment, and a more engaged and productive workforce. The American Society for Training and Development conducted a human resource development survey to ascertain how learning occurs in organizations, and the results indicated that 71% of all learning occurred through coaching and mentoring.

Organizational Culture and Mentoring

From an organizational perspective, mentoring is inherent to learning and development. In today's workplace, many organizations are benefiting from establishing formal mentoring programs that are specific to their organizational needs. Mentoring is valuable to organizations because it provides for continuous learning and development and a strong organizational culture, especially when the organization endeavors to assure that female employees have the same access as men to training and development. Organizational support of mentoring programs substantiates the importance of mentoring within the organization and helps individuals to determine whether they are interested in mentoring.

According to Paglis, Green, and Bauer (2006), the value of organizational mentoring is an inherent component of formal and even informal mentoring because it can be used to orient, socialize, and maximize new employees' talents. Organizational mentoring can increase business performance, develop a diverse culture, cultivate high-potential employees, and promote women who are the fastest growing demographic population currently in the labor market. Organizational mentoring can also help women gain access to informational networks, organizational policies and programs, promotional and career advancement opportunities, and the planning, training, and transferring of institutional knowledge (Gibson, 2006).

Mujtaba (2007) emphasized that mentoring is executed differently in various organizations and that it should be adopted by organizations and developed into an organizational mentoring scheme that provides the necessary resources for supporting and implementing learning into the organizational culture. In particular, if mentoring is not sufficiently embedded in a supportive organizational culture that values learning, then development rarely flourishes and it becomes too easily replaced (Zachary, 2005). Therefore, when mentoring is embedded in an organization's culture, it creates a sense of unity among employees because the organization's core values are promoted throughout the organization, along with socialization, which enables employees to learn faster and more effectively.

Organizational mentoring can improve retention, increase commitment, build morale, promote leadership development, provide ongoing career development, and facilitate organizational learning that is essential in understanding the organizational culture, all of which help to motivate and influence employees' attitudes (Zachary, 2005). Mentoring is essential in that it provides the opportunity for growth and development and a vehicle by which organizational knowledge can be leveraged for successful succession planning and for improved vertical and horizontal communication between levels and across the organizational culture (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006). This effort can increase opportunities to transfer knowledge and skills and help organizations to address issues that could inhibit productivity.

Love (2004) reported that mentoring has excellent organizational value in succession planning, the transfer of organizational knowledge, and retention of employees. During the hiring process, it takes on the crucial role of ensuring that new hires adjust and adapt to the organizational culture, thereby fostering a bond of loyalty

toward the organization's mission, values, and goals. However, regardless of the organizational culture, there is no universal best mentoring model to fit the needs of all organizations (Ismail, Khian-Jui, & Abdullah, 2009).

Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes, and Garrett-Harris (2006) pointed out that high-level mentoring organizations (a) have a clear link to business issues, (b) participate in the culture change process of the organization, (c) have senior management involved as mentees and mentors, (d) are involved in long-term talent management, (e) are involved in the development of individuals and scheme, (f) have a clear framework that is publicized with stories, and (g) focus on business issues and change agenda. Cummings and Worley (2009) explained that changes in the organization go deeper than structural issues, and any neglect of the culture will result in failure.

Developing a mentoring culture. For an organization to develop a mentoring culture, the organization will have to maintain an environment that supports the all-inclusive participation and collaboration of employees, which would significantly improve their career opportunities and personal development. Developing a mentoring culture differentiates a learning organization from other organizations and increases the potential of attracting job seekers, especially among those with a strong learning orientation (Allen & O'Brien, 2006). The sharing of organizational knowledge is shown to support mentoring and the development of human capital, which can turn an organization into a learned organization with better retention rates (Eby, Lockwood, & Butts, 2006; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005).

Workplace mentoring. There are generational differences in today's workplace, and mentoring is utilized to bridge the gap in the sharing of knowledge between generations because newer and younger employees are more technologically proficient

than their older counterparts who have the work experience and knowledge but are about to retire. According to Hagemann (2008), for the first time in working history, there are four generations of workers, with every generation having its own view of the workplace and mentoring practices. To address the different views, according to Holland (2009), workplace mentoring should be viewed as the most critical factor in workplace learning because it can be used as a means or support of training and apprenticeship, as well as the transfer of knowledge.

According to Allen et al. (2008), workplace mentoring is a relatively new focus of study and can be used as a bridge whereby organizations can accomplish their objectives, as well as affirm and validate mentees' professional accomplishment (Khian-Jui, Ismail, & Yaacob, 2009). Liang, Tracy, Taylor, and Williams (2002) posited that the validation of mentees is completed when the confirmation and acceptance process of mentees has been carried out; this outcome results in loyal and motivated employees. Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Marchese (2006) noted that loyal and motivated employees exhibited more positive and committed attitudes than did employees who had never been mentored. Moreover, a review of related literature indicated that individuals who had been mentored could expect to obtain high-performance ratings, faster career advancement, and more assistance in navigating through the social and organizational environment. Kram and Ragins (2007) found that individuals who were mentored became exposed to the organizational goals, values, politics, people, language, and performance proficiency of the organization, unlike those who had never been mentored.

The use of mentoring as a developmental tool is fundamental to learning in the workplace. Cummings and Worley (2009) stated that mentoring helps to create a learning organization and is a form of on-the-job training that is practiced by most organizations;

however, many organizations are still not utilizing mentoring as a developmental tool that can assist in the development of a person's career and help turn the organization into a learning organization. Mentoring in the workplace supports the development of employees; however, in order to understand the complexities of mentoring, it has to be approached through the lens of its purpose and function specific to the current developmental needs of the organization.

Mentoring as an Employee Development Tool

Approximately 69% of organizations provide mentoring programs (Catalyst, 2008) to improve employees' career development, and 48% of organizations and businesses provide mentoring programs to promote diversity. Mentoring help to empower organizations and prevent accumulated organizational knowledge from walking out of the door due to the loss of experienced employees. Mentoring can serve as a powerful tool for fulfilling the human need to connect, share, belong, and experience growth and development (Allen & Eby, 2007). According to Cummings and Worley (2009), mentoring should be incorporated into the organizational culture because organizational culture influences the mentoring process. The implementation of a successful mentoring program must be linked to the organization's mission, and will require the full support of top management in order to support and adhere to organizational policies in terms of support and commitment, decision-making processes, recruitment, career planning, and development of employees (Arokiasamy & Maimunah, 2011).

The Office of Personnel Management (2008) reported that to ensure the success and effectiveness of mentoring, organizations must implement the following actions: (a) an on-boarding process, (b) skills enhancement, (c) professional identity, (d) career-development program, (e) leadership and management-development program, (f)

education support, (g) organizational development and culture change, (h) customer support service, (i) staff retention plan, (j) recruitment incentives, and (k) knowledge management or knowledge transfer. A structured top-down support system ensures the successful development and implementation of formal mentoring programs. The use of such support facilitates the integrated of mentoring programs into the organizational culture, which then become part of the human resource strategy.

Allen and O'Brien (2006) confirmed that such benefits can be seen when the development of formal mentoring programs inhibit barriers such as a lack of easy access to informal old-boys networks, lack of suitable mentors, lack of access to sponsorship and patronage, and the inability to steer the organizational political culture that women encounter in an all male environment. Mentoring programs that succeed require stakeholders to create mentoring opportunities that would ensure that the program has continued success while advancing employees' career development. However, it is reported that high percentages of all-formal mentoring programs fail due to the lack of initiative on the part of employees.

Managers as mentors. Managers should be able to engage, motivate, challenge, and support individuals because this process helps them to become connected and committed to giving their best service to the organization. Valerio (2011) contended that management responsibilities are a prerequisite to executive promotion, and they can be accomplished if organizations provide the necessary tools, such as mentoring, to help employees promote their individual careers and leadership performance. Furthermore, research stipulates that, if mentoring programs are properly planned and administered by managers, they could have a significant impact on individuals' career advancement and socialization.

Drawbacks to mentoring. Similarly, there are numerous drawbacks encountered during mentoring. Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins (2010) and Kim and Choi (2011) reported that there are challenges and negative outcomes of mentoring experienced by mentors, mentees, and organizations. However, Kim and Choi stated that the negative aspects of mentoring would more likely be seen in formal, rather than informal, mentoring relationships. According to Kram and Ragins (2007), mentees can cause negative mentoring relations that lead to increased burnout for mentors. Additionally, negative mentoring experiences, such as mentees' performance, mentees' interpersonal conflict, and mentees exhibiting destructive relational patterns, can create serious problems for mentors (Choi & Kim, 2011).

Equally so, because of their more powerful position in the mentoring relationship, mentors can create negative mentoring experiences as perceived by the protégé. Eby et al. (2010) affirmed that negative mentoring is most likely to occur when mentors have different values, beliefs, and attitudes, and exhibit manipulative behaviors. For organizations, a negative mentoring outcome is associated with cost, lack of organizational support, and difficulties in coordinating programs (Eby et al., 2010).

Designing Mentoring Programs

According to Harris, Winskowski, and Engdahl (2007), Murray (2006), and Zachary (2005), organizations and businesses support the design and development of specific mentoring programs. Gutner (2009), posited that 70% of Fortune 500 companies have already implemented mentoring programs. In 2008, the Government Accountability Office reported that some federal offices would be implementing formalized mentoring programs. Dickinson, Jankot, and Gracon (2009) reported that Sun Microsystems had a 1,000% return on their investment into their mentoring program that yielded high returns

in networking, knowledge transfer, and diversity. Ensher and Murphy (2005) posited that outcomes such as the one reported by Sun Microsystems represent the exception, rather than the rule. Conversely, most successful mentoring program models have clearly stipulated goals and objectives, as well as criteria for successful program development.

In the next section of this literature review, strategies that are common among successful mentoring programs will be explored, and information will be presented on how the design and structure of successful mentoring programs can be customized to fit specific organizational cultures, thereby helping organizations and businesses to develop their own unique mentoring program.

Characteristics of successful mentoring programs. Organizations that create and support mentoring programs help to support organizational productivity, career development, and the organizational business goals (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Safi and Burrell (2007) asserted that the use of a mentoring program in organizations becomes effective when employees are enabled to perform in the organization, understand the organization's culture, develop an understanding of the organization's politics, obtain job information, and gain valuable information from coworkers who are leaving the organization. An important key to developing successful mentoring programs is that the program objective should be to increase the quality and quantity of the participants within the organizational structure.

There is no standardized model for mentoring programs, but mentoring program schemes can be customized and uniquely developed to address the needs of particular businesses or organizations. Participants' knowledge and understanding of management expectations, as well as their own career goals and ambitions, may affect the success and outcome of the program. Therefore, the success of mentoring programs is dependent

upon mentees and mentors having a clear understanding of the objectives and requirements of the program, its purpose, and goals, and an established commitment and support from the mentors, mentees, and top management. The extent to which mentoring programs are successful would be contingent upon the interests and motivation that goes into the design and development of the programs, as well as a clear articulation of the anticipated outcomes.

The key interest of the researcher is to present the extent to which the program structure clearly defines the program goals and objectives, as well as participants' understanding of anticipated outcomes that contribute to the success or failure of mentoring programs. Identification of key variables in the design and development of mentoring programs, the design process, the program outcome, and the motivation of the contributor, the mentors, and mentees can transform it into a successful mentoring program model. Establishing a solid mentoring framework is significant in the process of designing and developing mentoring programs.

Elements of successful mentoring programs. Successful mentoring programs have reciprocal relationships. According to Broder-Singer (2012), a successful mentoring program should consist of the following elements:

1. A clear delineation of program goals and expectations for mentors and mentees.
2. A careful selection and pairing of mentors and mentees.
3. An accountability of both the mentor and mentee for the relationship's success.
4. A recognition of mentors who make a difference.
5. A time line with a beginning, middle, and end, so participants can end the relationship gracefully if it is not working.
6. An organizational follow-up to benchmark the success of individual pairings

and the development of best practices.

A structured model for mentoring programs should emerge when these elements have been incorporated into the scope, structure, and operational procedures to construct and produce a successful program outcome. However, Kram (1985) cautioned that organizations must have an understanding of the unique and specific cultural environment that controls their organization before designing and implementing mentoring programs.

Developing successful mentoring programs. The development of successful mentoring programs should be aligned with the organization's strategic goals and openly communicated to the entire organization. According to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), the individuals who implement successful mentoring programs must be able to (a) solicit, receive, review, and approve applications; (b) create the pairing of mentors and mentees based on the application forms; (c) conduct an orientation session; (d) conduct planned activities; (e) conduct a completion ceremony; and (f) evaluate each step of the implementation process. Conducting follow-up evaluation is essential for measuring the success of the program.

Organizations that implement mentoring programs must first ascertain that the need exists and gather facts that justify the initiative for the program development. According to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), to ensure the success of effective mentoring programs, the following steps are essential to follow: (a) identify the program manager and the senior level champion; (b) identify the purpose of the program; (c) identify the intended mentors and mentees; (d) create a program implementation action plan; (e) establish the program approval process; (f) establish policies, procedures, and responsibilities; (g) schedule activities to support mentors and mentees; (h) create

program documents and resources; (i) develop a communication strategy; (j) train and educate the mentor and mentee pool on aspects and benefits of the mentoring program; and (k) implement and evaluate the program. Once the structure and time line of a mentoring program have been established, the organization can initiate the implementation of the program development. Ensuring the success of a mentoring program is dependent upon a comprehensive evaluation process and accountability of all involved.

For example, in academia, a mentoring program for new teachers was developed in New York in 2005 called New-Teacher Mentoring Program that utilized the New York State Education Department Office of Teaching Initiatives Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching program model. The structure of this program model was that (a) mentoring programs must have a clear purpose and specific goals that reflect best practices, (b) mentoring programs must ensure that the best qualified mentors be matched to newly hired teachers, (c) both the mentor and newly hired teachers must be ready to experience mentoring, (d) mentors must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and (e) a local program evaluation plan must be implemented.

In the health industry, Fox (2010) reported that St. Francis Hospital designed a successful mentoring program that paired new nurses with experienced nurses to reduce the hospital turnover rate of first-year registered nurses. Mentors were selected based on a criteria list for selection, and the program became an established part of the hiring process of new nurses and has expanded to other departments, giving them a competitive advantage over other local hospitals. The mentoring program reported a 100% retention rate after 1 year. Other local hospitals, such as St. Vincent Hospital, and other community hospitals now model the St. Francis program (Fox, 2010).

Mentoring programs in businesses and organizations, such as the Women's Alliance mentoring program at Xerox, develop the personal and professional expertise of women employees. The program was successfully launched in 2007 and has since been benchmarked as a program success indicator. Additionally, according to the National Mentoring Center, mentoring programs in faith-based organizations encounter the same problems as do programs in the secular world. Mentoring programs in faith-based organizations, such as St. John Baptist Church in Columbia, Maryland, were developed because of the need to mentor African American males who were struggling to find their way in the world, and the program in Maryland has emerged as a model of success for effective mentoring programs.

Successful mentoring programs have several unique characteristics in common: They have a clear purpose, specific goals, and defined roles. In order to avoid the unsuccessful development of mentoring programs, a useful and feasible model should be developed and customized from any successful program model. However, Hezlett and Gibson (2005) posited that additional research should be conducted to understand the specific factors that affect the quality of the mentoring process and mentoring programs.

Failure of mentoring programs. According to research, mentoring initiatives can fail when (a) organizations and businesses fail to use intentional process to guide the mentor-mentee relationship, (b) there is a lack of senior management support and involvement, (c) skills training is not provided to mentors and mentees, (d) outcomes are not clearly defined or tracked, and (e) there is no established criteria for selecting and matching mentors and mentees. According to Zachary (2005), many mentoring programs fail when top management is not involved in the program and its inception, and the program goals are not clearly established. The failure of any program affects an

organization's bottom line, which also adversely affects women's development and advancement.

Organizational Cultures and Women's Advancement

According to Baker, Greenberg, and Hemingway (2006), the strongest organizations are those that have innovative cultures and a clear vision that employees work unitedly to obtain. Cummings and Worley (2009) reported that organizational culture is a socially constructed attribute of the organization that serves as the social glue that binds organizations together and represents how they do things. Like humans, organizations have cultures and needs. Organizational culture is the identity, values, and behaviors within an organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Additionally, the organization's culture defines the organization's assumptions and expectations (Cummings & Worley, 2009) and determines the essential quality of the organization's social system by forging a sense of identity for employees through the process of socialization (Robbins & Judge, 2008).

According to Bierema (2005), organizations can develop a culture that is sensitive to, aware of, and supportive of gendered power relations. Billimoria et al. (2008) confirmed that organizations could implement into the organizational culture wider and deeper changes that are continually reinvented to transform structures, processes, work practices, and mental models that perpetuate inequality. This effort could improve organizational culture and practices and help to enhance the work climate. The culture of the organization influences the way that employees think, feel, and behave. Overall, organizational culture is the way of life of the organization, representing the beliefs and patterns of behavior of its members (Kwak & Anbari, 2006). Organizational culture is cultivated over time and is unique to each organization.

Each organization has a unique set of attributes and shared beliefs that define how the organizational culture operates and how things are performed in the organization and shared among employees that influence the working culture (Kwak & Anbari, 2006). The organizational operations determine the organization's culture, which defines management functions, such as work doctrines, language and communication, dress and physical artifacts, informal socializing, the work structure, and how gender is viewed. The organizational culture defines the organization's values systems, assumptions, and expectations to determine the organization's social system, which historically includes the taken-for-granted values that underline the assumptions and expectations that define and characterize the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009).

As organizations promote mentoring to become more supportive in helping women experience career advancement, and women observe similar success stories among other women, mentoring will become increasingly an acceptable vehicle to promote women career development in the workplace. Thus, the area of interest the researcher sought to address is the importance of mentoring women in the workplace, and the development and implementation of successful mentoring programs that will address and meet the needs of women.

Women in the workplace. Women's participation in the workforce is expected to grow 9.0% faster than men by 2018; however, as the number of women increases, their rate of advancement is nominal, which can cause them to fail at reaching leadership roles in higher numbers (Dezso & Ross, 2008). Women's presence in the workplace in all developed countries has grown tremendously due in part to increased industrialization, political and legal initiatives, and growth in the service sector and the profit and not-for-profit sectors that are creating new opportunities for women (Burke & Davidson, 2011).

A decade or two ago, women were expected to be stay-at-home moms, and most did not work outside of the home. However, in 2013, women are defining their careers and working in jobs that were once predominantly male oriented. One of the key factors contributing to this change is the high percentage of women who are advancing their education. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009), the percentage of women holding college degrees tripled between 1970 and 2009. Nevertheless, with women acquiring advanced degrees and occupying leadership positions, women continue to experience invisible barriers in advancing their careers and climbing the corporate ladder to top management and leadership positions. In 2009, women made up 59.2% of the workforce; however, of the 1.3 million jobs that were created, women gained only 149,000 jobs, whereas 90% of them went to men (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Women account for 51% of all people employed in management but hold only 3% of the Fortune 500's top executive positions.

The 2009 report on women chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies listed only 16 women, and, in Fortune 1,000 companies, the number of women chief executive officers was 19. The report showed that the numbers of women in the Fortune 500 and Fortune 1,000 arenas are minimal. Women are still underrepresented in the workplace, and they are still being overlooked for certain positions because of stereotyping and preconceptions. A Catalyst (2008) study reported that the number of women holding staff positions was higher than those holding management positions. Compared to men, women held fewer staff positions than men did and even smaller numbers of management positions. Another study conducted by Catalyst (2010) indicated that the key obstacles contributing to this inequality is that women are less senior than their male counterparts and are at a disadvantage in the decision-making process that

impacts them.

Burke and Davidson (2009) summarized that to reduce the inequality gap, organizations need to support and develop the talent of more women in the workplace. The development of women's talents will help organizations to realize (a) higher profits, more risk awareness, less hypercompetition, and a greater ability to survive financial downturns; (b) policies that contribute to individual and societal health (e.g., education, families, entrepreneurship); (c) a stronger integration of work and family leading to higher productivity and quality of life; (d) increased commitment to both personal and corporate responsibility and broader and more long-term planning; and (e) management that reflects 21st-century teamwork and participative decision making (Burke & Davidson, 2009).

Developing women's careers and assimilating them into the organization represent two elements of strategic business sense for organizations. According to Burke and Davidson (2009), organizations with a high percentage of women in senior-level positions will (a) acquire the best people for leadership and (b) provide better role models for both men and women, most especially for younger women who are entering the organization and need opportunities for growth and career development.

Women's career development. According to Bierema (2005) and Holland (2009), career-development theories were directed at men and had limited practical use for women because they did not consider the complexities and diversities of women's issues. Women's career development is reported to be very complex and diverse, as well as more complex than that of men because of their dual family and work roles (Huang, El-Khoury, Johannson, Lindroth, & Sverke, 2007) and, as such, cannot be approached with a one-size-fits-all mentality. Women exhibit more adaptive career patterns (Hakim,

2006), whereas men tend to have more linear, traditional career patterns (Huang et al., 2007) that position them for more monetary benefits and job promotions. This can be seen in both the private and public sector but can now be addressed using mentoring as an integral component to helping and better positioning women to succeed.

Gibson (2006) suggested that mentoring should be used as a vehicle to support women's careers; however, in order to advance the careers of women, organizational policies need to change to enable women to overcome barriers and hindrances that they encounter throughout their careers (Shandu & Mehta, 2007). One change indicator for organizations is to develop a more diverse and inclusive mentoring culture that will make available tools and resources to promote and develop the career of both men and women.

According to Darroch (2006), mentoring can help women to overcome informational barriers that obstruct their advancement. Research shows that women who have been mentored typically report greater job satisfaction, greater career success, greater self-confidence, and a stronger support base than women who have not been mentored. The lack of mentoring for most women could be associated with the limited number of available women in top leadership roles, which presents a significant problem in most organizations and especially for women who prefer to be mentored by another woman.

Women who are mentored by other women gain unique benefits because women will better prepare other women to confront stress in the workplace, tackle discrimination and social isolation, and cope with work-family conflicts (Webber, 2006). Campbell and Campbell (2007) validated the preference of being mentored by a person of the same gender or race, even though it does not guarantee a beneficial mentoring outcome. For women who choose to be mentored by other women, the lack of available female mentors

creates problems that necessitate a cross-gender mentoring approach in order to provide women with the opportunity to be mentored by men.

Hannan (2006) surmised that viewing mentoring through a male gender lens could provide women with broader and different perspectives on different issues because they can draw from two different views. However, Fowler and O’Gorman (2009) argued that women who acquire male mentors might (a) learn different gender behavior when men are offering personal and emotional guidance and (b) learn mentors’ behaviors, such as championing, acceptance, and confirmation, which will not be as pronounced with men as among female mentors. In addition, women will need to do away with negative female self-perceptions and gender values that can impede career development.

On the other hand, to help advance their careers, women need such qualities as being creative and self-confident and becoming risk takers who are politically astute decision makers with sound strategic minds and people skills to help them forge ahead in the workplace. Advancement in the workplace has been attributed to advanced education, continuous full-time employment, hard work, and networking (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Although studies still show slow advancement for women, there are tangible signs of progress. Kristof and WuDunn (2009) rationalized that the world is awakening to a powerful truth: Women and girls are not the problem; they are the solution.

Barriers to women’s careers. According to Eagly and Carli (2009), it is not the glass ceiling that holds women back; it is the sum of many obstacles, such as the lack of access to mentors, lack of formal and informal networks, lack of mentoring schemes, lack of career planning, and negative assumptions by top leadership concerning the suitability of women for top management positions, in addition to gender typing of occupations and sex discrimination. Furthermore, women encounter more barriers when advancing their

careers in the manufacturing industry than do their male counterparts (Eagly & Carli, 2009). The same can be said about women in all industries as they develop their careers because, according to Mujtaba (2007), gender inequality is prominent at all levels of an organizational culture and the whole structure of the organizations in which women work.

Mujtaba (2007) further emphasized that barriers existed at all levels of societal organizations; however, these barriers do not apply exclusively to women and minorities. The existence of these barriers that women encounter is attributed to the fact that (a) women are less likely to be given line-management responsibilities (Valerio, 2011) and (b) women lack equal access to networking (Bartol & Zhang, 2007). Equal access to networking can be addressed if organizations can sponsor women's networks that will enable them to build relationships and network functions across working domains (Valerio, 2006). Additional barriers cited by Bierema (2005) that impact women's career development are socioeconomic status, career interruption, positionality, and alternative arrangements. Eagly and Carli (2009) emphasized that the barriers encountered by women on their way to top-level positions are no longer overt. They are more subtle and diverse, and they impede their success and vertical movement.

The term *barrier* has been defined as any obstacle that prevents forward movement or any event or condition that makes career advancement difficult (Eagly & Carli, 2009). Barriers hinder development, promotion, and growth, and, when conceived through a gender lens, they can be viewed as barriers that hinder women's career aspirations and development. Lack of more women in senior positions and the failure to implement the WOW mentoring program can be classified as a deterrent, which is an obstacle to women's career development that is also known as the *sticky-floor syndrome*

(Shambaugh, 2008). Sticky floors are things women could be doing wrong that could be holding them back. Women run into sticky floors when they are not aware of what they do, the impact of their actions and decisions, or the right techniques and skills to overcome certain obstacles. This lack of awareness leads to sticky floors that limit their ability to achieve their career goals. However, with the help of mentoring, women can overcome sticky floors (Shambaugh, 2008). Additionally, Patton et al. (2005) maintained that anything of influence that contributes to or hinders advancement must be identified.

Breaking barriers. To help break down the barriers that women face, President Bush and some congressional leaders, under the Civil Rights Act of 1991, formed the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, a 21-member bipartisan group, to identify barriers that were inhibiting the advancement of women and minorities. Barriers and obstacles that are still experienced by women in the 21st century are widely believed to be caused by disparity within the workplace due to a restriction imposed on the advancement of women of all ethnicities from achieving their career aspirations (Dean, Mills-Strachan, Roberts, Carraher, & Cash, 2009).

The term *glass ceiling* was first mentioned in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article that described the infamous invisible barriers that women encounter as they advance to the top of the corporate hierarchy. However, Shambaugh (2008) further stated that, although the stereotypical, cultural biases that favor men and the old-boy networks still hold true in some organizations, the important thing is for women to look at what they might be doing or not doing that is holding them back. Shambaugh wrote, “I call these self-defeating or self-limiting actions the sticky floors” (p. x).

Eagly and Carli (2009) further emphasized that, depending on the organizational culture, women could be excluded or alienated, which would hinder their growth and

development in leadership positions. However, Kottke and Agars (2005) reported that women can advance in any organization regardless of barriers if they learn how to successfully manage these four underlying processes: (a) social cognitions, (b) organizational justice, (c) response to threat rigidity, and (d) the belief of utility. The most prominent of social cognitions are gender stereotypes and social identity. Gender stereotyping has a more negative impact on women than it does on men because it disproportionately addresses women's needs and creates the mindset that women lack the expertise to lead effectively (Eagly & Carli, 2009).

According to Kottke and Agars (2005), organizational justice can sometimes hinder advancement initiatives because it brings to the forefront the injustice of gender inequalities within the organization. The third process, the response to threat rigidity, can pose a barrier to women advancement simply because of their leadership styles. Women's leadership styles differ from those of men, which could create different types of changes in policies and the organizational culture, and people usually resist change because of unfamiliarity and being uninformed (Kottke and Agars, 2005).

The last process, the belief of utility, refers to the cost effectiveness of the organizational undertakings. Without the practice of utility, organizations will lack the understanding of the barriers that are obstructing women's advancement. Organizations that do not implement such utility create obstacles in the decision-making process of the organization when it relates to the value, benefits, and advancement of women in top leadership positions (Acker, 2009). Nonetheless, women's growth and influence can be generally narrower at the executive level, which ultimately renders them powerless in organizations. However, with the increasing presence of women in the workplace, there is also an increased awareness of the role and contribution that women are making in

organizations that will create greater exposure to a wider power base of executives and senior-level management.

Organizations can play a pivotal role in breaking down barriers by creating opportunities that will provide the resources and tools for women to gain access to opportunities that are undoubtedly more accessible to men. For example, the use of formal mentoring programs to provide practical support for women will improve their careers, enable them to interact with top leaders who are normally inaccessible, and help network their skills so they can gain visibility through new and fostered relationships while increasing their understanding of the organizational culture. Eventually, all of these positively influence the productivity of organizations. According to Eagly and Carli (2009), organizations can help to bridge the gap for women's upward mobility by properly planning and designing mentoring programs and aligning them with the organizational culture, especially when the purpose of the organization is to narrow the gap for women by using formal mentoring programs.

Defining Service Retail Organizations

The retail industry is reported to be the nation's largest recruiter and the dominating source of employment for women, with a projected employment growth of 16.7 million jobs by 2014. Even though women comprise 18.5% of Fortune 500 retail organizations, there is still an overwhelming disparity of fewer women in senior management positions when compared to other nonretail Fortune 500 organizations.

Service has been defined as useful labor that produces a tangible commodity (Acker, 2009). Based on the definition, the term encompasses a variety of businesses, such as retail stores, restaurants, and supermarkets. The service retail industry is the nation's single largest employer that provides a large volume of entry-level jobs with the

lowest educational requirements and is the dominating source of employment for women. Men once historically dominated this industry, but, over the years, women have surpassed men, and there are now more female retail workers. Women make up 18.5% of Fortune 500 retail organizations, with few of them in senior management positions.

Miller (2011) reported the following:

Retailing is a dynamic business that offers a variety of career paths such as buying, store management, sales promotion and advertising, personnel, operations/distribution, loss prevention, and finance in several different corporate forms such as department stores, specialty stores, food stores, and discount stores. In addition, retailing offers almost immediate accountability for talented young men and women to reach key management positions within a decade. (p. 3)

Despite the fact that women surpass men in retailing, they disproportionately encounter barriers that impede their career advancement. Brandwood, Davidson, Hahlo, and Woolnough (2006) found that barriers exist in the form of balancing family and long working hours and scheduling issues related to flexible shift work, as well as cultural values and beliefs. These barriers, according to Broadbridge (2008, 2010), can be attributed to (a) family responsibilities (e.g., childcare services and family commitments), (b) the way that work is organized (e.g., the long antisocial hours of retailing and lack of flexible time), (c) organizational cultures (e.g., male dominance in the organizational hierarchy or outdated attitudes to women's roles and gender stereotyped beliefs), (d) the invisibility of women at senior levels (e.g., a lack of female role models), and (e) the women themselves (e.g., lack of confidence and lack of political awareness).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009) reported that the retail industry operates with a high level of low-paid employees, which decreases operating performance. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2008), employee engagement plays a pivotal role in the organization and significantly affects employee

retention, productivity, and loyalty to the organization. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, *employee engagement* is defined as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment” (p. 2)

In addition, the Society for Human Resource Management (2008) reported that employees with the highest levels of commitment perform 20% better and are 87% less likely to leave the organization. Even though the landmark report from the Society for Human Resource Management does not speak to service retail industries specifically, it addresses the relationship between gender and career advancement that affects both men and women in the workplace. According to the results of the report, in order to promote engagement, advancement, and retention, improvements have to be made in career development and performance-management systems for both genders, and an inclusive workforce environment has to be created that addresses work-life needs.

Bridging the Gap

According to Storrie (2012), there are “gaps in terms of pay, position attainment, and development among men and women in the workplace and distinct perception gaps between men and women in how effective organizations are when it comes to recruiting, developing and retaining women” (p. 7). However, Storrie posited that the gap could be bridged by recruiting, developing, and retaining more women in the workplace. Albeit the reasons, these gaps can be met when organizations adapt to new changes and continuously invest in the career development of employees. The adaptation of new trends, according to Hagemann (2008), involves three processes: developing and retaining talent, anticipating change, and enabling the organization through globalization. The development and retention of talent involves managing talent, improving leadership

development, and managing a balance between employees' personal lives and their careers. Anticipating change encompasses managing diverse demographics and cultural transformation within the workplace.

The third adaption process in which the organization can be enabled is by creating an environment of learning through the transformation of human-resources departments into strategic partners. Conversely, Hagemann (2008) noted that effective career development should focus both on the need of the organization and on the need of the employees because organizations that recruit, develop, and advance, especially women, will benefit because of women's purchasing power, which makes them a force with which to be reckoned (Storrie, 2012). The development of successful mentoring program into any organization will help to develop and advance women in the workplace.

Research Questions

The approach of the research study was qualitative and descriptive by design. The primary purpose of the phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences and perceptions of six female managers assigned to design and develop the mentoring program as a development readiness tool to recruit and mentor more women into the district cluster. The secondary purpose was to identify and understand why the program development was unsuccessful. A phenomenological methodology was employed to interview the participants, understand and analyze their perceptions and experiences, and addressed the following research questions.

1. According to the managers in the target retail business, what is their overall perception regarding the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster?

2. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their

perception regarding the reason for the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program?

3. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding top management role in the design, development, and support of the mentoring program, and how did it affect the program outcome?

4. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what effects did the failure of the mentoring program have on their personal life, their work performance, and their working relationship with top management?

Summary

This research provided insight into appreciating mentoring programs, most especially, mentoring that are aimed at developing and promoting women. Although the focus of the study was on the experiences and perceptions of female managers, it did not detract from the importance of understanding the need for mentoring to help advance women's careers. Mentoring is a powerful career accelerator that is effective in helping women navigate organizational politics, gain visibility, advance their careers, and break the glass ceiling (Catalyst, 2011; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Gibson, 2006; Griffin & Ayers, 2005; Hopkins, 2005; Linehan & Scullion, 2008; Mujtaba, 2007). Mentoring is beneficial to all involved, and researchers indicated that mentoring is worth incorporating into an organization's strategic plan (Allen & O'Brien, 2006; Billimoria et al., 2008; Dougherty et al., 2011; Khian-Jui et al., 2009). Nevertheless, negative mentoring experiences have occurred when there is a mismatch between mentors and protégées. According to Eby et al. (2008), mentoring relationships have encountered both positive and negative experiences and interactions, but these experiences should be distinct from one another.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The primary purpose of the phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences and perceptions of six female managers assigned to design and develop a mentoring program as a development readiness tool to recruit and mentor more women into a district cluster. The secondary purpose was to discover and understand why the program development was unsuccessful. Through interviews, formal and informal conversations, the researcher obtained full, rich descriptions from the female managers describing the experience of developing and implementing a mentoring program in a retail service industry. This process enabled the researcher to accomplish the essence of phenomenology as the study of phenomena, or the structures of experience or consciousness, which is inherent in a qualitative and phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994).

Aim of the Study

The aim of the phenomenological study was to gain insight into the lived experiences of six female managers by exploring their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs during the design and development of an all-female mentoring program. Gaining insight allowed the researcher to translate the female managers' experiences into textual data that described and explicated the essence of what they experienced. The researcher gained new perspectives and an indepth understanding of how the female managers addressed and worked around a failed phenomenon by examining the influence it had on their planning and delivery performance, daily work performance, interpersonal skills, and working relationships.

Participants

The participants invited to take part in this study were the six female managers at

a service-oriented business who were involved in the design and development of the WOW mentoring program. According to Creswell (2007), this type of research requires participants in a phenomenological study who have experienced the phenomenon and who can articulate the happenings. According to Creswell, there is no defined number of participants to study because it might sometimes be necessary to use a small sample size because the essence is to achieve sufficient rich data according to the availability of time and resources. Rossman and Rallis (2003) affirmed that when embarking on a phenomenological study due to exhaustive and extensive data collection, it is preferable that no more than eight participants be included. The researcher chose this site because of convenience and her familiarity with the site and the lead manager.

Upon approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, the primary participants were contacted through purposive sampling, which, according to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), is the most important kind of nonprobability sampling that can be used to identify primary participants. Purposive sampling ensured that only the managers of the WOW mentoring program participated in this research study. Consent forms informing potential participants of the purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, the voluntary nature of the study, and confidentiality were provided to each participant. To ensure confidentiality, participants were not individually referenced as a result of the study, and pseudonyms were used for all participants. All signed consent forms are kept in a secured location and separated from the individuals' responses.

Procedures

Husserl (1962), the father of phenomenology, explained phenomenological research as a rigorous, systematic investigation of the indepth analysis of a conscious, lived experience. Because this study involved searching for the essence and the

commonalities of the female managers' shared experience, the phenomenological approach to qualitative research was the most appropriate strategy for the researcher to collect rich, indepth information based on the female managers' meanings and experiences of the effects of the attempt to implement the WOW mentoring program.

Phenomenology embodies different conceptual approaches that include the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl, the existential phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Ricoeur (Spiegelberg, 1982), whose philosophical frameworks sought to describe the essence of human experience and the world in which the experience occurs (Valle, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). Husserl founded the phenomenological methodology at the beginning of the 20th century with a descriptive approach that evolved, according to Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), as an alternative to the traditional scientific method used in the social sciences. Giorgi and Giorgi explained that the intention of Husserl was to use the real world as an evidential means to describe the qualities of a phenomenon in order to provide a more thorough understanding of its nature and essence.

Over time, phenomenology has expanded to include hermeneutic (i.e., language and structure of communication), transcendental (i.e., essential meanings of lived experience), and existential (i.e., social construct of group reality) approaches. However, the purpose of phenomenological methodology is still foundational for describing, understanding, and interpreting meaning and experiences of human lives (Bloor & Wood, 2006), with a focus specifically on addressing research questions that ask what it is like to experience a particular situation. Contemporary researchers, such as Creswell (2007), defined phenomenological studies as those in which the researcher identifies the nature of human experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by participants in a study,

with qualitative research providing a holistic approach starting from the ground up and occurring in a naturalistic setting that provides descriptive, interpretive reasoning.

Strategies of Inquiry

The approach of the study was transcendental and descriptive by nature. The descriptive methodology was employed due to the lack of information about the construct of the mentoring program and the barriers and hindrances encountered during the design and development of the program that impacted the female managers who were serving as mentors. Utilizing a descriptive strategy enabled the researcher to address the objective of the study and the research questions that were the foundation of the study. The major assumption of phenomenological studies is that there are essence or essences to shared experiences. These essences are the core meanings derived from a commonly shared phenomenon that have to be bracketed, analyzed, and compared in order to identify the commonalities of the essence of any phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

Patton (2002) identified four steps to the transcendental phenomenological approach in which the essence of a commonly shared experience is understood through *epoche*, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and structural synthesis. The term *epoche* derived from a Greek word meaning to stay away from or abstain from, which the researcher engaged in at the beginning of the study to obtain a broader and unbiased understanding of the developmental process of the mentoring program and its influence on the mentors. The researcher identified and eliminated biases by removing all traces of personal involvement and holding back all previous knowledge or learning without judgment. According to Patton, the *epoche* process embodies the data-driven evidence and empirical research orientation of phenomenology that is continuous during the phenomenological reduction process.

Conversely, during the reduction process, the researcher attained the purest form of data by bracketing all presumptions and assumptions and suspending any bias, feelings, and experiences until the process was unbracketed. Furthermore, when the researcher bracketed all presumptions and assumptions, the researcher was able to (a) locate, within the personal experience, key phrases and statements that spoke directly to the phenomenon in question; (b) interpret the meanings of the phrases; (c) obtain the participants' interpretations of these phrases; (d) inspect the meanings for what they revealed about the essential, recurring factors of the phenomena; and (e) offered a tentative meaning of the phenomenon.

Additionally, the researcher grouped and processed all data relevant to the study with equal value, enabling the process known as horizontalization. Horizontalizing enabled the researcher to unitize significant statements of the participants as "nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping" (Creswell, 2007, p. 159). Imaginative variation involved categorizing invariant themes that were not relevant to the study or phenomena but needed to be developed. In addition, those themes did not contain the experience. Structural synthesis involved examining the effects inherent in the experience for a deeper meaning for the participants of the study (Patton, 2002).

The objective of the study was to examine the invariant themes and patterns of the managers' experiences by imploring Van Kaam's (1966) seven-step modified phenomenological reduction approach with a descriptive strategy of inquiry. Utilizing the Van Kaam approach enabled the researcher to make a list of each participant's experiences and perceptions of the phenomena under study. Moustakas (1994) affirmed the objective of phenomenological research is to ultimately discover or significantly extend new knowledge of human experiences through a participative methodology.

Data collection procedures. As a qualitative investigator, the researcher was the main instrument for collecting and filtering data that was situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical context through her personal lens, as well as examining the experiences, interpreting the events, and explaining the what and how of the research (Creswell, 2007). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), qualitative researchers should utilize a wide range of interpretative methods and decide how the research process will filter through gender and race. The specific methodology underpinning the study was descriptive and eidetic and not interpretive and hermeneutics; therefore, the primary method used to capture data was through semistructured interviews, e-mails, and internal documents to generate understanding and addressed the following research questions.

1. According to the managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster?

2. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding the reason for the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program?

3. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding top management role in the design, development, and support of the mentoring program, and how did it affect the program outcome?

4. According to the female managers in the target retail business, what effects did the failure of the mentoring program have on their personal life, their work performance, and their working relationship with top management?

The research questions served as the framework to examine the perceptions of the female managers. They allowed the researcher to investigate the effects of constructing

the mentoring program for the recruitment of new women hires, the retention and performance of current women employees, and the daily performance of the female managers. The interview technique involved a face-to-face approach, and the information was audio recorded in order to capture the participants' language and meaning embedded in the perception. The in-person, semistructured, indepth interviews were based upon the 18 interview questions. The advantage of in-person interviews is to be able to note the nonverbal communication and cues that could help steer the interview process and the choice of questioning, probing, and exploring the experience and perceptions of the participants (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, & Mattis, 2007).

Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes or until data saturation was reached. Saturation of data occurs at a certain point in the study when the interviewer begins to hear the same information reported (Seidman, 2006). Each participant was asked to narrate her total involvement in the development of the program and the effect of the attempt to implement it on her. However, before conducting the interview, the researcher wrote a full description of her own experiences in order to bracket off her preconceptions from those of the participants, allowing the researcher to enter into each participant's life world and become the interpreter.

Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim for content analysis, and catalogued separately in order to ensure the accuracy of each participant's response and to acquire common and emergent themes and patterns. The interview protocol was open ended and flexible to enable participants to provide detailed information about the phenomena and to allow the researcher to ask probing questions for follow-up purposes. If additional information was needed, a second interview was requested for clarity and understanding of the first interview. General questions were used to create a relaxing and

comfortable condition to collect biographical data, the essential questions, the follow-up questions, and the probing questions (Berg, 2006). Written consent was obtained from the participants prior to conducting the interviews.

According to Kahn and Cannell (1957), qualitative interviewing represents “a conversation with a purpose” (p. 149), and, in order to distinguish it from other methods, it must be viewed from its width instead of its depth. Interviews differ in terms of their structure, and Creswell (2007) put interviews into three general categories: the informal and conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized, open-ended interview that will enable a researcher to acquire thick, rich data. For this study, the standardized, open-ended interview approach was employed. With the informal and conversational approach, interview questions are constructed as the researcher advances, and Creswell implied that this type of interview protocol is unstable or unreliable because of the inconsistency with the interview questions, thus making it difficult to code data.

The general interview guide approach is stated to be more structured than the informal and conversational interview approach, but one of the key issues with it involves the lack of consistency in the structure of the research question. The strength of the general interview guide approach is the ability of the researcher to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee (McNamara, 2008). Standardized, open-ended interviews are said to be the most popular interview technique that allows participants to express in depth their viewpoints and experiences. Because the results of the study derived from casual conversation, the researcher had to ensure consistency; therefore, the interview questions were categorized by section.

The use of content analysis was employed to group each participant’s narrative

into different themes. This grouping of narratives into themes helped to identify and code various statements and phrases using key word or words of the program design and development and the participants' experiences. Qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the "systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). It gave the researcher a better understanding of both the problems encountered that hindered the implementation of the WOW mentoring program and lessons learned that may apply to future program development.

Data Analysis

Data were collected and analyzed based upon the open-ended interview questions. The researcher focused on the response of each participant, coded and categorized the data. The data-analysis process helped to transform the data through interpretation, thereby ensuring the credibility of the findings and channeling the raw data gathered by the researcher into descriptive, narrative themes and categories. Before reading the transcripts and becoming familiar with the data, the researcher bracketed personal experience in order to acquire a fresh approach to analyze the data.

From the analysis of the data, the researcher identified significant statements that illustrated the participants' experiences of the phenomenon and allowed for clusters of meaning or themes from the statements. The development of meaning enabled the researcher to write a (a) textual description of what the participants experienced, (b) structural description of how participants experienced the phenomenon, and (c) an overall description of the phenomenon based on the common experiences of all the participants.

The researcher employed qualitative methodology to draw conclusions through inductive reasoning that was based on the inferred meaning gained from the perceptions

and thoughts of the female managers (Atieno, 2009). The analysis process required grouping all associated meanings obtained from the participants' statements into coded themes to capture the nature or description of the various experiences or until a point of saturation was reached and there were no more identifiable themes. The data analysis for this study was done using van Kaam's (1966) seven-step modified phenomenological reduction approach.

1. Reduction and elimination enabled the researcher to focus on listing and grouping all statements that were relevant to the experience in order to acquire a better understanding, also known as *horizontalization*.

2. Reduction and elimination involved identifying invariant constituents and testing each expression in order to answer two questions: Does it contain a moment of the experience that is necessary and sufficient to provide an understanding? Can the experience be extracted and labeled?

3. Clustering the themes of the invariant constituents involved categorizing related experiences into thematic labels.

4. Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes involved checking and validating the core themes against the complete record of all participants to determine alignment and pertinence with the invariant constituents.

5. Construction of a textual description and a structural description using themes and invariant constituents ensured that the transcribed interviews were precise and in the participants' own words.

6. Construction of an individual textual description and structural description that integrates all variations of the individual's description ensured that the transcribed interviews are precise and in the participants' own words.

7. Constructing for each research participant a textual-structural description of the meaning and essence of experience enabled the researcher to provide the description of the meaning and essence of each participant's experiences, both individually and collectively as a group.

A phenomenological approach to the study provided an experiential and qualitative disclosure of the phenomena as perceived by the participants (Van Kaam, 1966). Moustakas (1994) explained it as "a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). Analysis of the data required using Microsoft Office OneNote to identify, capture, and organize information to develop common themes. Microsoft Office OneNote is a software product that is used to import and consolidate information. It provided the interface to organize information from various sources. It is analogous to a three-ring binder.

According to Creswell (2007), the validity of a qualitative study is dependent on the credibility and truthfulness of the study. The researcher ensured research integrity within this study, such as credibility, trustworthiness, reliability, and validity, through the use of a reflective field journal, participant interviews, examination of WOW design documentation, member checking, and openness to invalidate evidence. To ensure trustworthiness, a series of biographical questions was asked of all participants. The trustworthiness of the phenomena emerged through the experience, candor, and realness of what was experienced by the participants. Member checking, expert review, and bracketing helped to ensure accuracy of all findings.

Member checking allowed participants to review the transcribed interview to ensure that no discrepancies were found in the recounting of the interview and that the

researcher's interpretations could be resolved. Following the recommendation of Creswell (2007), each participant was given a transcribed copy of the interview with the opportunity to either clarify or make changes to the data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), the qualitative research process and meaning occasionally are difficult to examine and validate. However, to maximize validity, qualitative researchers can use a reflexivity strategy to control biases through increasing self-awareness and self-monitoring.

The reliability of a qualitative study is entrenched in the trustworthiness and consistency within the research study (Ryan-Nicholls & Will, 2009). According to Ryan-Nicholls and Will, the consistency and reliability of data within the study will help to evaluate the accuracy of the research-measuring process, thereby ensuring the reliability of the study. The collection instrument did not contain any unclear or ambiguous research questions that could lead the participants to misinterpret the research questions, and the collection of data for all participants will be consistent, thereby enabling the researcher to obtain comparable descriptions from each mentor's experience. Aksu (2009) stated that in order to improve the reliability of the study, a pilot test could be conducted because it will help to strengthen any weaknesses that could exist within the study.

Summary

This chapter provided an explanation of the methodology of Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology that defined the completed study by summarizing the problem statement and the purpose of the research. The process of collecting the data and analyzing the data were uniquely identified to ensure the credibility, trustworthiness, reliability, and validity of the study through descriptive methodology.

Chapter 4: Results

According to Washington (2011), over a third of the nation's leading companies have developed mentoring programs. Mentoring programs are unique in each organizational culture (Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008); however, the key to developing a successful mentoring program is to link it to the organization goals, and the organization must be willing to commit the time, attention, and resources necessary to make the program successful (Office of Personnel Management, 2008). This chapter describes the experiences and perceptions of six female managers during the process of developing the mentoring program, but Moustakas (1994) informed that it could be a challenge elaborating on the phenomenon in terms of its constituents and arrive at a possible meaning that could reveal greater depth of understanding the essences of the experience. To provide detailed understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher extracted data from the qualitative interviews that were germane and central to the ordinary conscious everyday experiences of the six managers.

The objectives of the study were first to explore the experiences of the female managers during the developmental process of the mentoring program, and to understand and present what the managers perceived as the factors that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the program. Therefore, the appropriate choice for this study was phenomenological; utilizing van Kaam modified reduction approach of analyzing the interview data to obtain a more in depth understanding of the meaning and essences of the participants perception and experiences, which entails the "synthesis of composite textual and composite structural description" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181). This option required the researcher to examine each of the participants' experiences, and employed the use of "imaginative variation" (Moustakas) with regards to the varying

frame of references and the explanations that were unique to each of the participants.

The synthesizing of data according to the modified van Kaam (Moustakas, 1994) approach was

1. Listing and preliminary grouping all textual data (Horizontalization),
2. Reduction and eliminating of invariant constituents
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents to identify and label core themes of the invariant constituents (Thematizing)
4. Identifying the final Invariant constituents and themes by application (Validation)
5. Constructing textual description of each participant experience
6. Constructing structural description of each participant experience
7. Constructing textual-structural description to obtain a composite description of the meaning and essence of each participant experience (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120-121).

The first five steps of the van Kaam approach were used to categorize, analyze, and code the interview data to develop invariant constituents and themes generated from the participants' perceptions and descriptions. The researcher identified, coded, and integrated the participants' textual and structural descriptions to form a broad and in-depth understanding of the "invariant structure," or "essence," of the interview data; "the horizons that remained after overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions were eliminated" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

The interview probed issues related to the developmental process of the mentoring program as it correlated to the four content categories; program purpose, program barriers, management role, and program outcome. Data for this chapter are

presented according to (a) major themes that emerged from the interviews, (b) participants' individual textual descriptions, (c) participants' individual structural descriptions, and (d) the combined composite descriptions of all the participants' narratives.

Data Collection

After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the data collection process began. To eliminate any bias before commencing with the collection and analysis of data, the researcher adopted a phenomenological attitude of epoche, as ascribed by Moustakas (1994), to set aside any researcher bias. The purpose for removing the bias was to enable the researcher to acquire the purest form of data, which could only be accomplished by removing any prejudgments that would influence the result and the integrity of the research study (Moustakas, 1994). The data collection was accomplished through two phases. The first phase involved collecting data by interviewing the participants. The second phase involved organizing, analyzing, and compiling the data into clusters and themes based on invariant constituents. The data collection process involved obtaining approval from the district manager to use the premises and administering qualitative questionnaire to obtain data relevant to the study.

The collection of data was based on five general questions and 18 interview questions that were coded into four categories consisting of meaning units of 42 invariant constituents and four emergent themes. The general questions were to help establish a connection with the participants and create a relaxing environment before the interview session so that the researcher could gain an understanding of the participants' perspective concerning mentoring and the value and importance they ascribe to mentoring. The general question that was used to engage the participants, and to establish a baseline

understanding of how they perceived mentoring in relation to women's career development was; "*Do you think mentoring is vital to the career development of women?*" This question was to invoke lively reflection and conversation concerning the participant's perception of why the program was conceptualized and of each participant's personal interest in the program development. The participants verbalized their understanding in the following responses: Participant 1 echoed, "Women continue to be overlooked, and they need any help that can facilitate their voices being heard." Participant 2 reflected that she had been mentored, and it was instrumental in her career development and advancement. Participant 3 acknowledged that mentoring is vital to women's career development because it helps to provide a platform to launch their careers. Participants 4 and 5 mentioned that mentoring helps women to navigate their career paths because someone is helping to guide and direct them. Participant 6 recalled how she saw women who had mentors advance, and they were promoted faster than women who did not have mentors on the job. Four of the participants had never been mentored, and they reflected that had they been mentored, the trajectory of their career would probably be different today.

The first phase of the data collection process began with an in-person site visit with the General Manager of the research site for assistance with identifying and distributing a "Request to Participate" letter to each manager who had participated in the program development. An acceptance to participate in the study from the female managers initiated a direct contact from the researcher to arrange the time and place for an interview. The interview process commenced three weeks after the initial contact with the participants. The total amount of time required to collect the interview data was approximately seven weeks.

Interview. The focus and aim of the interviews in keeping with this phenomenological study was theme oriented. The intent of the interview was to explore the perceptions of each participant as it related to the developmental process of the mentoring program and to understanding what contributed to the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program. Before each interview session, the researcher outlined the purpose of the study and had the participants sign the consent form that detailed their rights to anonymity and confidentiality. A semi-structured interview was used to capture the textual data from each interview session. According to Creswell (2007), the rationale for performing semi-structured interviews is to create an environment that allows the participants to articulate and express their experience and perceptions about the phenomena being studied.

Due to the different work schedules, the interviews were conducted at various times and different locations as decided by the participants. All interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon location and lasted approximately 45 minutes. One of the interviews was conducted over the phone because the participant is no longer employed by the company and lives in a different state. Another participant chose to e-mail her response to the researcher. The interview process involved an informal interactive process that used open-ended comments and questions to capture a comprehensive account of the participants' experience of the phenomenon. The recorded interviews, notes, and transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home for a period of three years; after which they will be shredded or destroyed.

To maintain anonymity, each participant was assigned a designated code; such as Participant 1(P1), 2(P2), 3(P3). The semi-structured in-depth interviews were audio

taped, and each session began with an overview and the purpose of the study. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from participating in the study at any given time. Participants' interviews were digitally recorded and manually documented for backup and to ensure accuracy. Each interview was transcribed immediately after each interview session with the aid of Sony Digital Voice Editor. The researcher listened to and read each transcription twice to develop familiarity with the process of coding themes, and analyzing the data to develop textual descriptions of each participant's experience in order to develop content into major themes and clusters of themes as they related to the interview questions. The researcher listened to the recorded interviews the third time to correct any oversight or omissions.

The phenomenological reduction process was used to edit and divide each participant's interview into meaningful units of experience (Moustakas, 1994). First, the qualitative interviews were grouped and labeled according to each participant's response. Second, each participant's response was grouped according to the 18 interview questions. To increase the reliability and validity of the data, and aid in the organization and categorization of the data, the transcribed data were transferred into Microsoft Office OneNote for secondary analysis and to provide an integrated environment that would enable (a) each participant's data collected to be tabulated, viewed, and accessed on the same screen without losing the last position referenced or exiting the software, (b) audio indexing of data, (c) tracking of emergent themes, and (d) linking common themes to identify cluster of meanings (Moustakas, 1994). At the end of each interview session, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. The participants were also informed that if further clarification was needed, a follow-up telephone interview would be conducted. To ensure validity of the interviews, member checking was employed, and

each participant was given a copy of the transcribed interview to read, edit, and validate for accuracy. Member checking was recommended by Carlson (2010) to ensure an accurate representation of each participant's voice.

Data Analysis

The second phase of the data analysis for this study utilized the van Kaam reduction approach by combining the first three steps to create the clustering and thematizing of the participants' responses. The analysis of textual data involved organizing and coding the data obtained from the interviews into clusters and themes based on invariant constituents that allowed the data to be organized into logical and meaningful categories. Additional analysis of the data allowed the researcher to review the expressions and descriptions to further allow for more information to be generated (Creswell, 2008).

Data were organized according to the individual interviews, interview questions, categories, invariant constituents, and themes. The interview data were organized and clustered into meaning units in order for the researcher to identify recurring themes that universally occurred across all six interviews. The analysis of each participant interview was done to meet Moustakas' (1994) two requirements for testing participants' expressions to help determine the invariant constituents that emerged as to whether (a) the information gathered contained a moment of the experience necessary and sufficient that was possible to abstract, label, and group for understanding of the developmental process of the mentoring program; and (b) participants' responses corresponded to their experiences to contribute an adequate constituent and an essential constituent resulting from participating in the program development. Interviews were coded using Microsoft OneNote software to determine emergent themes and invariant constituents.

Listing and preliminary grouping (horizontalization). The first step in the van Kaam approach to analyzing the data enabled the researcher to create relevant expressions and remove personal and non-essential comments. Horizontalization enabled the researcher to assign equal value to all descriptions as she sought to disclose its nature and essence (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). Hence, every expression obtained from the interview was coded (horizontalized) to identify and categorize all expressions or patterns into themes relevant to the study. These expressions were either phrases (e.g., “lack of time”) or clauses (e.g., management role in developing the program). The themes that emerged corresponded to the descriptions of the lived experiences of the participants and revealed the essence of the participants’ perceptions with developing the program. Saldana (2009) informed that coding is relevant to beginning qualitative researchers; it is a process that helps the researcher capture emerging themes by first collecting data as a whole rather than analyzing data line by line.

Reduction and elimination. The researcher identified and listed all expressions or patterns that were relevant to addressing and answering the research and interview questions. This analysis enabled the categorization of rich descriptions and experiences of each participant involvement in the developmental process of the program. As overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions were eliminated, the remaining statements became the invariant constituents (the meaning units or horizons), the verbatim description of the participants’ experiences that were clustered into meaningful units and groups of like themes. To obtain rich and relevant data, the researcher had to eliminate some expressions, combine some expressions, or keep some expressions. For instance, when participants responded to Research Question 2 concerning barriers that hindered the successful development of the program, some of the responses were personal while

others were in reference to the study. Each of these responses was listed as an “invariant constituent” of the participant’s experience. Individually listing and combining all invariant constituents of the participants’ narratives culminated in a list of invariant constituents for all the participants as a whole.

Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents. The invariant constituents of the participants’ responses were clustered into categories and emergent themes after all nonrepeating significant expression from the participant textual data were inductively grouped together. The categorization of participants’ responses came from key phrases and terms, which created themes or meaning units that captured and supported important aspect of the developmental process. The example of the two expressions “invariant constituents” previously discussed were generally labeled and thematically categorized under “program barriers” and “management role.” The categories were used to group and describe the emergent themes discussed below. This formed the foundational meaning for understanding the experience as a whole. The themes were determined based on the number of times the invariant constituents were described. The listing and preliminary grouping of codes were categorized as program purpose, program barriers, management role, and program outcome; the four emergent themes that were identified were (a) purpose for mentoring program development, (b) perceptions of barriers to mentoring program development, (c) perception of management role in mentoring program development, and (d) perception of program outcome.

The emergent themes formed the basis of the findings presented and discussed in this study. Each emergent theme is defined, but only the invariant constituents that were consistently mentioned by four or more of the participants are discussed and noted below.

Research Questions and Emergent Themes

Theme 1: Purpose for mentoring program development. In answer to the first research question, “According to the managers in the target retail business, what is their overall perception regarding the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster?” four major themes emerged. These themes included recruitment, retention, training, and support. Each will be discussed further below.

The first thematic category, mentoring purpose, emerged from 21 invariant constituents and was chosen to describe participants’ understanding of the purpose of program development. This category was used to group the participants’ descriptions associated with the need and the purpose of the program. All of the participants confirmed that the purpose for the program development was to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster. The reasoning and purpose for the program development was surmised from four invariant constituents: recruitment, retention, training, and support.

According to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), the development of successful mentoring programs should involve a considerable amount of planning, committed resources, and personnel to ensure the successful development of the program. A successful mentoring program will help the organization foster an open and collaborative organizational culture, and help to attract, support, and retain a diverse pool of talented employees. According to the Federal Workplace Mentoring Primer for the Office of Personnel Management (2010),

managing diversity within the workplace will help to create an environment where everyone is empowered to contribute to the work of the unit. It requires sensitivity to and awareness of the interactions among staff and between staff and leadership, and knowing how to articulate clear expectations. (p. 11)

Research supports the use of mentoring programs for developing talents and advancing employees' careers. According to Office of Personnel Management, organizations that are interested in developing mentoring programs must create a business case and address why the program is needed, what the organization hopes to gain, and the requirements of the program.

Recruitment emerged from the participants' responses as one of the primary purposes for the mentoring program development. The recruitment of specific targets for mentoring programs is underscored and supported by Brien et al. (2010) for use by formal mentoring programs within the workplace. Organizations need to continuously have influx of talented employees in order for the organization to function and realize its mission and goals.

Retention was the other primary expression that emerged from the participant responses about the reasons for the program development. The retention of employees is essential to an organization human resource policy and business objectives (Natalie et al., 2011). It starts with the hiring process but most importantly, keeping employees involved and loyal to the organization. Noteworthy is that the mentoring of employees helps to influence retention while establishing the organizational culture (Office of Personnel Management, 2008). A research study conducted by Gowry (2011) on employee retention at Intel indicated training and development as the second retainer in employee retention; the first was listed as performance appraisal.

Training was the third expression that emerged from the participants' responses about the purposes for the mentoring program development. Training can help new hires to proactively adjust into a new organizational culture. O'Connor and Laidlaw (2006); and Ehrich et al. (2006) argued that training is an integral factor in successful mentoring

programs. This finding is supported by Portner (2008) that training is the most important factor in establishing a mentoring program. Training is an important activity of human development because it provides employees with valuable skills that may enhance their employability; and Hezlett and Gibson (2007) maintained that mentoring programs is the tool through which they can develop a career path by engaging in training and development. Ragins and Kram (2007) supported this idea, arguing that mentoring can be a life-changing experience that inspires growth and development and can have significant positive effects on organizations. The female managers believed that the development of the mentoring program would have helped to advance and promote employees careers; giving them a platform from which to start. The belief of the participants is supported by Scales' (2010) argument that career development encourages involvement and improves the employees' performance and that of the organization by providing employees to seek meaning and challenge in their jobs.

Support was the fourth expression to emerge from the participants' discussion about the reason for the program development. Four of the participants stated that acquiring support is highly valuable because it ensures that employees get referred to or noticed by the right people. Mentoring programs are supported by Cohen et al. (2007) as having a positive effect on promotion; providing faster induction (Chapman, 2008; Freedman, 2008); increased training (Anderson, 2009; Bally, 2007); contributing to promotion rates (Allen et al., 2006); and enabling employees to attain personal and professional goals (Scott et al., 2007).

Theme 2: Perceptions of barriers to mentoring program development. The second research question was, "According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding the reason for the unsuccessful development

of the mentoring program?” The second thematic category, perception of barriers, emerged from nine invariant constituents and was chosen to describe what the participants perceived were the reasons for the unsuccessful development of the program. The objective of Research Question 2 was to identify all the perceived barriers that hindered the development of the program, which were (a) lack of clearly defined goals, (b) lack of resources, (c) lack of support and communication, and (d) lack of leadership. These four themes were overwhelmingly mentioned as the factors that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program. Research indicates that internal and external barriers have a significant effect on the successful development of mentoring programs (Washington, 2011). Relative to this study, the perceived barriers reported by the participants were all internal barriers inherent to the program development and a prevalence to mentoring programs that are unsuccessful.

The lack of clearly defined goals and structure had a negative effect on the participants because they felt unproductive. According to the participants, they were instructed to develop the program, but there were no clearly defined directives from top management as to what they needed done or how they wanted it done. Research supports the findings that organizations must determine and establish the program structure, design, requirements, and objectives (Flynn & Nolan, 2008; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005). Three of the participants believed that the successful development of the program would benefit the organization because it would create a more diverse workplace with the hiring of more talented women to the organization. However, one of the participants did not believe it would make a difference; she said, “The gap in pay between male and female managers have always existed, and the number of women in top management had not increased significantly.” The most prevalent issue with the barriers was they believed

there was no continuation of the process when problems arose and, therefore, the problems could not be immediately addressed or resolved.

Lack of resources was repeatedly mentioned by all of the participants as the most profound barrier that inhibited the program development. The participants cited the lack of time, inflexible work schedule, and participants' availability as barriers that presented the most difficulties inherent in the program development. The participants believed the lack of these resources presented them with the most frustration and delay in developing the program. They expressed the belief that time should have been factored into their daily schedule; a minimum of 30 minutes daily or one hour weekly for meetings and collaboration. They believed that the lack of protected time to meet was detrimental to the program development. For example, their daily work schedule and duties should not have intruded or conflicted with the times they met or were allotted. The difficulties with work schedules presented a time and scheduling problem because the participants did not want to come in just to attend a meeting on their day off, and in most instances, it did not coincide with other participants' schedules. It is surmised that the balancing of time and each manager's workload created a major problem that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the program. According to Beecroft et al. (2006), time constraints and scheduling are the biggest obstacles encountered during the development of mentoring programs.

Lack of support and communication were viewed as barriers to the successful development of the mentoring program. According to Ismail and Rdizuan (2012) and Ismail Khian Jui (2013), these are salient practices that must be incorporated into developing successful mentoring programs. Communication is vital in any relationship because it is the protocol through which information is channeled concerning the

procedures, content, tasks, and objectives of the program or process. The lack of communication negatively affects performance in any organization. Top level support is the constant to a successful program outcome because it helps to add value to the program development and to secure commitment from other executives. According to Davis (2007) and Fox et al. (2010), support provides emotional and instrumental assistance during the mentoring process.

Lack of leadership was perceived as a gender issue because management did not see their leadership as credible and because of the lack of female top leadership to balance the decision making process. They discussed that the lack of leadership, especially female leadership, did not provide them support and advocacy for the program development. They said that their interaction with top management was only during meetings or conference calls. They expressed that even though the directives to develop the program originated from the corporate office, there were no defined goals or structure for achievable actions or expectations towards the program outcome.

Theme 3: Perception of management role in program development. The third research question was, “According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding top management role in the design, development, and support of the mentoring program, and how did it affect the program outcome?” The third resulting thematic category, management role, emerged from 10 invariant constituents and was described to explain how the participants felt about the level of support and the role top management played in the program develop. All of the participants stated that top management did not play an effective role because of their lack of direction and support of the program. The invariant constituents (a) provide direction, (b) provide support, (c) eliminate barriers and obstacles were consistently mentioned by at least four

of the participants.

Provide direction was a key expectation from the participants' perception of management roles in the program development. All six participants stated that they expected management to take an active role in every phase of the program development process to ensure a successful program outcome. The participants believed that this process should have been interactive and not filled with company bureaucracy. A unified belief of all of the participants was that top management should have played a more active role in the developmental process by providing directives and instruction on how to proceed throughout the process. This assumption is supported by Parise and Forret (2008) who found that management support and directives are critical factors that influence participant willingness and motivation to take part in the program.

Eliminate barriers and obstacles was another strong belief held by the participants of the role top management should have played to ensure the availability of resources needed to accomplish the program goal. They believed that it was management's responsibility to remove or address obstacles that affected the program outcome. The role and function of upper management was crucial to the program development because, according to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), "formal mentoring program is tied directly to the organization's leadership, and they should set the goals and objectives of the mentoring program" (p. 8)

Theme 4: Perception of program outcome. The fourth resulting thematic category, program outcome, emerged from nine invariant constituents and gave meaning to each participant's perception and expectation of the program outcome. The invariant constituents (a) empowerment, (b) development, and (c) networking, were repeatedly mentioned by all of the participants. The successful development of the mentoring

program hinged upon the proper planning and implementation of the program's goals and objectives. The Office of Personal Management (2008) stated the major function of mentoring program is to promote development and a successful program outcome, and the organization and participants should be focused and not approach mentoring with unexamined sets of assumptions of what the program will deliver. According to Giscombe (2007), mentoring programs that are designed to advance women require a clear focus on services that directly affect women and should focus on their skills, attitudes, insight, and accountability, by providing the support and training required to achieve these objectives. Hence, mentoring programs should never begin without specific sets of goals that are supported by top management.

Empowerment was described by the participants as an enabler in the building and development of employees' careers, self confidence, and self worth. This particular theme was more about the participants than what the perceivable outcome of the program was to have accomplished. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 expressed that top management could have empowered them by allowing them to voice their opinions and concerns during the meetings regarding what they had concluded among themselves needed to be addressed for the development of the program. They believed if they had been empowered, they would have been encouraged to continue developing the program. Second, they firmly believed that a more positive relationship would have developed between them, the general managers, the district managers, and hopefully top management.

Development from the perspective of the participants of what the program outcome would generate was believed to be the ongoing professional development of the employees. They mentioned that the program would have helped new hires with the

onboarding process and have them not experience what they, the participants, encountered when they became employed. According to Samuel (2008), employee development is crucial to their overall growth, and organizations that provide this opportunity acquire motivated and loyal employees. Participant 1 stated, "Helping new hires to circumvent obstacles and navigate the organizational culture would have helped in their retention and achievement." All of the participants believed that the mentoring program could also have assisted in developing special skill sets needed to professionally develop.

Networking was perceived by the participants to be the vehicle that would have made the transition period for the new hires less traumatic and stress free. By helping them network, the participants stated that would have decreased the time to adjust in the new job and focus more on learning and developing; ultimately addressing one of the company biggest concerns, the retention of newly hired staff.

Final Identification of Invariant Constituents

The researcher analyzed and validated all data collected from the participants to determine the final four emergent themes that addressed the focus and objective of this research study. To check for accuracy, a second review of each participant invariant constituent was performed by reviewing each participant's recorded interview and checking it against the data generated to ensure and determine that the phenomenon was explicitly expressed by them. Verbatim conversation is used to add richness to the textual, structural, and composite description of the participants' narratives. Patton (2002) recommended that the experiences of the participants be captured and presented in their own words to add value to the study. Bailey (2007) also encouraged that "generous helpings of the original conversation of the participants be added to the report because the

original words help them come alive for the readers” (p. 192).

Individual Textual Descriptions

The individual textual descriptions provided literal examples of each participant’s thoughts regarding the invariant constituents and themes (Moustakas, 1994). Textual descriptions were summarized and developed for each research participant that provided a description of their experiences during the process of developing the mentoring program. The individual descriptions provided the fundamental structure for developing thematic labels discussed above, and summarized below are the verbatim narratives of each participant interview organized by themes. When asked about their perception regarding the purpose of the program, the barriers that affected the program development, the role of management, and their expectation of the program outcome, excerpts from the participant’s descriptions and comments are used to highlight and support each theme.

Textual description for Participant 1. All six participants confirmed that the purpose for the program development was to recruit and retain more women managers. Participant 1 perceived that the mentoring program would help create diversity, advance women, and help facilitate their growth. She stated, “Mentoring helps to advance people in general but is even better for women because they continue to be overlooked, and they need any help that can facilitate their growth and their voices being heard.” Participant 1 believed that the barriers that affected the program development were because of the lack of resources. She stated, “The lack of time to meet and develop the program and the lack of basic necessities were resources that created an impasse during discussion among the general managers and district managers, which affected us and removed power out of our hands to perform.” She went on to say, “Time is a critical resource that has to be used effectively and be appropriated wisely in order to accomplish the task set before you;

sadly, time was not set aside just for the program development, and the times we did meet to collaborate was constantly being over ridden by other demands of the job.”

Participants 1, 2, 4, and 5 expressed that the top management role was practically nonexistent and removed. Their collective view was “they did not fully support the program; the message was put out that they needed to work closely together to ensure the program development; it was initiated; however, we did not receive the type of support and insight that was initially expected from top management.” They believed that the management role should have been to help and eliminate barriers, including the ones they encountered that inhibited them from moving forward with the program development. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 thought the outcome of the program would have been positive. They believed that with support, the program would have been successfully developed because the need existed and because it came directly from top management. Participant 1 stated, “My desire was to see more support from women in top management.” Participant 5 stated, “I believed that the program would have provided training for women and empower them with the right tools to get the job done.”

Textual description for Participant 2. Participant 2’s perception of the program was that it would help provide leadership and direction to employees but especially women and new hires. She stated, “The workplace is already predominantly men. I would have tried to encourage and support the women any way I could to help make the job more appealing and attractive to them.” She added; “Retailing is already male dominated, so one has to increasingly find every means to attract more women; that would have become a mission for me.” Participant 2 believed that the barriers that affected the program development were caused by the lack of feedback and the lack of commitment exhibited by top management.

Textual description for Participant 3. Participant 3 stated, “We were all aware of the basic reason why the program started, but, personally, I was hoping the development of the program would help increase awareness and support diversity, especially where Black women are concerned.” Her perception was that mentoring helps develop confidence and empowers women. Participant 3 captured the very reason for the company decision to start the program; “Mentoring is indeed vital to the career development of women because it will help the company to identify women for management positions.” The barrier according to Participant 3 that hindered the ability of the participants and affected the program development was the lack of clearly defined goals. “Management did not set goals or performance measures which affected the success of the program.” Participant 3 believed management’s role in the program development should have been to provide the proper resources and direction and create a structure that ensured an exchange of ideas and information. Her expectation of top management was that they would have been committed to the program success and definitely see the program fully develop; however, she stated, “I had my doubts that the program would develop fully because of the lack of structure and non-commitment from top management.”

Textual description for Participant 4. Participant 4’s perception of the program development was to provide critical training especially to new hires to help them navigate existing or different career paths within the organization. Participant 4 believed the barriers that hindered the program’s success were program and management specific but not cultural. She stated, “In respect to time as a resource, the lack of timely feedback and responses to inquiries affected how much we could contribute to applying concrete work into the program development.” Participant 4 emphasized that these limitations during the

development of the program was discouraging and removed some of the initial enthusiasm. She stated, “It felt like our hands were tied behind our backs.”

Textual description for Participant 5. Participant 5’s perception of the program development was it would help create opportunities especially for woman and increase female participation that otherwise might not have occurred. She stated, “Because of the good-old-boys club, women miss out on a lot of opportunities because they are not as aggressive as men, or they do not have the type of support that men have. It is sad because there are lots of highly capable women that are overlooked.” Participant 5 stated, “Barriers exist all around us, but we can avoid most of them if we have the right support and leadership that will go to battle for us.” She contended there should be more managers who see the potential in an employee and commit to nurturing and supporting his or her development. She commenced to say, “I hate to use the word failure, but we all failed at developing the program. I am a manager, but I could not make any changes or implement new ideas without the approval of top management; therefore, I was limited with what I could or could not do.”

Textual description for Participant 6. Participant 6’s perception of the program development was that it would provide a balanced work environment, advancement, and training. She explained, “Mentoring helped minimize stereotypical behaviors and open doors of opportunity that most time do not often present themselves to employees at a lower pay grade.” Participant 6 further stated that the use of mentoring to recruit and retain employees in general is great as long as they have a good mentor who has a voice in the organization. Participant 6 believed that the stereotypical belief of women and the exclusion from networking and decision making was a major barrier to the program development because it created an imbalance in the decision making process. The role of

management was minimal according to participant 6; they were not open to or accommodating of suggestions or ideas of what the participants thought would be beneficial to women. “We were always told to revisit the decisions or ideas we came up with, but when presented to top management, we rarely received any feedback or directives. The lack of commitment, follow through, and specific directions, I believe created a communication barrier that negatively affected the program outcome.”

Participant 6 thought the program development was great for the business as they were experiencing high turnovers. “I thought the process of developing the program would create an environment that would foster collaboration and create awareness of women in management.”

Individual Structural Descriptions

The structural descriptions of the participants were developed from the textual description of the interview transcript. Moustakas (1994) stipulated that these descriptions enable researchers to reflect on the data in an effort to recognize and examine the phenomenon and process all of the relevant expressions made by the participants to provide the basics for the individual structural descriptions. The researcher reviewed all the thematic and non-repetitive expressions of the participants in order to extract and present a brief summary of relevant expressions from each participant interview. Moustakas (1994) posited that individual structural descriptions are the mechanism through which each participant’s thought is interpreted for each theme. In regards to the thematic categories: the purpose of mentoring, barriers to mentoring program, the role of top management in program development, and the program outcome, this is what each participants had to say.

Structural description for Participant 1. Participant 1 perceived the purpose for

the program development was to aid in advancing women's career and help facilitate their growth. Participant 1 claimed the barriers that affected the program development were due to the lack of key resources. The sentiment shared by participant 1 regarding the top management role in the program development was for them to provide support and help eliminate barriers. Participant 1's perception of the outcome of the mentoring program development was to help empower and develop new hires and current women employees.

Structural description for Participant 2. Participant 2 perceived the purpose for developing the mentoring program was to provide leadership, encouragement, and support. Participant 2 believed that the barrier to the program development was due to the lack of feedback and the lack of commitment. The opinion expressed by Participant 2 concerning top management role in the program development was the need for critical feedback for developing and ensuring the program success. Participant 2 elaborated that the desired outcome of the program was centered on providing support and increasing the presence of women.

Structural description for Participant 3. Participant 3 believed the purpose for developing the mentoring program was to create diversity and promote awareness for equitability. Participant 3's opinion concerning the barrier that inhibited the development of the mentoring program was due to the lack of clearly defined goals. Participant 3's viewpoint of the role of top management in the program development was to ensure the program success. Participant 3 assumed the intended outcome of the mentoring program was to increase training and promotion of women into management.

Structural description for Participant 4. Participant 4 believed that the purpose for the program development was to train new women hires and help them navigate their

career path. Participant 4's perceived notions of the barriers that inhibited the development of the program were lack of support, lack of leadership, lack of feedback and follow-up, and lack of clearly defined goals. Participant 4's understanding of the role of top management in the program development was to provide direction, provide support, provides resources, and ensure commitment to the success of the program. Participant 4 concluded that the successful outcome of program development would have provided career guidance.

Structural description for Participant 5. Participant 5 believed the purpose for developing the mentoring programs was to minimize stereotypes and create opportunities. Participant 5's perspectives on the barrier that inhibited the mentoring program development was the lack of clearly defined goals. Participant 5 believed that the role of top management was to eliminate any obstacles that hindered the program development. Participant 5 believed that the outcome of mentoring program would have provided learning and skill development for the new hires and current female employees.

Structural description for Participant 6. Participant 6 believed that the purpose of the program was to create a balanced work environment, advancement, and assistance in navigating careers. Participant 6's perceptions of the barriers that affected the program development was the lack of follow-up and lack of commitment from top management. Participant 6 believed that the role of top management in the program development was to provide critical feedback, directions, motivation, and removal of any barriers that threatened the development of the program success. Participant 6 believed that the outcome of mentoring programs would have created an environment that fostered collaboration.

Composite Textual-Structural Descriptions

The final level of van Kaam's modified reduction approach entailed condensing the themes that were central to the experiences and the most thematic constituents reflective of the essence of the phenomena as experienced by all participants as a group (Moustakas, 1994). The composite provided the means to view the data in a more holistic manner and conduct analysis across all six interviews to better describe any commonalities found regarding the participants' perceptions of the program development, the barriers that affected the development of program, the role of top management in the development process of the program, and the program outcome. To illustrate the real meanings and significance of the phenomenon as it was described by all of the participants in their own words, the 18 interview question results are presented as the composite descriptions that represented all of the participants' shared experiences. Data are presented as a whole from the interviews (Saldana, 2009), and the thematic textual and structural descriptions of each participant experiences below are integrated into a "universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122).

Interview Question 1. *What factors influenced the need to mentor women into the district cluster?* The Office of Personnel Management (2008) posited that organizations must first make a strong business case to demonstrate why the organization should devote the time, attention, and resources to develop mentoring; and link the reasons for establishing the mentoring program to its business goals. The intended purpose of this interview question was to discover the reason and purpose for developing the mentoring program. All of the participants stipulated that the request to develop the program originated from the corporate office and was channeled through to the district

manager who met with the general managers of local stores of that cluster to develop and implement the program. The underlying reason was there was an imbalance of the number of women as compared to men in management roles; the objective then was to attract, motivate, develop, and retain women talents. The factors that influenced the need to develop the mentoring program are listed below according to the participants:

Was due to the lack of female management both female in gender as well as of color; we lack diversity in management. (P1)

There were predominantly more men than there were women managers, and the company wanted to make it more attractive to recruit women. Because retailing is male dominated and having more men, we were trying to find something that was more attractive that would bring more women in. (P2)

The mentoring program was introduced to narrow the gender gap. Management also believed that the program would help expand the professional networks and open new doors especially to women. (P3)

The program was to help women's development and advancement. (P4)

It was due to two things: one, there certainly was the need for more women managers; but second, because women raise families and leave the field for a period then sometime have to return to the workplace, they miss out on career opportunities presented to men; we were seeing a lot of this occurring. The program I believe would have helped bridge that gap. (P5)

From a female prospective, there were basic things missing that would attract females; for example, women that had children, there was nothing in place to accommodate their children's needs. (P6)

Interview Question 2. *What organizational factors inhibited or facilitated recruiting women?* The intent of question 2 was to discover the hidden nuances of inequities within the organization's hiring policy. All of the participants noted that the imbalance of female as compared to male managers facilitated the reason for the recruitment; however, no obvious factors inhibited the recruitment of women. Research supports that an organizational culture that supports continuous learning through mentoring will most likely be conducive to high quality mentoring relationships (Dutton

& Ragins, 2007). The participants indicated the following:

There was nothing specific towards women but in reference to developing the program, we had problems meeting and developing the program. An external thing that has been mentioned by women and would have indirectly affected how women responded was the lack of basic needs that would attract females. For example, having a changing area for mothers with children, or the unisex uniform worn by both genders. (P1)

I believe that the developmental process created an awareness that did not exist before. Even though the program development was unsuccessful, I think just going through the process has helped because some of the topic or items that were brought to the table and discussed are being considered. We are beginning to see more women applying for management position; not thinking that just because I am a housewife I might not have the experience or feel that it is off limits. (P2)

This should not exist because women are just as capable to perform. Part of the problem is that most of the job requires heavy lifting and it is assumed that women cannot perform certain strenuous jobs. Jobs that involve climbing and carrying heavy things are considered difficult for a woman, which tends to limit their employment. (P3)

I do not believe there were visible factors that inhibited or facilitated in the recruitment process other than accommodating the various schedules. (P4 & P5)

In my opinion, there was nothing specific but from an organizational perspective, there are things lacking that needed to be addressed. If I as a woman see that an environment is not conducive to my need, it will deter me from having interest. (P6)

Interview Question 3. *In your opinion, what way would the program have benefited women's advancement?* The intent of the question was to highlight and inform of the importance of mentoring in women's careers. This question provided the opportunity to revisit the value of developing the program specifically targeting women. According to McNish and McFarland (2010), organizations are putting themselves at a competitive disadvantage by not having women equipped with the necessary knowledge and experience to advance into management positions. Comments supporting participants' opinion follow:

The program would have benefited women by giving them a stronger voice and a

more balanced work environment. (P1)

I believe by bringing more women into the organization and changing the mindset that retail is a man's world and a male oriented business. (P2)

It is essential for everyone that works in the store to be properly trained; and for women, it would have provided a vehicle to be promoted into management positions. I believe mentoring and other trainings must be introduced at the store. (P3)

It would have developed more women, giving them the exposure and creating a diversity of talents. (P4 & P6)

If we look specifically at the women that have worked for me, I always inform them of opportunities to help them advance in their career. Case in point, I had a quiet lady working for me but I knew she was capable performing the work so when an opportunity arose, I offered her the position. More mentoring programs are needed to help people advancement, like this one; hopefully we will go back to the drawing board to redevelop this program. (P5)

Interview Question 4. *In your opinion, was it a good strategy to use mentoring as a recruitment and retention tool?* The objective of the question was to elicit an open dialogue to delve into the mindset of the participants on the importance of mentoring. The recruitment, development, and retention of women is a diversity issue; and according to the participants a good strategy, which is supported in literature (Cascio & Aguinis, 2008; Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008). According to Meister and Willyerd (2010), "it offers junior employees and also new hires insight and opportunities into higher levels of the organization to enhance their understanding of the business and in addition, allows mentors to gain access to speak and interact with top management" (p. 2). Participants' comments supporting the use of mentoring as a recruitment and retention tool are listed below:

Yes, because you will be able to provide training, acclimatize new hires into the organization; help them understand the culture, and how things are done in a more structured environment. (P1)

Yes, people hired will benefit from training and development. Employees that are

properly trained will stay on the job therefore mentoring is essential in the retention of employees. (P2, P3, & P4)

Yes, it definitely is because there are so many people that come out of college or are looking for second career and knowing that they have someone to help them develop makes a difference in whether they take that job or not. (P5)

Yes, because it opens the door wide for everyone. I feel it is left to the individual how they approach and take advantage of opportunities. It helps to even the playing field. (P6)

Interview Question 5. *How did the culture of the organization affect the development of the mentoring program?* The question was designed to examine objectively the effect of the organizational culture on women's career advancement. The participants noted that one of the major issues was that the decision-making power that affected the program development was predominantly male oriented. They believed that all of their suggestions were being overlooked or under played without any visible support. The participants as a group had requested females from all levels to participate in the meetings, and there was only one female represented from top management.

Research findings corroborate with participants' comments below:

It is not so much the culture; it was the lack of on-going support. The male managers did not see the importance in most of our suggestions. (P1)

I do not believe the culture had much of an effect on the program development. I believe it had more of an effect on the female general managers because they realized that they needed to take a stand as woman and change how they dealt with other women (P2)

It is unfortunate because the company has a culture of over-working employees without making much concession. Many female employees reported that women, especially single mothers are finding it very difficult to get schedules that will ensure that they can spend time with their school-going children. I believe female managers are scrutinized more so than their male counterparts. (P3)

I believe that there are different cultures with different intentions within the organization and these differences manifest at different times and have an effect on the decision making processing in the organization. (P4)

This is a very good question because I believe that culture does play a part in how things happen in the company. The culture plays a part because it is manifested in how some people perform additional tasks that do not come with compensation, especially since there is a big pay gap between male and female managers. I concluded that participating in the program does not mean money compensation; however, it creates exposure. (P5)

The culture does influence the organization; because the culture is made up of the individuals that work in the organization. In my opinion, the culture affected the program development because the final decisions were dependent on an all-male management who I believe did not see the relevance of most of the things we brought to their attention that we believed affected women employees. If there were top female managers there would have been another view point that was sensitive to matters specifically addressing women. (P6)

Interview Question 6. *How did management support the development of the program?* The objective of this question was to invoke an open forum for discussion of whether the recruitment and retention of women was a concern of top management. All six participants mentioned that top management did not fully support the program as expected. According to the participants, they did not seem as committed and involved as when they initially started developing the program. Overall, the participants reported a narrow view of management involvement; they viewed management's involvement as more of a hindrance than a supportive relationship whose goal was to ensure the success of the program during various stages of the development. All the participants indicated that the lack of top management support and commitment to the program was the primary contributing factor to the unsuccessful design and development of the mentoring program. According to the participants,

Management provided minimal support during the program development. There was always the sense of being too busy or having another appointment that seemed more important than participating in the development. (P1)

I believed that we received some support because we did meet few times as a group to develop the program. However, we had to on some occasion end the meeting early because of various interruptions. (P2)

For most part, management supported the program development but not in depth as was expected, partly because for the times we met we were constantly being interrupted with daily tasks that superseded our meeting time. Management should have set aside time purposely for the program development with no interruptions. (P3)

I believe management had interest in the program, what I think is that they did not ascribe a certain level of importance to program development. They were not open or accommodating to suggestions or ideas. (P4 & P6)

Management support was minimal; I believe they did not quite understand and see the value and benefits of the program. If you have people that have never been mentored, it is hard for them to fully support or understand the value of mentoring or give it their full support, they tend to take things for granted or not attach much importance to all. (P5)

Interview Question 7. *In what way would the program have benefited the organization?* The purpose of the question was to determine how the organization would have benefitted from the development of the mentoring program. There were varying degrees of the participants' perceptions on the benefit of the program to the organization. The participants believed that the company would have benefited by improving productivity and developing and retaining diverse talents of women leaders. A study conducted by Garvey and Garrett-Harris (2008) of over 100 evaluative studies of mentoring programs across various industry sectors supports the participants' perceptions of the benefits the organization receives.

Improved job creation and business performance; reduced staff turnover and improved retention rates; improved information flow and communication; help in disseminating business values and developing the culture; improved productivity; help in managing talent; motivation and relationships; improving business learning; reduced labor and training costs; provided cost effective development; improved succession planning; provided and developed effective leadership. (p. 15)

Also supporting the participants' beliefs are the findings espoused by Triple Creek Associates (2007) that organizations with mentoring programs create an environment that supports career development and personal development by sharing

business information and skills and creating and identifying a pool of talents for succession planning. Specific benefits to the organizations from the perception of the participants are that

By hiring more women and retaining them would fulfill the program goal; to attract more female diverse talent within the office. The program would have opened the door of opportunity for both internal and external females but more so external females who will be applying for management positions. (P1, P3 & P6) It would have brought more women into the company because majority of the general managers are men. (P2)

It would get the word out that the organization supports, trains, and develops their female employees. (P4)

It would benefit the organization because when people develop more skills and are happy about their work, they are more productive. You also create the next generation of managers, because as people develop and advance, growth occurs and the organization has the right people with company knowledge already equipped to move up. (P5)

Interview Question 8. *In what way would the program have benefited women's development?* The intent of the question was to understand how a mentoring program is a catalyst in the development and career growth of women. The participants believed that the program would have been effective in helping women acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and expertise that are essential to advancement in organizations; however, some of their responses were about how they as mentors would benefit. Supported by literature, mentoring programs help the organization develop and retain diverse talents and contribute to the organization by means of the faster induction of employees (Freedman, 2008). Benefits to women according to the perceptions of the participants are below.

First, specific to the female managers participating in the program development, it would have collectively brought together female managers with different mindsets and views to discuss opportunities that affect women. Second, it would have provided the proper training needed to adjust and perform in the new work environment. (P1)

As far as I think it would have brought more women into the organization and change that mindset that retail is a man's world – through. (P2)

The mentoring program would have benefited women's development in a number of ways. The women involved in the program would have achieved personal growth, and learned more about themselves. The females involved would have been properly prepared for management status, and it would have improved their self-esteem, and given them the confidence that they can perform and make a difference. The women would not have only learned the culture of the organization, but have a greater understanding of diverse cultures, and feeling of productivity. (P3)

By training and preparing them for advancement. Helping them deal with a variety of things and understand that they are not alone and that they can overcome any obstacles. (P4)

Help them grow, develop, and prepare them for the next step up the career ladder, which moves the next person up, therefore creating these generational things where people move up. You can see this when people keep a department functioning when someone leaves or moves up. (P5)

The program would have given women moral support, helped them avoid going through the basic things that would take up time and limit development and training. (P6)

Interview Question 9. *In what way did participating in the program development benefit you as a manager?* The essence of this question was to gain insight into how the participants benefited from participating in the program development and how they intended to use what they had acquired to help develop other women or improve their management style. The participants reported valuing their participation in the program development. The important thing to all of them was making a difference in the lives of women, especially younger women. Participating in the program they believed opened their eyes to see and think differently about how they can be effective as women managers in the development of other women. They believed they had learned things through the process of climbing through the ranks and from their personal experience with management that could be valuable to new hires or younger women. Participating in

the program created awareness and the need for mentoring. Research indicates that the manager of a mentoring program plays a very important role in the mentoring relationship (Grace-Rowland, 2008). The participants stated,

It did benefit me; however, it had a negative effect because it was not successful. The failure of the program made me more aware of how things should work and how I interacted with the people that report to me. (P1)

The program allowed me to review things as far as being a women, what I wanted to do, how I could help other women and encourage them to advance on the job. (P2)

The program helped me to focus on the procedures and policies of the store. Participating in the program development helped me to meet the challenges of the job. (P3)

For me it was a very enlightening time, personally I learned to view things through a different lens; it becomes humbling when you can reach out and help others. (P4)

I enjoy it. It helped me develop my people skills. As a manager, it helped me because now when I recognize good skillset in an employee, I assign them additional tasks and have them shadow me. Eventually, I develop a symbiotic relationship with some that we can work together. (P5)

It increased my awareness of how to address and respond to employees that reported to me. (P6)

Interview Question 10. *How did the program development influence your management style?* The focus of the question was to give the participants the opportunity to discover aspects of the developmental process that made an impact, and recognize areas that needed improving. Many of the participants discussed they were not acutely aware of their management style until after they participated in the program. The most obvious awareness was to develop a more sensitive working relationship with the women who reported to them. According to the participants,

It made me realize that I should reach out more to females, lead from where I was irregardless of top management response. I began to informally mentor female workers, I explained and made them understand new or existing programs they could benefit from. (P1)

It helped me realize that I can be the best I want to be and I do not have to compare myself to a man, I can lead from where I am because this is a woman's world as well. (P2)

The mentoring program has helped me establish good relationships, and trust with other managers. I listen more now than I talk and I try to be flexible and open to changes and suggestions. I gladly accept challenges and reward those who are doing well with praises. I realized we work better as a team. (P3)

It helped me perceive how to engage with the people that report to me, I understand not everyone sees or understands things the same; therefore, whenever I am dealing with the staff that reports to me I automatically go into mentoring mode. (P4)

I think you start with the basics; you either have it in you to be a good manager or not a good manager. It has a great deal to do with personality and temperament. If a person does not have a good temperament you can spend all the time in the world and they will not be a good manager. I believe it has helped me become a better manager. (P5)

My management style became more inclusive. It allowed me not to micromanage but to allow the workers to perform their duties in the time allocated, and I noticed more was being accomplished. (P6)

Interview Question 11. *How did being a mentor influence your perspectives?*

The intent of the question was to understand whether the development of the program positively or negatively affected the way they viewed their application of the work environment. The participants all stated that they did not get to officially mentor but participating in the program development absolutely had an impact on them. It helped to expand their understanding of mentoring and change their approach and reception of it; and their interaction with top management and the employees that report to them.

Examples of these statements are below:

It changed my view. My intention was to make an impact on other women. If we had gotten the necessary support to make this successful, we would have been able to provide the proper training and present a successful picture for females to view the company in a different light and also that there are females that are already successful at what they do. The success of the program could have impacted and influenced more women to come aboard. (P1)

It did not have a positive or negative impact on me as I did not have the chance to mentor. (P2 & P4)

Participating has given me a better attitude at work. I am now learning more about myself and constantly looking for ways to grow. (P3)

It was all positive; it was difficult working with some people, but I learned to become a team player. (P5)

It made me feel a sense of worth that I was chosen to contribute to the development of the program and the development of women. (P6)

Interview Question 12. *What barriers had the greatest impact on managers?*

This interview question elicited discussion on the impact barriers have on the development of mentoring programs or barriers women face in the workplace. Many of the barriers identified by the participants were reflected by the lack of support, lack of resources, lack of commitment, and scheduling; these barriers are supported by research. The participants strongly believed that management support could have mediated some if not all of these barriers. Examples of these statements are below:

The barrier that had the most impact was trying to manage and arrange time away from our local stores to come together to discuss topics, findings, and develop the program. I could not make commitments to conference calls and meeting at different locations because of the requirement to be at my place of operation. (P1)

The program was not structured. There was no designated time or day set aside where you could leave or local store to work on the program. I am a structured person and the constant fly-by-fix method was very distracting. (P2)

The barrier that had the greatest impact on me was the constant interruptions. It disrupted the time I had to help develop the program. Scheduling of employees and absenteeism is another barrier that adversely affected the development. (P3)

Time was a great barrier; also, there was the typical White boy network with stereotypical belief and exclusion from networking and decision-making. (P4 & P6)

I do not believe in barriers, I view them as challenges. When working with people that have never been mentored, they do not understand or appreciate the value of mentoring. For them it becomes a waste of company time to spend one-on-one time on something different from what they perceive. Unfortunately, what they

are missing is that all this works together to develop staff so that they are ready for the next level... What I see as succession planning. (P5)

Interview Question 13. *What was done to overcome the barriers?* The intent of this question was to seek information on how the barriers and limitations were addressed. The idea was for the participants to discuss barriers encountered during their career progression in hope that they would provide relevant information as to how they positively and constructively viewed those barriers they encountered. Participants believed that barriers were synonymous with stereotypes and are a part of the societal norm for any organization. Participants believed that accepting these barriers and understanding the organizational culture and organizational norm would aid in the success of women. Participants further agreed that the objective would be to review the barriers as a positive, constructive attribute and use it as an aid to help them perform in an outstanding manner. The participants' responses to overcoming barriers were

I tried to combat it, but from a power standpoint, my hands were tied. I had to respect the position and job requirements in running the store efficiently. It was hard balancing the quality of running the store and taking off, we could not do it on our days off because we all had different schedules. When we had conflicts and could not resolve it, we did not meet. (P1)

I was comfortable within myself that I am just as capable of doing anything (P2)

You continue mentoring but you just try to educate your superior in letting them know how important mentoring is. Majority of the time people leave themselves open to understand that and appreciate another viewpoint. (P3 & P5)

Whenever I felt that I was not getting through, I responded by removing myself and going into different environment or working on another task. (P4)

I cannot say I overcame the barriers, I decided that I have to work much harder and try to form a collective voice with the front line managers so we can be taken seriously. (P6)

Interview Question 14. *How did participating in the program development influence the managers' motivation, commitment, and service?* The essence of this

question was to understand the personal effect derived from participating in a program development and find commonalities in the participants experiences. The participants voluntarily responded for a variety of reasons. Some saw it as an opportunity to network and facilitate career advancement; others developed a commitment to contribute to women development in the workplace. All of the participants expressed interest in understanding and using mentoring to develop and assist new hires and female employees currently reporting to them. Additional comments of participants are

The lack of support from upper management made me aware that if I wanted to advance or stay competitive with my male cohorts, I had to work harder and fight for every promotion or bonuses. It did not change my commitment or the service I was hired to provide because it just shows how professional one is. (P1)

As far as my service and commitment to the job, it made me more committed to reach the highest level and care more about the people that work with me. (P2)

The mentoring program has helped to motivate me; I am more focused and motivated about learning and growing. I am learning many new things about younger employees, especially how to establish good relationship with them. Participating in the mentoring program has helped to make me committed to and appreciative of my job. (P3)

It helped me become more focused on the things that I want and enjoy out of life and not be dependent on one thing or deterred by an obstacle. A lot of time we wait for thing to be perfect or wait until we get 'x' to do 'y'. Whereas, you might never get x hence, you lost out on y. (P4)

It helped me become more positive. As a manager, whenever I see somebody improving and growing and know I have contributed in some way, gives me a feeling of responsibility towards him or her, it makes me happy. I have learned how to acknowledge employees accomplishments. (P5)

It helped me realized that giving up is not an option but to try harder and become committed to my work related projects. (P6)

Interview Question 15. *Describe in detail how the failure of the mentoring program affected you as a woman and as a manager?* The design of the question was to discover whether the participants believed women should be concerned about the barriers

they faced, and if these barriers effected their functions as managers. The participants expressed that with the gender-based stereotyping about women roles and functions, the unsuccessful development of the program portrayed them as lacking and inefficient in their management competence. Their responses are reflected below:

As a woman in management, I struggled to get to where I am now, to think that I could help other women not to experience what I went through, to help them network better than I did was inspiring. It had a reverse effect on me in that it motivated me to seek out others to assist. (P1)

I was disappointed because top management did not allow the program to continue; I did not feel obligated to try harder. (P2)

I believed that the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program delayed addressing some issues of advancement of women in management. Female employees are already finding it difficult to be promoted. (P3)

It made me more aware of my approach and treatment of women who report to me. It probably made me a better manager because I make a conscious effort to reach out and help more. (P4 & P5)

At the beginning, there was a feeling of great disappointment because I was sure the program would have worked. The failure had me to reassess my relation with female workers, how I could become helpful to them, how to empower them by keeping them updated and informed. (P6)

Interview Question 16. *Describe in detail how participating in the mentoring program influenced or detracted from your work-life balance?* The intent of the question was to understand whether participating in the program development had any influence on the participants' working or personal lives. The participants without children did not report any struggles with balancing work and family; however, participant 3 (P3), having young children, expressed that her schedule or management did not truly support career and family balance. She stated, "I could not participate in any meetings after hours or my day off and that hindered giving 100% commitment to the program development." The other participants stated,

There is not a true balance between work and personal life; we take home with us things from the job and things from our personal lives intrude into our professional life, the secret is to find a way to balance the two, learn how to create a synergy. (P1)

I consciously try for my work life not to intrude into my personal life, for that reason, I do not take work home with me. (P2)

Participating in the program influenced my work life because it has kept me motivated in terms of assisting and working with others. (P5)

It did not detract from my work-life balance instead it helped me become more aware of how to spend my time, how to meet deadlines, and how to follow through with making sure information is filtered through to all groups. (P4 & P6)

Interview Question 17. *Describe in detail whether participating in the mentoring program fostered a better working relationship with top management?* The intent of the question was to discover what effect socialization with top management had on the participants' careers. According to Dougherty and Dreher (2007), serving as a mentor can bring about greater visibility for the participants and make the decision makers more aware of their potential. Literature on workplace socialization calls it a learning and adjustment process in which the individual acquires social knowledge for a particular organizational role, understands expected behavior of that role, and assumes the values and attitudes supported by that role (Chao, 2007). Chao posited that mentoring is a powerful outcome of organizational socialization, and a factor in helping to reduce the turnover of new hires. The participants comments and thoughts on the positive and negative influence of participating in the program are below.

I cannot say it influenced or made a difference in my working relationship with top management. Professionally, we should not allow anything negative to affect our productivity (P1, P2, & P5)

Participating in program development created a visibility that I would probably not have obtained with top management, which allowed for occasional socialization but no career advancement.... yet. (P3 & P4)

I believe it made top management aware of my role and function. (P6)

Interview Question 18. *What lessons can be learned from the process of developing the program in terms of; personal commitment, organizational commitment, team dynamics, and program requirement.* The intent of the question was to obtain information about the possible commonalities across participant experiences. Although the participants expressed frustration while developing the program, all agreed that they acquired valuable lessons that were essential to working in a team and improving their management style. For example, becoming more proactive and involving upper management earlier in decision making process, and being instrumental in supporting female employees' development. The personal and professional lessons learned by the participants are summarized below:

Personal commitment. According to one of the participants, "I think we all knew what we wanted to get out of participating in the program development." All of the participants stated that the lessons learned will always have an impact on their lives because it helped them revisit their management style, to value and care about the people who report to them, and most importantly to be consistent in their time, their management approach, and their delivery of service. One said, "The mentoring program has made us committed to our jobs, to be more efficient and effective on how we daily perform our management roles." They believe that participating in the program development has improved relationships between them, the general managers, and the district manager. Participant 3 believed that participating in the program development has made her realize that working at the company is not just a job but who she is and ascribes to be. The participant was asked to elaborate on her statement and she stated, "because it has made

me to become committed to my job, and I actually look forward to going to work every day. Going through the process I believe has improved the working relationship between the employees and management based on their responses to me.”

Organizational commitment according to the participants was to develop and ensure a successful mentoring program that helped in the recruitment and retention of women. They came away with these thoughts: Participant 1 stated, “If I had to do things differently, I would have gained the support of someone in top management before the start of the program.” Participant 3 stated, “It inhibits me when I do not successfully accomplish a task or goal because it seems like I cannot move forward, now I will prioritize things and make sure to get it done before moving on to the next task.” From now on she stated, “I will make sure that something is put in front of management ahead of new tasks or functions that they can work with instead of waiting for something to take place.” The participants realized that they should have done some things differently to successfully develop the program. Participant 4 said, “If I had to do things differently, I would find a way to manage my time better, stop putting things off, and be more proactive than reactive. We often think we can multitask and truly get things done and done well, but I have come to realize that we truly cannot. If a job needs our attention or focus, we ought to give it our fullest attention and commitment to effectively get it done and done well before moving on to the next project.” Participants 5 and 6 had similar statements, “I would spend more time with subordinates and make it a more integral part of how I management and network with top management.”

Team dynamics were great, according to the participants. They discussed that they supported each other and got along; however, their regret was that if they had been more aggressive especially as a team, they would have succeeded in accomplishing more.

Participant 1 stated, “As a team, we should have been more aggressive to achieve results and receive the support we needed to implement or at least consider our ideas.”

Participant 2 stated, “if I had to do things differently, I would foster a one-on-one working relationship with top management.” Working as a team, they all seem to have connected in many ways, but they did not enforce or demand more support partly because there were problems meeting. “We were locally disbursed at different locations; unfortunately, no place was convenient enough to accommodate each person’s travel or schedule. We sometimes met in restaurants that were not always convenient or acceptable by all of the participants; however it was about outcome not about convenience; sadly, most subjects were never fully agreed upon.” According to the participants, the majority of the time they communicated via conference calls, personal cell, and email.

The program requirement was captured with Participant 1’s statement, “We should have automatically initiated the development of the program with someone in top management, and we should have solicited program support from key managers.” The belief of the participants was that if they had initially injected someone from a higher level that individual would have had the power to provide the necessary support to help them develop the program; instead of reaching out after the fact and throughout the process only to receive limited support. The participant realized that they should have ensured the program was structured and the requirements defined and aligned with the business goals. Participant 2 stated, “The lesson learned during the development of the mentoring program was not to take anything or anyone for granted; doing so affords equal opportunity for growth and development.”

Additional comments were solicited from each participant; but they all stated they had no additional comments or questions for the researcher. They all mentioned that they

had a great group of female managers working together, they valued the teamwork, and being a team player became a valuable asset. According to the participants, what they felt was lacking among them was the commitment to meet, and the determination to go against top management.

Summary

In Chapter 4 the findings from interviews of six female managers during the developmental process of an all-female mentoring program were presented. The interviews captured in the lived experiences and perceptions of the managers regarding factors that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program. Audio-taped, face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants to obtain the data for this research study; and van Kaam's modified phenomenological reduction approach was employed to organize, analyze, and code the data into clusters and themes based invariant constituents. The verbatim transcript of the phenomena of the developmental process of the program development was used to address the final step of creating the textual and structural descriptions of the participants' perceptions and experiences. A composite description of all the participants was generated to provide a universal understanding to the participant's description as "whole."

Chapter 5: Discussion

The problem addressed in this research study centered on the failure of a service retail business to successfully develop an all-female mentorship program in 2009. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore, describe, and present the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and lived experiences shared by the six female managers during the developmental process of the program. The objective of the researcher was to discover from the participants' perceptions the factors that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program.

Chapter 1 provided the framework and justification for the study and statement of the problem that created the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter 2 presented a review of literature and presented the rationale for conducting this research study. Chapter 3 described the phenomenological methodology for collecting and analyzing the data for this study. Chapter 4 presented the emergent themes that were extracted from the interview data, the textual and structural descriptions of each participant's perception of the developmental process of the mentoring program, and the verbatim textual-structural descriptions that formed the universal composite descriptions of the group experience. The interpretation of the interview questions were presented in relation to the research questions and relevant literature. Chapter 5 presents a brief overview of the study with the discussion and the implication of the findings as it relates to the four research questions guiding this study. This chapter also presents the significance of the findings, the limitation of the study, and recommendations for future study.

In summary, the study findings were based on current research studies pertaining to the importance of mentoring, enhancing individual's advancement (Young et al., 2006); and achieving organizational strategies and goals (Khian Jui et al., 2009).

Discussion and Findings Linked to Research

The analysis of the data resulted in four emergent themes: purpose for mentoring program development, perceptions of barriers to mentoring program development, perceptions of management's role in mentoring program development, and perception of the program outcome. The semi-structured interviews yielded five findings of which three contributed to the unsuccessful development of the WOW mentoring program. The five findings of the study follow.

1. Research supports the use of mentoring for the recruitment and retention of women.
2. Research supports the finding that the lack of top management support and commitment adversely affected the successful development of the mentoring program
3. Research supports the findings that the successful development of the mentoring program required the clear establishment of the program goals and objectives
4. Research does not fully support the findings that women in senior positions will advocate for women in lower ranking positions
5. Research supports the findings that top management role is an essential component in the continued success of the mentoring program.

The following are the discussions of the findings as they related to the research questions.

Research Question 1. *According to the managers in the target retail business, what is the overall perception regarding the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor more women into the business cluster?* Overall, the participants perceived the use of mentoring to recruit, retain, and mentor women as strategic and a relevant business intervention. According to Gutner (2009), approximately 70% of Fortune 500 companies offer formal mentoring programs. Mentoring programs have become an area of great

focus in today's workplace and a power asset in furthering employee's development. The relationship of Research Question 1 as it related to Interview Questions 1 through 4 was twofold: to establish a genuine need for developing the mentoring program and to discover the importance of the program. The participants stated that just participating in the program development was a positive and enlightening experience that made an impact on their management. Participants 1, 3, 4, and 6 stated that they had never been mentored and believed that the lack of mentoring experiences stymied their advancement.

Finding 1. The findings from the study support the use of mentoring programs for the recruitment and retention of employees, and it may be even more important for the recruitment of women. For example, in professional organizations, the use of mentoring to recruit and retain employees is incorporated into their goals and strategic plans; it has become a recognized method of development and a sensible approach to workplace learning (Place & Bailey, 2010). This finding is congruent with Allen and Eby (2007) and Ragins and Kram's (2007) work that identified mentoring as a viable tool in the recruitment and retention of employees and a benefit to both employees and the organization. O'Reilly (2008) affirmed that finding and retaining talented and experienced workers is instrumental in reducing turnover and high operational costs. Research confirms that mentoring new employees and helping them become successful on the job is one way to reduce turnover.

The participants' perceptions are reflected in Fatima (2011) who reported that employee retention is a major issue in the development of organizational competence; and in the Office of Personnel Management (2008) study, which claimed that mentoring influences employees' retention and helps establish an organization's culture; and Natalie et al.'s (2011) reported that growth, development opportunities, and training influences

employee retention. In addition, the findings supported and corroborated Echols (2007), Hytter (2007), and Rodriguez (2008) in that organizations' retention of employees occurs when they provide learning and development opportunities. Further support of the participants' perceptions regarding the use of mentoring that women can truly benefit from being mentored was emphasized by O'Reilly (2008); and having female mentors who are knowledgeable and experienced can help show other women how to navigate the organizational culture. A plethora of benefits exist when mentoring is used to recruit and retain workers. Harvey et al. (2009) concurred that mentoring can be used as a strategic tool to develop and transfer organizational knowledge, which contributes to the organization creating a competitive advantage in today's global economy.

In addition to the study findings, research supports various uses of mentoring. Mentoring is regarded as a learning tool by organizations to promote development for new and existing employees (Little, Kearney & Britner, 2010) by providing structure (Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monseque-Bailey, 2009) and a positive approach to learning (Ismail et al., 2005, 2006; Little et al., 2010). In the workplace, mentoring is used to provide support for employees' individual attainment and performance feedback (Fox, Stevenson, Connelly, Duff, & Dunlop, 2010; Davis, 2007; Fox et al., 2010). Successful mentoring provides positive outcome (Ismail & Khian Jui, 2013; Hezlett & Gibson 2007), and impacts the workplace network (Eby et al. 2008; Hezlett & Gibson 2007).

Research Question 2. *According to the female managers in the target retail business, what are their perceptions regarding the reason for the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program?* The second research question presented to the participants was inquiry based, soliciting ideas and examining factors that presumably

affected the successful development of the mentoring program. The relationship of Interview Questions 5 through 8 as they related to Research Question 2 was to discover the perceived factors that affected the program development. The researcher found that the lack of clearly defined goals, resources, support, and leadership to be the perceived barriers that contributed to the unsuccessful development of the mentoring program. In addition, the participants believed that because top management consisted of all males and only one female; it contributed to them not receiving the kind of support needed to develop the program.

As previously discussed, but in alignment with the participants' beliefs, Broadbridge (2008) affirmed that the perceived barriers women encounter in retailing are attributed to five categories: (a) family responsibilities (lack of child care facilities and family commitments), (b) the way work is organized (the long anti-social hours of retailing and lack of flexi-time), (c) organizational cultures (e.g., male dominance in the organizational hierarchy, outdated attitudes to women's roles and gender stereotyped beliefs), (d) the invisibility of women at senior levels (a lack of female role models), and (e) women themselves (lack of confidence and lack of political awareness).

Finding 2. The study findings that the lack of top management support and commitment adversely affected the successful development of the mentoring program are supported by the Office of Personnel Management (2008) who reported that "a formal mentoring program is tied directly to the organizational's leadership, and the program will succeed only if senior leadership supports the program and makes it part of the learning culture" (p. 7). Research on mentoring programs posits that management support and training are key factors to the program success (Allen et al., 2006; Parise & Forret, 2008). In line with the study findings, top management support is an essential component

to the continued success of the mentoring program (Allen et al., 2006; Parise & Forret, 2008); mentoring initiatives require the active support and commitment of top management.

The belief of the participants that they did not receive the kind of support due to the lack of female presence is explained by Storrie (2012) that when top management is mostly male, obtaining buy-in for programs that foster the recruitment, development, and retention of women in organizations becomes a challenge. Storrie (2012) further noted that “whether a development opportunity was a way to enter a high-potential program or provided support for transitions into higher positions or taking on multinational responsibilities, men were favored over women at every job level” (p. 5). Nonetheless, Storrie (2012) confirmed that when there is a high percentage of women in leadership roles, companies report a measurable impact on their return on investment.

Finding 3. The successful development of any mentoring program is dependent upon a clear articulation of its goals and processes. The study findings that the successful development of the mentoring program required the clear establishment of the program goals and objectives is supported by Washington’s (2011) argument that organizations must clearly define the processes mentoring program should adopt in order to yield the anticipated benefits. According to OPM (2008), a clear understanding of the program goals and objectives ensures that the employees’ needs are met. These findings are mirrored in P-Sontag et al.’s (2007) study that the reasons why formal mentoring relationships fail are due to the lack of commitment, misaligned expectations, and lack of support. According to Fagenson (as reported by Washington, 2011), the development of successful mentoring programs must include conducting needs assessments of employees, establishing clear program objectives, defining the roles of the mentor and the

protégé, and providing clear procedures to monitor and evaluate the relationship (p. 315).

Finding 4. The assumption that there are more men than women in top leadership role is consistent with McKeen and Bujaki's (2007) study that there are more men in high-level positions in organizations. However, Duguid (2011) contradicted the participants' beliefs that women in senior positions will advocate for women in lower ranking positions. Duguid found that women in senior positions are biased against other women, and they might actively find ways to keep other women out of senior roles; also, other women are concerned with negative consequences toward them if they do reach out and assist.

Research Question 3. The third research question was "*According to the female managers in the target retail business, what is their perception regarding top management role in the design, development, and support of the mentoring program, and how did it affect the program outcome?*" The relationship of Interview Questions 9 through 14 as it related to Research Question 3 was twofold; and focused on discovering the effect of the management role in program development, and discovering how the organization would have benefited if the program had been successfully established. The participants' perceptions regarding the role of management in the program were mixed. Their understanding was that top management was to define the goals and objectives and provide support to accomplish the program plan. One of the participants summarized the role of management when she said, "the lack of commitment, feedback, and directions from top management I believed affected the continued development of the program."

Finding 5. Rowland (2008) discovered that managers play a very significant role in the program development and the culture that surrounds the program development. Top management support is a critical factor that validates the significance of the program

and in return, the program becomes valuable to the organization as a whole. The result of top management's role in the program development affirmed that managers at the top positively influence how resources are used and allocated. According to Allen et al. (2006), when management supports mentoring programs, they impact the extent to which the best designed programs are perceived as effective. Conversely, Eby et al. (2006) inferred that managers who support the organization's mentoring program consequently experience the reward and benefits of the program.

Research Question 4. The fourth research question was "*According to the female managers in the target retail business, what effects did the failure of the mentoring program have on their personal life, their work performance, and their working relationship with top management?*" The relationship of Interview Questions 15 through 18 as it related to Research Question 4 was to discover if the failure of the program had any negative effect on the managers as women or on their management style. According to Harris et al. (2001), workplace mentoring is the most critical factor in worksite learning, and all of the female managers discussed that it indirectly affected them because as women in management they did not receive support to provide the type of learning that would have been needed by the mentoring program. The participants stated that the ease of access into the organizational culture would have been a key factor in preparing and promoting the careers of new hires. One participant stated, "I know the struggles I had to endure to get to the level I am today; for as long as I have been with the company. I had to start at the very bottom and gradually work my way up; with very little support. The failure of the program impacted me because I had seen other women that I could have helped and I did not get that opportunity; I felt I had failed." Other participants referenced that it had very little effect on their personal life mainly because of the minimal

interaction that have existed between corporate managers and local general managers. “I have only had minimal working relationship with top management before so there was no major change or impact in how I professionally or socially related to them during or after the program development.” The other participants added that the failure of the mentoring program had no direct effect on their personal life or work performance. However, all of the participants mentioned that a positive outcome of participating in the program was the interaction and socialization among the female general managers.

Implications of Findings

Mentoring in organizations has been posited as a necessary tool and sound organizational strategy, which has precipitated the ongoing research of mentoring programs (Baugh & Fagenson-Eland 2007; Parise & Forret 2008), in terms of women-only groups (Devos, 2007), in relation to career outcomes (Kammeyer-Mueller & Judge 2008), and the perceived role of organizational support (Baranik, Roling & Eby, 2010). These findings concurred that the ability to either informally or formally implement mentoring programs could lead to higher individual psychosocial support and career development (Ismail, Abdullah, & Francis, 2009).

Although a great number of women are in the workforce compared to a century ago, women still need the support of organizations and the benefit and advantages of mentoring to navigate the organizational culture and cope with many of the political issues of advancement. Research has confirmed that to help foster more women in the workforce, successful mentoring programs have to be developed and implemented. The literature confirms that organizations should start by building relationships within communities of women’s organizations and for the retention of women, organizations need to provide opportunities for advancement through networking and hands-on

experience opportunities, competitive compensation, avenue for growth and development, and a positive relation between employees and managers. Carden (2011) posited that when providing mentoring, organizations should engage women in consistent conversation—asking questions, providing honest feedback, guidance, and tips. Doing so will help women feel involved, their opinions matter, and their voices are heard.

The findings of this study indicated that talent within an organization creates sustainable competitive advantage; and mentoring programs provide a means to develop and grow employees' abilities. Further findings of this study correlated with research studies that organizations that provide mentoring programs add value in many ways; improving retention, building networks, increased diversity of thought, unlocking hidden employee talent, improving knowledge sharing, and sharing cultural value. Mentoring programs have been a powerful tool in human and workforce development. Mentoring is highly effective in developing and advancing women's careers and deterring gender inequality.

According to the Office of Personnel Management (2008), "organizations that are interested in developing formal mentoring programs need to create a business case and address why the program is needed, what the organization hopes to gain, and what components the program should include" (p. 6). However, as previously mentioned, these programs should have clearly stipulated goals and objectives for successful program development, and should be evaluated at various phases of the development. The Office of Personnel Management (2008) affirmed that

A formal mentoring program will succeed only if senior leadership supports the program and makes it part of the learning culture. It is best to identify a champion (preferably a senior leader) of the program who will play a major role in marketing the program and recruiting mentors. Agencies currently operating successful formal mentoring programs have support and commitment from

leadership and management. Not only do these leaders pledge their support and commitment, they participate as mentors. When senior leaders participate as mentors it shows a true commitment to the program and will encourage agency employees to participate. (p. 6)

Limitations

There were several limitations to this research study. Creswell (2008) explained that “limitations are possible weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher” (p. 207). One major limitation of this study was the small sample size, the exclusion of male participants, and the fact that the program was limited to only one of the many district clusters. The study sample size comprised of six female managers who had collectively worked in the retail industry for over 40 years. This small sample size does not represent the multiplicity of women in the workplace and, therefore, the generalizability of the results when compared to women working in higher level positions, different professions, and different organizations is limited. Moreover, the sample participants did not reflect a true representation of the retail organization they worked for or the organizational rank; therefore, the result cannot be generalizable to the entire organization.

Another limitation was that only the development process of attempting to create a mentoring program was examined and did not include the full program development life circle such as program requirement, design, implementation, evaluation, and support. It is unknown how variables such as race, gender, ethnicity, resources, status, and top management support would have impacted the results of the program had it been fully developed.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are

suggested. Because this study utilized only a limited number of female managers in only one local cluster of a major retail business to develop the program, it is recommended that future attempts to implement a mentoring program include male managers to develop the program. In addition, because the development of the program targeted only women to recruit, retain, and mentor, the researcher recommends that future development of the program recruit, retain, and mentor promising male employees as well and therefore should include male managers to both develop the program and males as mentees of the program. Being inclusive of both genders would add more depth, richness, and equality to potential mentoring programs.

Another recommendation is for the future redevelopment of the WOW mentoring program. With the limited number of women in top management, the development of a mentoring program that will train and have an impact on retention, not only will impact diversity within the organization, but, ultimately, will increase the organizational return on investment. Qualitative data provided by this study indicated that mentoring is a determinant of employees' career advancement and has a positive impact on job performance. Also, it has an even greater impact on the organization, because it fosters personal and professional growth that supports and sustains the organization's goals and strategic plans. According to Allen et al. (2006), "organizations should continue to develop and implement formal mentoring programs, and it is imperative that researchers continue work that will close the scientist-practitioner gap with respect to the design and delivery of this important personnel management intervention" (2006, p. 150). The redevelopment of the WOW mentoring program could potentially help recruit more women and help them better navigate the organizational culture.

Summary and Conclusions

Organizations that provide mentoring programs that promote workplace learning, provide career development and advancement, and promote diversity, maximize their effort in recruitment and retention of qualified workers (Banko, 2008). Therefore, to ensure that quality and effective mentoring programs are developed, top management should be involved from the program conception through its development and implementation (Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007). It is equally important that the participation and contributions of the program participants be valued and integrated into the developmental process. The integration of the participants' voices should become an integral part of the process because it will help determine the worth of what the program delivers and the future continuation of the program.

Research provides strategies for developing effective mentoring programs. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Office of Personnel Management's (2008) guideline for developing successful mentoring program should involve (a) identifying the program manager and the senior level champion; (b) identifying the purpose of the program; (c) identifying the intended mentors and mentees; (d) creating a program implementation action plan; (e) establishing the program approval process; (f) establishing policies, procedures, and responsibilities; (g) scheduling activities to support mentors and mentees; (h) creating program documents and resources; (i) developing a communication strategy; (j) training and educating the mentor and mentee pool on aspects and benefits of the mentoring program; and (k) implementing and evaluating the program.

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