Mentoring Functions and their Application to the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows Leadership Development Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine and better comprehend the concept of mentoring functions as they apply to leadership development within the American Council on Education Fellows Program—from the Fellows' (or protégés') perspectives. The study sought to generate knowledge in how to develop future higher education administrators in response to the documented increase of turnover among campus leaders. A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was used, collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative data. This mixed methods study highlights the functions of mentoring that enhanced the learning experience for leaders in higher education, and has resulted in a proposed conceptual model.

Keywords: mentoring, leadership development, higher education

Introduction

Turnover among higher education leadership is estimated to be at least 50% between 2011 and 2016. (Leubsdorf, 2006). Data from the Association of American Universities (AAU) has demonstrated that between 2011 and 2012, 16 of the 61 member universities within the AAU hired new presidents or chancellors. When considering additional leadership positions beyond presidents/chancellors, this figure increased even more (Kiley, K, 2012). Additionally, a past study from King and Gomez (2008) found that 92% of all current college/university presidents were 51 years of age or older. Furthermore, of that group, 49% were found to be 60 years of age or older. When looking at all senior administrators, 66% were identified as being 51 years of age or older. Whether attributed to retirement, forced resignations, or simply choosing to leave, issues relating to turnover among higher education administration are prevalent.

To further complicate matters, the majority of current faculty, who could potentially fill administrative positions, has primarily focused on research and teaching, therefore resulting in a lack of administrative leadership experience. Likewise, administrative leaders' terms in office are somewhat short when compared to most faculty members' tenure; over the last 30 years, campus presidents have averaged 7-year terms (Kezar, 2009; ACE, 2007).

As written in The Chronicle of Higher Education, developmental programmes are invaluable for those with little to no administrative experience: "If you are coming up through the faculty ranks—as the vast majority of future presidents do—you aren't always exposed to the financial and managerial sides of the

institution" (Carr, 1999, p. A37). More recently, Academic Leader published a special report devoted to transitioning from faculty to administration. Again demonstrating the need for mentoring and leadership development to gain experience, Buller (2012) indicated "recently appointed administrators are all too often left to fend for themselves, having to learn 'on the job' many of the skills they will need to know in order to succeed in their new positions" (p. 6).

McDade (1998) also acknowledged individuals must quickly develop necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities when leading an institution. Warner and DeFleur (1993) agreed: "…colleges and universities are large, complex institutions requiring significant management and fiscal expertise and faculty members typically do not develop this expertise in the normal course of activities" (p. 5). With this being the case, how can individuals become more readily prepared or qualified to fill these upcoming vacancies in higher education administration?

Review of the literature

Higher education, a setting devoted to the enhancement of learning, inquiry, and development, lacks effective continuing development for individuals aspiring to be future campus leaders (Bornstein, 2005; Hargrove, 2003). This is especially true when examining leadership development for faculty in higher education. According to Green and McDade (1994), the scarcity of development programs is paradoxical:

Ironically, we pay little attention to enhancing the ability of administrators and faculty to lead our institutions: the priority is low and our investment is modest. The corporate sector, on the other hand, spends $40 billion a year on training. Surely, higher education—a $150 billion dollar enterprise— should not consider leadership development less important than the corporate sector does. (p. 3)

The field of education has followed successful business organizations in recognizing mentoring as a critical component of effective leadership development (Remy, 2009). Since mentoring is said to play a vital role in leadership development, additional research to examine how it aids in leadership development is warranted. According to Gibbons (2000):

Mentoring is a protected relationship in which learning and experimentation can occur, potential skills can be developed, and in which results can be measured in terms of competence gained rather than curricular territory covered" (p. 18). Such a relationship sounds ideal to garner future leaders of academic institutions.

Significant mentoring research has been conducted by Kram (1983, 1985, 1988). In her early stages of research, she proposed a conceptual model identifying both career development and psychosocial functions of mentoring. Since then, much of the mentoring research has occurred in the business sector. As Brown (2010) noted, there is an abundance of literature in the business sector; however, to find detailed studies regarding mentoring in higher education becomes much more difficult.

Utilizing the identified typology of Muijs, Harris, Lumby, Morrison, and Sood (2006), mentoring can be viewed as a form of experiential leadership development. And each individual mentoring function aids in some form or another. As defined by Kram (1983) "career functions are those aspects of the relationship that primarily enhance career advancement," such as sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments (p. 614). Psychosocial functions are defined as "those aspects of the relationship that primarily enhance sense of competence, clarity of identity, and

effectiveness in the managerial role," such as role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship (p. 614).

A meta-analysis of the literature has shown that "Extant theoretical and empirical research is clear that career and psychosocial functions serve as the primary distinct and reliable overarching operationalization of mentoring provided" (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004, p. 128). These functions define the multiple roles a mentor may portray, as well as the disposition in which the protégé develops. Once aware of the functions that mentoring provides, one may begin to question which, if any, are more common or beneficial within mentoring relationships among those seeking leadership development in higher education. As Rosser (2004) noted, she was not aware of any research that has tried to validate Kram's research on mentoring functions.

Mentoring literature suggests a wide variety of purposes: it can serve as a "buffer," encourage the feeling of appreciation, "rekindle the enthusiasm," provide social support, etc. Ultimately, mentoring is viewed as a developmental tool providing both organizational and individual benefits (Cureton, Green & Meakin, 2010, p. 80). In the setting of higher education, such an interpersonal relationship that fosters support between a mentor and a protégé, seems to be an ideal means for individuals desiring to learn campus leadership fundamentals.

One such formalized program that is available to those working in higher education is offered by the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE's Fellows Program is considered one of the most successful mentoring programs in higher education that places aspiring institutional protégés on site with experienced senior mentors. Due to it being the longest running leadership development program in the United States, a common presumption is made in academia that the ACE Fellows Program provides lessons of leadership development through mentoring that higher education institutions desire (Riskind, 2014). This program seeks "to furnish middle-management academicians with up-close exposure to senior executive jobs while helping them to hone the leadership and management skills required for leading a postsecondary institution" (Ruffins, 1998, p. 28). Such a program allows protégés to take part in the leadership at the host institution and immerse themselves in the culture, policies, and decisions (ACE Fellows Program, 2010).

Having the knowledge to expand or offer additional such programs would provide more long-term preparatory opportunities for those devoted to becoming academic leaders. Thus, this mixed methods study was designed to discover which function(s) of mentoring the ACE Fellows Program participants—the Fellows (or protégés)—perceived to be the most/least utilized throughout the mentoring relationship and most/least beneficial in enhancing their leadership development. As a result, a conceptual model can be developed.

Methodology

Seven research questions helped to guide the study:

1) To what extent are career development functions of mentoring utilized in the ACE Fellows program?
2) To what degree are career development functions beneficial to leadership development for the ACE Fellows?
3) To what extent are psychosocial functions of mentoring utilized in the ACE Fellow program?

4) To what degree are psychosocial functions beneficial to leadership development for the ACE Fellows?
5) What are the perceptions and experiences of protégés in regard to career development functions utilized in the ACE Fellows program?
6) What are the perceptions and experiences of protégés in regard to psychosocial functions utilized in the ACE Fellows program?
7) What additional information is gained about mentoring functions from the qualitative follow-up interviews that was not available from the quantitative Likert scales?

Initial samples and permissions.

The sample for the quantitative phase was based on the population of former participants in the ACE Fellows Program. ACE was asked for permission for the researcher to gather data on their Fellows; the Director of the ACE Fellows Program agreed to provide the researcher with access to survey three random classes for the quantitative phase. A random number generator was utilized to determine three classes: 2001-2002, 2006-2007, and 2009-2010. This resulted in 116 former ACE Fellows potentially receiving the survey. Based upon those who had available contact information, there were 98 usable email addresses for the quantitative research portion.

Class	Class Size	# Women	# Men	# Minorities	# Community Colleges	# Private Colleges
2001-2002	34	16	18	11	2	12
2006-2007	40	23	17	21	4	8
2009-2010	42	27	15	18	3	31
Totals:	116	66	50	50	9	51

Table 1Demographic data of sample population

Instrumentation and data collection.

Effectively implementing mixed methods research requires extensive planning. Because the Director of the ACE Fellows Program was in support of this research study, it was beneficial for her to initially promote it to the Fellows.

A review of the current literature revealed no appropriate instrument for use in identifying utilization and benefit of career development and psychosocial mentoring functions as they related to leadership development. An original survey instrument was developed to collect data from ACE Fellows concerning their level of use and degree of benefit from mentoring functions employed over the course of their Fellowships.

A week prior to the survey being sent to the participants, they received an email of support from the ACE Fellows Director. It was hoped this would help to alleviate a low response rate, which is typical of web-based surveys. Furthermore, a three-phase follow-up sequence was utilized (Dillman, 2000). On the survey, each participant was asked to identify which mentoring functions were utilized and which were perceived to beneficially contribute to his/her leadership development within higher education.

For the qualitative guided interviews, a tentative list of semi-structured, open-ended questions was utilized. This portion of the study focused on expanding up the results from the quantitative phase. Interviews offer some inherent benefits to researchers. They produce much data quickly, and the

researcher has the opportunity for immediate follow-up or clarification (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Roulston, 2010).

Interviews were sought from nine individuals who had volunteered to participate in follow-up communication. When initial approval of each participant was obtained, an email was sent to the participants, including an Informed Consent Form. Appointments, via telephone, were scheduled with the confirmed participants. Interviews lasted between 35 to 60 minutes each.

The semi-structured, open-ended format of the guided interviews allowed for rich qualitative data adding meaning to data that has been acquired quantitatively. Stake (1995) notes the validity of conducting interviews: "…each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell" (p. 65). Interviews were audio-recorded to allow for later transcription by the researcher.

Description of the sample.

This study gathered information from 36 past ACE Fellows producing a 36.7% response rate. The 36.7% response rate falls within the acceptable range for response rates for online surveys [32.52% - 41.25%] (Hamilton, 2003).

Demographics of the respondents were collected from closing questions in the survey. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were female (n=20), and 44% were male (n=16). Seventeen percent were between the age ranges of 60 and 69 (n=6), 64% were between the age ranges of 50 and 59 (n=23), and 19% were between the age ranges of 40 and 49 (n=7). Sixty-one percent of the respondents self-identified their race or ethnicity as white (n=22), 19% self-identified as black (n=7), 6% self-identified as Hispanic (n=2), 6% self-identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (n=2), and 3% self-identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (n=1). Two respondents selected "other" and self-identified as "Black, West Indian, and Spanish" and "multi-racial."

Fifty-three percent presently work for 4-year public institutions (n=19), 33% are at 4-year private, nonprofit institutions (n=12), 8% are at 2-year public institutions (n=3), 3% are at 2-year private, nonprofit institutions (n=1), and 3% classified their employer as "other" specifically stating they work for an association (n=1). When asked which type of Fellows Placement they participated in, 78% indicated full academic year (n=28), 14% indicated academic semester (n=5), and 8% indicated periodic/flexible placements (n=3). Finally, when asked about their position title or rank pre-ACE Fellows experience to their current position title or rank, 31 of the 36 respondents provided a response to this question. The majority of those who responded, 81%, have increased their rank in higher education (n=25); 19% have seen their rank decrease in higher education (n=6).

Quantitative data analysis.

The quantitative data were individually analyzed using statistical software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). In an effort to avoid biasing participants' answers, they were required to respond to all questions. Clear definitions of terms were provided throughout the survey to ensure consistency in understanding among the survey respondents. A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine any general trends and report central tendency and variability. Descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to summarize overall tendencies, give information of how single scores compared to others and to assess how representative the sample was of the population (Creswell, 2009). The use of like-valued Likert scales for the two variables allowed for the researcher to determine the Pearson correlation between the degree of utilization of the mentoring functions and the degree of benefit perceived.

Because the survey also contained some opportunities for respondents to comment within text boxes, some additional data analysis needed to occur. The text was not as in-depth as that provided by the interviews, thus the researcher was able to manually analyze and assess this content. As such, any relevant data that emerged from assessing the data were reported and aided in guiding the second-phase interviews.

The opening short-answer question (Q1) allowed participants to express their belief of the value of mentoring. Thirty-five out of 36 respondents (97.2%) provided usable responses to this question. Of those responding, 94% believed that mentoring is valuable (n=33). As one individual stated:

Yes, mentoring is very valuable because you have the opportunity to have a one-on-one relationship with an experienced leader with unlimited opportunities to learn and see leadership in action.

Another provided a similar response:

Yes, mentoring provides information that might not be readily available through other means and feedback about potential options that are under consideration.

Following this, participants were specifically asked (Q2) if they believed their mentoring received through the ACE Fellows program was valuable, specifically from their formally assigned mentor. Thirty-four of the 36 participants (94.4%) provided usable responses to this question. Of those responding, 82% (n=28) felt it was valuable, and many provided positive commentary explaining why. Several made mention that they would not have had access to such experiences, insights, and information prior to a full-fledged leadership role if it was not for the ACE Fellows program. One simply stated:

I learned a great deal from the mentors' personal and professional experiences through many one-on-one conversations. I also gained significant confidence in my own ability when the mentors verified the validity of my judgment.

Another commended the mentoring:

I would not be in the position I'm in without it. I continue to use my network of ACE Fellows and mentors to grow and develop, and to seek critical advice on career advancement.

The reliability of the Likert-scale questions were analyzed with the use of Cronbach's alpha. The reliability analyses of the instrument conducted during the study provided values at or above .77, indicating the instrument was found to be reliable. The alpha value for Question 3 (utilization of career development functions) was .79; the alpha value for Question 4 (benefit of career development functions) was .82; the alpha value for Question 5 (utilization of psychosocial functions) was .77; and, the alpha value for Question 6 (benefit of psychosocial functions) was .87.

Research Question 1 – To what extent are career development functions of mentoring utilized in the ACE Fellows program?

Respondents were asked to address the degree to which their mentor(s) provided/utilized five various career development mentoring functions (Q3): sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments.

Mentoring Function	Never Utilized	Seldom Utilized	Sometimes Utilized	Often Utilized	Very Frequently Utilized
Likert Rank	0	1	2	3	4
Sponsorship	16.7%	13.9%	33.3%	25.0%	11.1%
Exposure-and-Visibility	19.4%	11.1%	30.6%	22.2%	16.7%
Coaching	5.6%	16.7%	19.4%	30.6%	27.8%
Protection	27.8%	22.2%	13.9%	33.3%	2.8%
Challenging Assignments	13.9%	11.1%	11.1%	22.2%	41.7%

Table 2 Survey question 3: utilization of Career Development Functions

Based upon the 36 responses, the most frequently utilized career development function within their ACE Fellowship was challenging assignments (n=15). Conversely, the least utilized mentoring function from these respondents' experiences was protection (n=10). When combining the top two categories of utilization, "Often Utilized" and "Very Frequently Utilized," two mentoring functions stood out above the others as far as utilization: coaching (n=21) and challenging assignments (n=23). When combining the bottom two categories, "Never Utilized" and "Seldom Utilized," protection was still the least utilized function (n=18).

Research Question 2 – To what degree are career development functions beneficial to leadership development for the ACE Fellows?

Respondents were asked to address their perception of how beneficial each career development function was to their own leadership development (Q4).

Mentoring Function	N/A (not utilized)	Not At All Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Moderately Beneficial	Extremely Beneficial
Likert Rank	0	1	2	3	4
Sponsorship	16.7%	8.3%	25.0%	13.9%	36.1%
Exposure-and-Visibility	19.4%	0.0%	19.4%	19.4%	41.7%
Coaching	5.6%	8.3%	11.1%	25.0%	50.0%
Protection	27.8%	2.8%	25.0%	33.3%	11.1%
Challenging Assignments	13.9%	2.8%	8.3%	22.2%	52.8%

Table 3 Survey question 4: perceived benefit of Career Development Functions

Based upon the 36 responses, the most beneficial career development function within their ACE Fellowship was challenging assignments (n=19), followed closely by coaching (n=18). Conversely, the least beneficial mentoring functions which were utilized from these respondents' experiences were sponsorship (n=3) and, ironically, coaching (n=3). The assumption from the data collected was that if a

mentoring function was not utilized, the ACE Fellow could not provide a ranking of how beneficial that function was. Thus, larger percentages, higher frequencies, were in the correlating column for "N/A (not utilized)." When combining the top two categories of benefit, "Extremely Beneficial" and "Moderately Beneficial," two mentoring functions stood out above the others as far as benefit: coaching (n=27) and challenging assignments (n=27). On the contrary, when looking at the lower two categories of benefit from functions that were utilized, "Not At All Beneficial" and "Somewhat Beneficial", sponsorship (n=12) and protection (n=10) had the most frequency for limited benefit.

Research Question 3 – To what extent are psychosocial functions of mentoring utilized in the ACE Fellows program?

Respondents were asked to address the degree their mentor(s) provided/utilized four various psychosocial mentoring functions (Q5): role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship.

Mentoring Function	Never Utilized	Seldom Utilized	Sometimes Utilized	Often Utilized	Very Frequently Utilized
Likert Rank	0	1	2	3	4
Role Modeling	0.0%	2.8%	16.7%	41.7%	38.9%
Acceptance-and-Confirmation	0.0%	2.8%	16.7%	55.6%	25.0%
Counseling	0.0%	16.7%	27.8%	33.3%	22.2%
Friendship	2.8%	11.1%	19.4%	41.7%	25.0%

Table 4 Survey question 5: utilization of Psychosocial Functions

From the 36 responses received, the most frequently utilized psychosocial mentoring function within their ACE Fellowship was role modeling (n=14). Conversely, the least utilized psychosocial function was friendship (n=1). When combining the top two categories of utilization, "Often Utilized" and "Very Frequently Utilized," two mentoring functions stood out above the others as far as utilization: role modeling (n=29) and acceptance-and-confirmation (n=29). When combining the bottom two categories, "Never Utilized" and "Seldom Utilized," counseling (n=6) and friendship (n=5) were the least utilized functions.

Research Question 4 – To what degree are psychosocial functions beneficial to leadership development for the ACE Fellows?

Respondents were asked to address their perception of how beneficial each psychosocial function was to their own leadership development (Q6).

From the 36 responses received, the most beneficial psychosocial mentoring function within their ACE Fellowship was role modeling (n=23). Conversely, the least beneficial mentoring functions which were utilized from these respondents' experiences were counseling (n=5) and friendship (n=4). The same assumption was made for the psychosocial functions: if a mentoring function was not utilized, the ACE Fellow could not provide a ranking of how beneficial that function was. This did not affect the

psychosocial data as the majority of respondents indicated some form of utilization, thus they were able to rank how beneficial they believed these functions to be. When combining the top two categories of benefit, "Extremely Beneficial" and "Moderately Beneficial," two psychosocial functions stood out above the others: role modeling (n=30) and acceptance-and-confirmation (n=29). On the contrary, when looking at the lower two categories of benefit from functions that were utilized, "Not At All Beneficial" and "Somewhat Beneficial", friendship (n=13) and counseling (n=12) had the most frequency for limited benefit to the Fellows.

Mentoring Function Likert Rank	N/A (not utilized) 0	Not At All Beneficial 1	Somewhat Beneficial 2	Moderately Beneficial 3	Extremely Beneficial 4
Role Modeling	0.0%	5.6%	11.1%	19.4%	63.9%
Acceptance-and-Confirmation	0.0%	8.3%	11.1%	33.3%	47.2%
Counseling	0.0%	13.9%	19.4%	33.3%	33.3%
Friendship	2.8%	11.1%	25.0%	33.3%	27.8%

Table 5 Survey question 6: perceived benefit of Psychosocial Functions

Although survey respondents were not directly asked to assess the relationship between the use and benefit of the mentoring functions, it seemed logical in this stage of the data analysis to reformulate and reassess the research questions being addressed. Once immersed in the data analysis, the researcher considered if there was any relation between utilization and benefit among mentoring functions. Based upon the data collected, further data analysis occurred to explore any correlation between utilization and benefit of each individual mentoring function. Correlation data allowed the researcher to see if ACE Fellows perceived the utilization and benefit of each function to be in relation with one another, which aligned with how questions were posed for the qualitative follow-up interviews. It was assumed that if a mentoring function was utilized, it would be perceived as beneficial, thus the rationale for a one-tail Pearson Correlation test. It should be noted, the value of n differs among the functions as correlation was only calculated for those individuals that reported utilization/benefit. If there was no utilization, the respondents automatically selected a corresponding value for benefit, "N/A (not utilized)," which would alter correlation calculations. Tables 6 and 7 describe the relevant correlation data for career development and psychosocial mentoring functions.

Mentoring Function	N	R	p-value
Sponsorship	30	.507	.002
Exposure-and-Visibility	29	.284	.068
Coaching	34	.583	.000
Protection	26	.376	.029
Challenging Assignments	31	.599	.000

Table 6 Correlation data for utilization and benefit among Career Development Functions

As can be seen, multiple correlations were found to be statistically significant, which infers the ACE Fellows have found a relation between the benefit from the career development functions being utilized.

More specifically, the correlation between utilization and benefit for sponsorship, coaching, and challenging assignments was found to be significant at the .005 level; for protection, it was found to be significant at the .05 level.

Mentoring Function	N	*R*	p-value
Role Modeling	36	.564	.000
Acceptance-and-Confirmation	36	.563	.000
Counseling	36	.635	.000
Friendship	35	.645	.000

Table 7 Correlation data for utilization and benefit among Psychosocial Functions

Deriving meaning from the psychosocial data, again, ACE Fellows have found a relation between the benefit from the mentoring functions being utilized. More specifically, every correlation between utilization and benefit for psychosocial functions was found to be significant at the .005 level. This provided an opportunity to delve deeper into the relationship between utilization and benefit within the qualitative follow-up interviews.

Qualitative data analysis.
Following the quantitative survey, nine individuals were purposively selected to participate in the follow-up telephone interviews consisting of 14 open-ended questions. A total of 18 survey respondents volunteered to be in the pool of candidates for the follow-up interview; 72% were female (n=13); 28% were male (n=5). Of the individuals that were among the nine confirmed interviewees, 67% were female (n=6), and 33% were male (n=3). Sixty-seven percent were between the age ranges of 50 and 59 (n=6), 22% were between the age ranges of 40 and 49 (n=2), and 11% were between the age ranges of 60 and 69 (n=1). Seventy-eight percent of the respondents self-identified their race or ethnicity as white (n=7), 11% self-identified as black (n=1), and 11% self-identified as Hispanic (n=1).

Forty-four percent presently work for 4-year public institutions (n=4), 44% are at 4-year private, nonprofit institutions (n=4), and 11% are at 2-year public institutions (n=1). When asked which type of Fellows Placement they participated in, 67% indicated full academic year (n=6), 22% indicated academic semester (n=2), and 11% indicated periodic/flexible placements (n=1). Finally, when examining the rank of individuals who responded, 78% had increased their rank in higher education when comparing pre-ACE Fellows positions to their current positions (n=7); 22% had seen a decrease in rank within their higher education positions (n=2).

Upon completion of transcription for each interview, a copy was emailed back to individual participants for their review. If any clarifications were necessary, those were made. Then, analysis was completed. With nine interviews, manual data analysis was plausible. Such data analysis could ensure reliability and consistency of emergent themes. Common themes began to emerge when discussing research questions regarding utilization and benefit of both career development and psychosocial functions.

Initial interview questions (Q1 and Q2) allowed for introductory information to be shared. Background data and specific ACE Fellows placement details were provided. Throughout each interview, terms were defined to ensure consistency in meaning and understanding with respondents.

Research Question 5 – What are the perceptions and experiences of protégés in regard to career development functions utilized in the ACE Fellows program?

Sponsorship: From the interview, Q3 addressed thoughts and experiences regarding sponsorship within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. Of those individuals interviewed, all nine believed that sponsorship was present in some form within the ACE Fellows experience. While some were more emphatic than others, it remains rather consistent with survey data. In fact, on the survey, more individuals ranked sponsorship as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting that more sponsorship could be utilized to allow individuals to fully receive the extreme benefit that is perceived.

As one interviewee stated, *"...even in academia, networking and having people know you...that idea of connections is still important."* Another individual noted how she was invited to executive meetings, and that type of contact was extremely valuable. Finally, one respondent noted she felt she had the ultimate sponsorship in that a position was created for her upon completion of the ACE Fellows experience.

Exposure-and-visibility: The next question, Q4, asked interviewees to discuss their thoughts and experiences regarding exposure-and-visibility within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. All but two respondents indicated that exposure-and-visibility was definitely utilized within their ACE Fellowship. The remaining two believed it was somewhat utilized, but honestly believed it would result in more exposure than it did. While some interviewees provided more examples of experiences than others, it remains rather consistent with survey data. A greater number of individuals ranked exposure-and-visibility as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting that more of this function could be utilized to allow individuals to really receive the extreme benefit that is perceived.

One respondent indicated, *"It was huge! Absolutely unbelievable! I met everybody that was anywhere around this region"* while working with the President at the host institution. Furthermore, she elaborated on the ACE Fellows themselves being an enormous sponsorship resource:

You are only a Fellow during a single year, but you can call any ACE Fellow in the network and say that's who you are and immediately talk to them, recommend somebody, or do whatever you need to do.

Coaching: Q5 allowed interviewees to expand upon their thoughts and experiences with regard to coaching within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. Seven of the nine interview participants had responses that resulted in a common theme indicating they felt coaching occurred within their ACE Fellows experience; two did not perceive it to happen. Again, data gathered from the follow-up interviews remained rather consistent with survey data with regard to the coaching function. Once again, more individuals ranked the function as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting that even more coaching could occur to allow individuals to really receive the extreme benefit that is perceived.

During the interview, one individual noted:

My mentor was just so welcoming for me to be part of her routine…while I can't remember specifically any negative feedback, I'd always ask her for comments, and she was always willing to help me understand what I didn't know.

Another respondent noted she appreciated coaching from the fact that it forced her *"to think more broadly about where [she] wanted to be in higher education."* From a different perspective, one individual said it was more about being *"allowed access rather than coaching."*

Protection: Next, Q6 addressed interviewees' thoughts and experiences regarding protection within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. The overwhelming majority, eight respondents, expressed a common theme and did not believe protection existed in their ACE Fellowship; one perceived it to exist somewhat. The question regarding the protection function gathered varying data when compared to the other functions; however, the responses from the interviews were again consistent with data collected via the survey. Respondents noted, *"I didn't need it,"* or *"I have a hard time of recalling anything that required that,"* or *"I didn't really have difficult situations that required protection."*

Challenging assignments: Finally, Q7 asked interviewees to address their thoughts and experiences with regard to challenging assignments within their ACE Fellowship and how they benefitted their leadership development. The common theme that surfaced was that challenging assignments were an integral part to the ACE Fellows program, supporting Sibbel's (2009) claim that some form of project-based learning often has the greatest risk and reward in mentoring relationships. Seven respondents indicated they were part of their Fellowship; two individuals believed they somewhat took place. The majority of responses were extremely insightful and positive toward this mentoring function. The data collected via follow-up interviews again remained consistent with initial survey data. In fact, on the survey, this function received the most responses for being frequently utilized and extremely beneficial. Slightly more individuals ranked challenging assignments as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, again suggesting that more challenging assignments could be utilized to allow individuals to receive the extreme benefit that is perceived as part of their ACE Fellowship.

Respondents were involved in various challenging assignments: partaking in institutional advancement work, learning a different governance structure, exploring various international-presence models, heading an institutional-wide diversity plan task force, and guiding a strategic planning process. When discussing their challenging assignments, it could be derived from the interviews that individuals truly believed these activities to be an essential aspect to the Fellowship.

Research Question 6 – What are the perceptions and experiences of protégés in regard to psychosocial functions utilized in the ACE Fellows program?

Role modeling: Q8 asked interview participants to expand upon their thoughts and experiences regarding role modeling within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. The common theme was that utilization of this function did exist as eight respondents clearly indicated this; the remaining respondent did *"not particularly"* feel this was prevalent in her ACE Fellowship. The majority of interviewees were extremely positive about their role modeling experiences, and it further supported survey data. In fact, on the survey, role modeling received the highest response to being frequently utilized and extremely beneficial to one's leadership development. In addition, more

individuals ranked role modeling as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting that even more role modeling could be utilized to allow individuals to receive the extreme benefit that is perceived. Affirmative responses were very descriptive. One stated:

Yes, [role modeling] definitely happened. I got to see these people every day firsthand and was involved in multiple kinds of interaction…I had time to observe my mentors in every role they played.

Another noted:

Certainly I learned a lot from watching [my mentor] work, so I would say that role modeling was a very helpful part of mentoring.

Acceptance-and-confirmation: The next question, Q9, inquired about interviewees' thoughts and experiences regarding acceptance-and-confirmation within the ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. Again, upon completion of the interviews, it was evident the majority of respondents, seven of nine, supported a theme of utilization with regard to acceptance-and-confirmation; one felt it somewhat occurred, and another indicated she did not feel this was necessary in her Fellowship stating, *"I think I went in fairly strong….and I don't think I developed too much because of their involvement."*

While some were more emphatic than others regarding the use and benefit of acceptance-and-confirmation, it remained rather consistent with survey data. Once again, on the survey, more individuals ranked acceptance-and-confirmation as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting that even more of this function could be utilized to allow individuals to receive the benefit that is perceived.

One individual noted that this *"definitely"* occurred in her ACE Fellowship, and she believes it is still occurring to this day, 10 years later, by her mentor. Another respondent stated, *"I think the consistent feedback that I got during the time I was there…really made me feel like they took my Fellowship seriously, and that they were vested in my success."* Positive remarks continued from the interview participants:

I received so much positive feedback, a lot of positive reinforcement from them. They were willing to say good job and offer critiques that were positively reinforcing things while allowing me to understand complex things more completely. That was probably the main thing…the people helped confirm what I was doing.

Counseling: Next, Q10 examined the thoughts and experiences interviewees had regarding counseling within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. Holding true to other psychosocial functions, the common theme was again acknowledgement that counseling had occurred within the ACE Fellows experience. Seven respondents undoubtedly recalled experiences and thoughts, and two individuals agreed that it was somewhat included. This follow-up data again supported the initial survey results. Again, on the survey, more individuals ranked counseling as being extremely beneficial than the number of individuals who reported it being very frequently utilized, suggesting again that Fellows perceive high value to this function and more utilization could occur.

One Fellow noted how he appreciated the time his mentor would take to sit and listen, and his mentor would open up regarding personal struggles with professional decisions, and he noted *"that was good for me to see."* Another individual provided insight into how she felt counseling was utilized in her own Fellowship:

I think [counseling] went well. I think [both mentors] were very interested in my future career development, so we talked very broadly about the skill sets that I had, and if there were areas that needed further development. We talked about where I saw myself in the next three to five years; then we together kind of explored different paths to getting there.

Friendship: Lastly, Q11 solicited information from the interviewees regarding friendship within their ACE Fellowship and how it benefitted their leadership development. Holding true with the common theme found in responses to the questions centered on psychosocial functions, respondents, again overall, felt friendship to also be present in their ACE Fellows experience. Six individuals confirmed they perceived it to be utilized, two others said it was somewhat included, and only one individual noted she did not feel it to be prominently present, and stated she looks toward other facets of her life for friendship. The data from the interviews confirms what was found via the survey. Responses were more spread out among the level of utilization and degree in benefit, indicating Fellows did not have a clear sense if friendship was present in some form, and further indicating Fellows could not clearly state if friendship played an instrumental role in their leadership development.

For those who felt it was somewhat present, they felt their friendship, or bond, developed over time, but it remained within the confines of work. It was truly a *"professional friendship, but sometimes in a more social sense."* Others who felt more strongly regarding the presence of friendship provided additional details: *"The personal basis, collegiality and friendship, just hitting it off was the basis of why I went to [that host institution]. It was also one of the foundations of trust and the feeling of being able to contribute something."*

Mixed methods data analysis.

Mixed methods data analysis in a sequential study serves the purpose of using the "information from the analysis of the first database to inform the second database" (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007:142). When utilizing the original quantitative survey data as a foundation for further analysis of the follow-up inquiry, the mixing of data resulted.

Research Question 7 – What additional information is gained about mentoring functions from the qualitative follow-up interviews that was not available from the quantitative Likert-scales?

Much more depth was provided from the follow-up interviews, which the researcher would not have otherwise had if only utilizing the quantitative survey. These open-ended questions allowed for further thoughts to be shared and additional questions to be explored. Throughout data analysis three themes began to emerge and these are explained in turn.

Emergent Theme One – Multiple Sources of Mentorship: What stands out after reviewing the transcripts is that ACE Fellows identified a vast number of mentors throughout their Fellowship. Not only did they have their formal mentors at the host institution assigned by ACE (the examples explored in this research), but they also recognized mentors at their home institution who nominated them to become a Fellow. Other mentors that were mentioned include ACE staff, Fellows within their respective cohorts,

the Fellows network at large, and other colleagues that Fellows worked with at their host institution that were not identified as being formal mentors. The value of multiple sources of mentoring became apparent from the full transcripts, but also more specifically when addressing Q12 which asked, "Of all mentoring relationship experiences throughout your ACE Fellows experience, which do you believe to be the most beneficial in your own leadership development? Why?"One Fellow noted, *"The program itself is the most beneficial...the experiences with the other Fellows were all just superb."* Another individual agreed:

> *I think what stands out most in my own leadership development and in terms of my own overall pleasure in the ACE program was working with so many competent peers. To see leadership at that level may have been more important to me than any of the rest of it.*

Furthermore, another respondent commented the most beneficial aspect for her was *"the ongoing relationship that I had with the Presidential mentor that ACE assigned."*

Emergent Theme Two – Desire for Ongoing Mentoring: While recommendations were sought, in a sense, from Q13, what truly emerged were specific suggestions regarding the mentoring aspect of the ACE Fellows program. One individual mentioned the idea of Fellows becoming mentors for future Fellows to ensure they serve both sides of the relationship. Another suggestion included *"a more systematic way of encouraging connections after the program."* One individual provided ample detail mirroring the theme:

> *I think continuing the mentoring relationship in a more formalized way, either with the ACE Presidential mentor or one of the mentors from the Fellowship, just one year out...to help you think about your role when you got back...I think one year of post-mentor follow-up would really help you to make sense of what your experience had been and how best to translate that into future career success.*

Emergent Theme Three –Psychosocial Functions Collectively Positive: When reviewing interview responses and notes, it became apparent that data demonstrated Fellows had a very positive outlook on both the utilization and degree of benefit for psychosocial functions. When tying in the quantitative survey results, it was noted, on average, psychosocial functions were more frequently ranked at the higher levels of utilization as well as benefit.

When considering why such results may occur, one could argue that individuals at this level of being accepted into the Fellows program do not rely as much on career development functions; these have been experienced in many forms throughout various positions leading up to the ACE Fellow role. However, when an individual is contemplating the decision to become a campus leader, more of the psychosocial functions were found to be desirable and useful

Discussion and future research

Mentoring continues to receive increased attention in higher education as a common "buzz word." In addition to the emergent themes this study revealed regarding mentoring functions and their relation to leadership development, a conceptual model is proposed incorporating results from this research (see Figure 1).
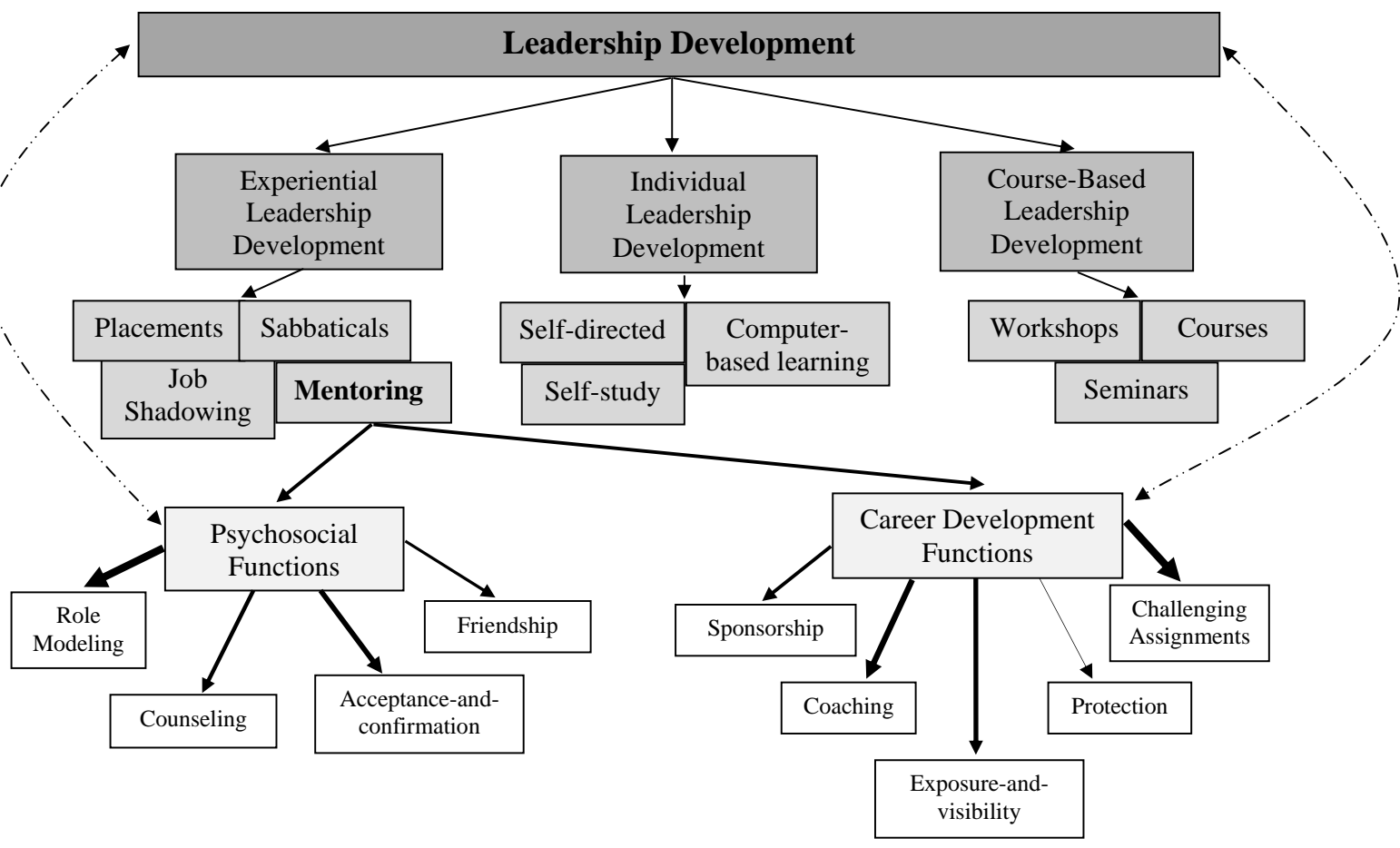
Figure 1 Proposed Conceptual Model of Mentoring Functions within Leadership Development

The model supports the relationship and typology addressed by Muijs et. al (2006). Conceptualizing leadership development at the top of the model, the typology identified three main types of leadership development: experiential, individual, and course-based. Muijs et. al (2006) continued with specific examples of each type of leadership development. Directly related to this study is the concept of mentoring, which is where this model is further expanded. The various functions of mentoring are specifically identified within this model, and the arrows connecting them demonstrate linkages of how "strong" or "weak" their application to leadership development is. The thicker the arrow, the stronger their utilization and benefit to an individual's leadership development; the thinner the arrow, the weaker the application and benefit to an individual's leadership development.

The dotted bi-directional arrows connecting mentoring functions and leadership development represent the proposed relation addressed in this study. They are bi-directional to represent the cyclical and continuous relationship mentoring and leadership development are proposed to have. Those serving as mentors pass knowledge and experience "down" to the protégés, yet knowledge and experiences are transferred "up" as well, demonstrating the benefit to both mentors and protégés.

For future research, various recommendations have surfaced. It is recommended that future research address other variables, such as age, gender, and employer type, to determine if other characteristics have an effect on data collected. The study of additional variables could contribute to a more complete picture of factors that contribute to positive (or negative) mentoring experiences. Additionally, the survey instrument could be utilized with additional classes of Fellows to confirm the findings of this study. The survey could also slightly be revised for utilization with other formal mentoring programs geared toward leadership development in higher education.

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