Abilene Christian University

## Digital Commons @ ACU

# The Impact of Mentoring on the Academic Mindset of At-Risk High School Students in Texas

Brittany Nichole Venegas
bnv16a@acu.edu

ABSTRACT

Students who drop out of high school can cause a social problem for many high schools. They can become a social problem in that dropping out can lead to difficult life changes. Moreover, a student's academic mindset is stated to be a major factor of dropout. As a result, in an attempt to prevent dropout a key component is to better the academic mindset. To improve the academic mindset there are many studies on mentoring to be a promising intervention. However, there is a lack of empirical study on its impact on the academic mindset. The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring is related to the academic mindset among the study population of at-risk students at a Texas high school. A nonequivalent comparison group design was used, using a pre and posttest to compare the change between two groups of students at a high school in Texas. Data was reviewed for a total of 21 students who were enrolled in a dropout prevention program. Although mentoring had a significant effect, it did not necessarily buffer the results for the academic mindset. Surprisingly, there was a positive relationship in 2 out of 5 domains including the overall scores. The results show the effect of the mentor services on the outcomes was negative although statistically significant. These findings imply that the research is not conclusive. It is recommended that additional studies be completed to continue examining the impact that mentoring has on the academic mindset of at-risk youth. Further investigation is needed to validate these findings.

The Impact of Mentoring on the Academic Mindset of At-Risk High School

Students in Texas




A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Social Work

Abilene Christian University




In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Social Work




By

Brittany Nichole Venegas

May 2022

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Brittany Venegas, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Social Work

_____
Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs

Date

**May 3, 2022**
_____

Thesis Committee

_____
Kyeonghee Jang (May 3, 2022 10:00 CDT)

Dr. Kyeonghee Jang, Chair

_Rachel Slaymaker_
_____

Dr. Rachel Slaymaker

_Sarah Mclean_
_____
Sarah Mclean (May 3, 2022 11:11 CDT)

Sarah McLean, LMSW

In loving memory of my grandfather Pedro Venegas
Your never-ending blessings and belief in me and my education have carried me through
this journey.

To my family and friends,

I am incredibly thankful and blessed to have had the support of each of you. To my aunt Yasmin Mota, a loving father figure Jose Espitia, and my precious grandmother Maria Delfina Venegas, thank you for always supporting me in every way you could and encouraging me along the way.  To my siblings, your belief in your older sister has carried me more than you will ever know. To my mother, your prayers have paved a way for my success. I am forever grateful for the blessings bestowed upon my life by all of my family and friends. I love you all more than words could ever describe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

**Problem Statement**

Dropout rates among high schools are a social problem that many high schools face (Goux et al., 2017). A low graduation rate in the United States has been a chronic problem over time (Rumberger, 2011). There are numerous students who decide not to proceed with their education and cut it short each year (Chan et al., 2020). Dropping out can lead to many downfalls for a person that can negatively impact their future, such as higher delinquency rates, unemployment, low income, etc. (Kamrath, 2019; McFarland, 2016).

Moreover, certain students are at a higher risk. The dropout problem is more pressing among students of color (Kamrath, 2019). Young men of color, particularly Hispanic and African Americans, have been shown to have a higher dropout rate in comparison to white students (Fall, 2012; Hall, 2015; Harris et al., 2016; Jarjoura, 2013, Moreno & Garza, 2017; West et al., 2019). In addition, there are multiple external factors in dropout decisions. Those factors include financial obligations, employment, family needs, childbirth, or illness (Doll et al., 2013). If these external factors outweigh the benefits of staying in school, the student will most likely decide to drop out. Dropout rates appear to increase through periods of slow economic growth, thus leading to a rising spread and concern (Goux et al., 2017).

Students face a serious issue with dropout during the interim of their transition to high school (Neild, 2009). Benner et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of this issue during the transition such from middle school to high school. Although adolescents are likely to experience a disruptive transition to high school, little is known on how to help ease the transition, especially for students from more diverse backgrounds. However, the community with which the student surrounds him/herself can make a large impact on their mindset and overall success. Consciously or not, students come to school with beliefs about who they are as learners. The beliefs these students have installed in their mind of who they are as learners are influenced by those who surround them daily, including, parents, peers, past classroom experiences, and the wider culture. This impact made by loved ones can either support or undermine school success (Farrington et al., 2012).

Students considered to be at risk of dropping out become a statistical number later to be observed by those in the education profession who seek different dropout preventions and methods. Research has reported various factors of dropout and the efficacy of various interventions (Stevenson et al., 2021; Webber, 2018). Many studies have attempted to find the impact of mentoring and academic mindset on dropout. Having a mentor helps students overcome various troubles due to risk factors (Day, 2006; Moreno & Garza, 2017). Dropout and poor academic mindset are linked to multiple negative results for the individual (Maynard et al., 2013). The academic mindset of at-risk youth is a major factor of predicting future dropout (Hammond et al., 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

## Research Gap and Present Study

In the research that studies mentoring as a dropout intervention, academic mindset is sometimes presented to explain why mentoring should prevent dropout. Given a definition of *academic mindset* of "beliefs, attitudes, or ways of perceiving oneself in relation to learning and intellectual work that support academic performance" (Farrington et al., 2012, p. 28), mentoring may play a role in preventing dropout among at-risk students. Academic mindset for such students is less likely to be noticed, and somebody in schools or agencies that provides services can address this issue early on. Intervening at an early stage is expected to prevent students from dropping out and or having a poor academic mindset that eventually leads to dropping out. There are few studies that examine the impact of mentoring on general outcomes or the impact of academic mindset on dropout. Additionally, the concept of mentoring is ill-defined, and little research has been conducted on the impact it has on the academic mindset (Dawson, 2014).

The present study aims to bridge the research gap by examining how mentoring has been implemented in a specific context and explore the impact of the mentoring activities on the academic mindset of at-risk high school students. This study purpose will be accomplished by using a sample data collected during a dropout prevention program that was implemented by an agency in Texas.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this literature review is to explore the following issues: the seriousness of dropout, mentoring as a promising intervention, and the impact of mentoring on academic mindset and dropout. Mentoring is proven to be an effective intervention used to positively impact youth. Moreover, this literature review examines the influence of mentoring on the academic mindset of youth deemed to be at-risk to prevent them from following in the path of dropout.

**Literature Search Strategy**

The following databases were used to find the most relevant information on mentors in the lives of high school males: EBSCO Publishing and Science Direct. Google was also used to search for research that may not have been included in the databases above. A Boolean search was conducted. Search terms included: "mentorship" and "youth," "males" and "mentoring programs," "mentoring" and "high school students," "dropout" and "high school," and "dropout" and "youth." The following terms were also input into EBSCO Publishing for further results: SU mentor* AND (dropout or graduation) AND (man or men or male). References and citations from recovered publications were reviewed for other articles that may have been missed. From these processes, a combined collection of scholarly articles and other educational pieces were recovered.

**Factors of Dropout**

Students are at an increased rate of dropping out in the interim of their transition from middle school to high school, resulting in low graduation rates across the United States that appear to be getting worse over time. Dropout and poor academic mindset are linked to multiple negative results for the individual and society as well (Maynard et al., 2013). Dropping out can lead to many downfalls for a person, causing a negative impact to their future. For example, individuals who dropout of high school are at a higher rate of experiencing high delinquency rates, homelessness, unemployment, and lower annual earnings (Kamrath 2019; McFarland, 2016).

An empirical study (Goux et al., 2017) provides evidence supporting the positive impact of mentoring for at-risk students. This study uses a large-scale randomized experiment and reports that an uncomplicated program of meetings run by upper school staff that target at-risk students at the end of their middle school term can assist students in identifying paths that correlate their style of learning with their academic capability. Researchers found a connection when students transitioning from middle school to high school were becoming disengaged after not being able to get into selective high school programs. Results from the trials showed that a group of meetings led by superior school staff could help "low achievers" form better educational goals that suit their academic capabilities. Overall, the intervention provided decreased grade repetition and dropout by 25% to 40% (Goux et al., 2017). Findings from this research indicate that having a goal unsuitable to their academic ability is a cause of dropout.

There are multiple external factors that often help determine whether a student will remain in school or not. In the case that these external factors outweigh the benefits

of staying in school, the student will most likely decide to drop out. The gap between dropouts appears to increase in times of slow economic growth, thus leading to a rising spread and concern (Goux et al., 2017).

## Holistic Approach to Prevent Dropout

To prevent dropout of at-risk students who often experience multiple risk factors, a holistic approach is recommended. Communities In Schools (CIS) programs present their students with multiple interventions to fit their needs (Communities In Schools, 2021). After spotting warning signs of potential dropouts, the next step recommended by the IES Practice Guide is to design interventions that will target at-risk students (West et al., 2019). The program that utilizes such approach provides a community of support to at-risk students that prevents these students from dropping out. CIS success coaches work with on-campus staff (e.g., teachers, coaches, principals, counselors, attendance officers, etc.) to identify problems faced by students. The students' needs range from academic to basic needs. Once the issues are identified, the success coach can begin choosing an intervention that will best fit the troubles faced by the student (Communities in School, 2021).

CIS uses a holistic approach to focus on the needs of the students. To assist in addressing the needs of the students, CIS affiliates conduct a needs assessment that helps obtain the key needs of each individual student. Upon receiving the results, student success coaches and students team up to develop a success plan surrounding the goals and needs of each individual student. Success coaches then partner with school staff and the community to support the students. Throughout this process, success coaches monitor

the student's progress and accommodate to the progress made by the student (Communities in Schools, 2021).

The efficacy of an individualized holistic approach to prevent dropout is presented in an evaluation study of CIS (Communities In Schools, 2010). Based on the five-year evaluation study, CIS is one of few organizations that documented and proved that it increases graduation rates, and over 80% of students monitored moved on to the next grade level (Communities In Schools, 2010). The success coaches placed on campus are available to students to assist in academics, attendance, behavior, and other basic needs. A few of the ways in which success coaches get involved begins with student success coaching in which the success coach teams up with school staff to complete the following: (1) build relationships with students; (2) team up with other school staff to assist the student in navigating barriers that are in the way of their success; (3) partner with students to create goals; (4) connect students with support systems that will help them achieve their goals; and (5) measure the improvements made by the student. Success coaches work as a motivation to students to push forward with their goals and navigate the issues that arise throughout the process. Furthermore, CIS also has a system called "Check and Connect." Check and Connect targets attendance, homework completion, classroom engagement, and classroom behavior. This system helps students take accountability for and keep track of their grades, attendance, and behavior. Overall, the program assists students by partnering with them and building relationships. CIS has a strong belief that through relationships with the students on their caseload they have the ability to decipher the true potential of their students. CIS founder Bill Milliken stated, "it's relationships, not programs, that change children" (CIS, 2022). This agency has

provided mentoring as part of their holistic approach. To explain how this complicated approach could achieve the successful outcome, this literature review now focuses on the mentoring part of the approach.

**Mentoring as a Promising Intervention**

Mentoring has been implemented to prevent dropout for at-risk students, although Dawson (2014) claims that the concept of mentoring is not clearly defined. Additionally, Keating et al. (2002) present a study where they examine a comprehensive mentoring program that fixates on youth estimated to be at risk of either delinquency or mental illness. The pre- and post-intervention ANOVA measures assessed differences from the preintervention to postintervention. Findings determined significant improvement in problem behaviors for the group tested. According to the study, mentoring seemed to have a greater impact on African American youth in comparison to others. The overall findings of the study support mentoring as a positive intervention for at-risk youth (Keating et al., 2002).

Along with Keating et al. (2002), Cannon (2021) also found that mentoring made a significant change in the lives of African American males. Cannon (2021) discusses the results of his study "Mentoring Strategies with African American Males," stating that evidence supported that "mentoring made a difference in the self-esteem and academic efficacy of African American males" (p. 93). Peer support and mentorship can specifically positively impact black males because through mentorship, positive racial identity can be developed in which the mentor can discuss with the mentee cultural identities experienced in multiple settings (Harris et al., 2016; Jarjoura, 2013).

These youth mentoring programs are an intervention used for at-risk youth who have acquired a considerable amount of psychological, social, or behavioral issues (Dubois & Karcher, 2014; Raposa et al., 2019). Moreover, mentoring relationships have had a positive impact on youth mentees and have been identified as key factors by corporations, nonprofits, and other government entities (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). Some of those problems are addressed by Rhodes (2002) and Deutsch et al. (2020) who proposed that mentoring relationships improves youth in three different ways: improving social and emotional relationships, improving intellectual skills through communication and listening, and encouraging a positive identity development by providing a mentor. When adults display trust, respect, and interest, and additionally devote time youth will respond (Deutsch et al., 2020). Mentors have been described as pushing youth to progress toward their goals, improve their self-esteem and confidence, and reinforce alternate mindsets (Spencer et al., 2013). The trust and respect gained by the mentor gives them the rapport necessary to push the students toward their goals without the students feeling pressure. This helps the students see it as support and not pressure. Through mentorship, strength and resilience is built with mentee's that can further build respective skills and creating a dependable community of support (Harris et al., 2016).

## Academic Mindsets

According to Farrington et al. (2012), academic mindset is one of the major noncognitive factors that are associated with academic performance. Academic mindsets are "beliefs, attitudes, or ways of perceiving oneself in relation to learning and intellectual work that support academic performance" (p. 28). The academic mindsets are

made up of four key beliefs that affect motivation, strategies, and perseverance (Farrington et al., 2012). These key beliefs include the following:

1) My ability and competence grow with my effort. (There must be a growth mindset. One must believe that by putting in effort there is a chance of improvement.)

2) I can succeed at this. (Belief in self-efficacy in students is a vital motivator for students. Those who do not believe there is a valid chance of them of being successful will not put in effort.)

3) I belong in this community. (Students who feel like they belong in their learning environment show a higher level of motivation and self- efficacy.)

4) This work has value and purpose for me. (If students do not believe the work they are completing has value, there is no point in putting in effort. It is difficult for anyone to put in effort when they feel as if the work that has been given is simply busy work.)

The key beliefs that make up the academic mindset have a strong impact on motivation, strategies, and perseverance. Due to the major impact these have on a student's abilities, research has presented results that support that academic mindsets are a better predictor of student success than any other determining factor. Determining whether a student has a high academic mindset could help discover the level of motivation that a student has, as positive academic mindsets motivate students to persist at schoolwork (Farrington et al., 2012). When a student has a negative academic mindset and undermines their abilities it leads to them doubting themselves and creating a cycle of self-defeat (Olson, 2008). The negative impact of a low academic mindset proves that

academic mindset is a major factor of drop out Through research conducted results

present that the attitudes and beliefs shown by students have a stronger association with

their performance in school compared to test scores (Farrington et al., 2012).

Overall, each academic mindset is important. They are able to guide students in

engagement of deeper learning. Farrington et al. (2012) page 18, explain that educators

play a key role in constructing a student's positive mindset. Students' academic identities

and stance on schooling are heavily influenced by the educational environment in which

learning is taking place; the structure of academic work, goals, support, and feedback in

that environment; and the messages expressed to students about themselves in relation to

their academic abilities.

**Why Mentoring Can Improve Academic Mindsets**

Among various positive outcomes that mentoring can bring about, this study pays

special attention to its impact on academic mindset because academic mindset is

considered a strong factor of dropout. The academic mindset includes academic

competence, academic engagement, and academic motivation scales. Therefore, the

following mentioned (e.g., school engagement, academic achievement, etc.) are

integrated in composing the overall academic mindset of a student. Academic mindsets

apply to the motivational components that impact a student's aim and will to participate

in learning. There are four main beliefs that compose academic mindsets. These key

beliefs highly impact one's behaviors as learners and facilitate the success of learning.

Mindsets alter one's motivation, strategies one uses, and perseverance.

Due to academic mindsets having the capability to alter motivation and the ability

to impact behaviors, it is important to focus on a strategy that will assist in improving the

academic mindsets to avoid decreasing these factors. A strategy that could be of great use is mentoring. Through the use of mentoring students can experience individualized goal-setting, relationships built on trust, and the development of self-awareness (Faggella, 2017). For example, a mentoring program that insists on a supportive relationship that will increase a student's engagement in school could assist in improving the academic mindset through the increase in engagement. Check and Connect is a program used by Communities In Schools uses a problem-solving approach based on variables (e.g., grades, attendance, tardiness to class) that contribute to student involvement in school and have the capability of anticipating school disengagement (Christenson et al., 1999; Sinclair et al., 1998). An increase in engagement through mentoring can provide improvement to the academic mindset.

In addition, mentoring administers reinforcements to youth by preventing and addressing negative outcomes (e.g., dropout, suspension, and school failure) related to academics. The earliest form of mentoring has been described as pairing a student with a non-familial adult with youth identified by schools to be at risk and have issues that could be approached by a mentor. By interrupting causal influences and increasing a connection with mentors who provide support, the issues that cause these students to be at risk can be addressed (Lyons & McQuillin, 2021). When students are paired with a mentor who is providing support where it is needed, they are more likely to succeed in school by meeting academic demands. Having a mentor pushes students to try hard and be persistent in doing so, thus impacting their school engagement.

A student's engagement in school is a big and important predictor of graduation (Kern et al., 2019). Previous studies have demonstrated that low academic achievement

shown at the beginning of high school is an essential prognosticator of school dropout (Pharris-Ciurej et al., 2012). The behavior of a student within school, their attendance, and their engagement are factors that link students to dropping out (Maynard et al., 2013). Goux et al. (2017) discovered in their findings that objectives that are not appropriate or suitable to a student's academic capability is a source of dropout. Dropping out of school is the climactic point of long-term school disengagement (Fall & Roberts, 2012). Academic standards increase at the beginning of high school. Therefore, the students who decline in their number of school credits that are needed to progress to the next grade are more likely to drop out after that grade (West et al., 2019). A student who obtains a relationship with a mentor has someone that will push them and help keep them on track by viewing their grades, attendance, and tardiness to class. Through the variables mentioned the mentor knows the target areas of the mentee to provide the necessary support. With the provided support students are more likely to complete tasks. By completing their tasks, seeing improvement, and having a person provide support students are more likely to improve their academic mindset through engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy (Kern et al., 2019; Kirk, 2022; The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine, 2018). Believing one can be successful is a prerequisite to putting forth sustained effort.

## Conclusion of Literature Review

Literature suggests that dropping out can make a difference in a person's life and negatively impact their future in multiple ways. For many individuals it affects their income, employment, living situation, etc. The dropout rate is significant across the country and affects a range of students, but studies have proven that graduation rates

among Hispanic and Blacks were noticeably lower than those of their fellow White

classmates. The motives for dropping out have become a prioritized discussion among

those trying to decrease the dropout rate. Due to these studies and contributing

discussions, interventions such as mentoring have been discovered. Mentoring has been

proven to positively impact minorities and improve their way of thinking, thereby

indicating that this intervention has the capability of contributing to the decrease of

dropout rates by improving a student's academic mindset. According to the literature a

poor academic mindset is a great contributor to dropping out. However, previous research

does not provide evidence that there has been an attempt to improve the academic

mindset before it reaches the point of causing a student to drop out. Therefore, it is

important to conduct a study if mentoring make a difference in major outcomes including

academic mindset, which is expected to prevent dropout.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents how this study conducted research to explore the impact that mentoring had on the academic mindset of at-risk students. Previous research based on the service of mentoring has shown the positive impact that mentoring has had on the prevention of dropout. The outcomes of previous studies show the influence that mentors have on students. Similar studies have shown that a student's academic mindset can detect dropout and if detected and managed can direct the student away from the path of dropout. The study aimed to assist in acknowledging the student's academic mindset in an attempt to help reduce students at risk of dropping out.

**Research Design**

The agency provided the services to a group of students without any control group. Since there was no control group involved to measure the results of each participant before and after the program was implemented, the research design used in the study will be a pre-experimental pilot study (i.e., the one-group pretest-posttest). With this one-group pretest-posttest design, the dependent variable—the SEAD—is implemented before the mentoring services are provided and once again after the service is implemented.

Mentoring was implemented as part of a dropout prevention program provided by an agency in Texas. It would have been helpful for the agency to determine whether or not the mentoring intervention positively impacted the academic mindset and or other

domains of the student if they conducted a study using an experimental design. Given the nature of the research design that had limitations in internal validity, any difference cannot be attributed only to the mentoring.

## Sampling

The study population was at-risk high school students in Texas that received mentoring/supportive guidance services. The study population was limited to Texas, as it was based off mentoring services provided by a program at a high school in Texas. Participants of this study were high school students who were served by a dropout prevention program. A student is referred to the program when they are determined to be at risk by the school (e.g., teachers and school staff) and therefore they need help regarding behavior, attendance, basic needs, or other. This study selected a sample of the agency clients who were from a high school in West Texas and participated in the program for more than one year (i.e., 2020-2021). Therefore, the participants of this study were students who had participated in the program more than once. Each student in the sample was a participant in the dropout prevention program where mentoring service is provided. In continuation each student was provided either a mentoring or supportive guidance service that were given to them through the agency. Since February 1, 2021, the agency decided to change the name of the service from *mentoring service* to *supportive guidance*. This study will consider both services as *mentoring* because it is the term most commonly used in the literature, and the content of the service is consistent even after the change in the name. Given that the study used data from a school during 2020-2021, the study used a convenience sampling. Therefore, there was a limitation in generalizing the results of this sample study to the study population.

<center>**Measurements**</center>

The study used secondary data that were collected by the agency while they implemented their program for the school year 2020-2021. The data were gathered with the help of a student success coach and the director of mental health services.

**Intervention: Mentoring in the Dropout Prevention Program**

Mentoring is part of the dropout prevention program. Once a student enters the program, the agency conducts an assessment called the Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) assessment. The assessment was used to analyze the appropriate support needed to improve students' development and progress in their social, emotional, and academic competencies. Services were provided based on the results of the assessment. The SEAD includes competencies that are significant for a student to be successful (SEAD – Communities In Schools University, 2021). These critical competencies are essential for the student to be successful not only in academics but also life (SEAD – Communities In Schools University, 2021). The SEAD assisted student success coaches in providing a baseline for a student's social, emotional, or academic capacity (*DCPS Connected Communities Initiative*, 2018). Mentoring was part of the agency's intervention that used a holistic approach.

The literature review (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014; Spencer et al., 2013) refers to *mentoring* as a relationship between two unrelated individuals in which the mentor is older than the mentee and acts as a guide who supports the mentee. The definition provided by the agency (Communities in Schools of Houston, 2020) mentions the supportive guidance to be given to an individual or group and is specific that the provider does not need to have a clinical license. For this study, the *mentor* was the student

<center>17</center>

success coach that provided services to the student, who was known as the *mentee*. As mentioned, the agency interprets mentoring as supportive guidance. The level of mentoring service reception was measured by the supportive guidance hours while a participant was in the program. In addition, the total contact hours were collected as well because the success coach provided mentoring in a broader sense.

**Outcome: Academic Mindset and Other Outcomes (Pretests and Posttests)**

To explore the impact of mentoring (i.e., assistance of success coaches (mentors) for students (mentees), this study will use the SEAD assessment scores before the intervention (pretests) and after the intervention (posttests). The SEAD measurement contains a total of 43 questions in 5 domains: social support, social awareness, self-control, self-perceptions, and academic mindset. Although the primary focus of this study will be the impact on academic mindset, examining data from the other domains will be helpful because the outcomes are also correlated with each other. Indicators for each domain are explained below.

Social Support Domain is comprised of 3 subscales: social support (home), social support (peers), and school belongingness. This domain measures the overall perceived social support received by the student at home, school, and with peers. This section includes a total of 11 questions.

Social Awareness Domain is a measure of the student's awareness as well as reaction to others' thoughts, feeling, and perspective (consists of perspective and taking empathy). This section includes a total of 7 questions.

Self-Control Domain is a composed measure of the student's ability to handle both feelings and behavior (consists of behavioral problems and emotion regulation). This section includes a total of 6 questions.

Self-Perceptions Domain is an accumulated measure of student's perceptions of oneself (comprised of self-worth, growth mindset, and academic self-efficacy). This section includes a total of 8 questions.

Academic Mindset Domain is the measurement of a student's entire academic mindset (consists of academic competence, engagement, and academic motivation). This section includes a total of 11 questions.

For 43 items, students can answer from 5 answer choices given (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). For subscale scoring, the scores are scored on a 5-point scale and for each individual subscale, one must calculate the items corresponding to the subscale. Each subscale has a different number of questions. Table 1 below contains information regarding the subscales and their different sections plus number of questions.

**Table 1**

*Subscale Information*

| Domains | Subscales | Number of questions | Example questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Support | Social Support (Home) | 3 | When I have a problem, there is someone at home that I can talk to about it. |
| | Social Support (Peers) | 3 | I have friends who I know I can trust |
| | School Belongingness | 5 | I feel like I matter at my school |
| Social Awareness | Perspective Taking | 4 | I can understand other peoples' views, even if I don't agree with them |
| | Empathy | 3 | I feel sad or concerned when I see that other people are in pain or upset |
| Self-Perceptions | Self-Worth | 2 | I am happy with who I am as a person. |
| | Growth Mindset | 4 | Getting help from others when I make a mistake is a good way to learn |
| | Academic Self-Efficacy | 2 | I can do well in school if I put my mind to it. |
| Academic Mindset | Academic Competence | 4 | I feel like I am just as smart as other people my age. |
| | Academic Engagement | 3 | I enjoy going to school every day. |
| | Academic Motivation | 4 | Graduating high school is important to me. |
| Self-Control | Problem Behaviors | 2 | It is fun to tease or pick on people. |
| | Emotion Regulation | 4 | It is hard for me to control myself when angry. |

To calculate the domain scores, the averages of the subscales that complete the domain must be calculated then multiplied by 2 to make sure that each domain is on a 10-point scale (Communities In Schools, 2019). Lastly, to receive the overall SEAD score,

add the 5 domain scores together and multiply the sum by 2 so that the score is out of 100 (Communities In Schools, 2019).

There is no evidence that proves the reliability and validity of the assessment. However, a study titled "District of Columbia Public Schools" (2018) provides evidence that shows improvement in assessment scores.

## Data Collection Procedure

This study used secondary data that were collected by a dropout prevention program in Texas while they implemented their program for the year 2020-2021. To obtain data for students who participated in the program for more than one year, a student success coach in the program multiple years will identify such participants and send the list of students to the Director of Mental Health Program. The researcher requested the following data from the agency: the SEAD assessment at the beginning of 2020 (pretests) and the SEAD assessment at the end of 2020-2021 school year, along with services that the student received during the year. Any data that could potentially identify a specific student were asked to be excluded (i.e., student name, ID number, and name of the school). The Director of Mental Health Programming in this agency downloaded the requested data and sent them to the researcher in an Excel file.

The following includes information about how the agency collected the data. Once a student enters the program, the agency collects pre and post SEAD assessment every year. The assessment is conducted by having each student participate in a survey via the success coach's computer. The data collected from the assessment are collected and managed by the agency's central office. When the assessment is completed, the survey is sent off to the agency's central office so that they provide the score of each

domain. It is then scored using a scoring guide that contains three different techniques to achieving scores for the SEAD.

A comparison was made between all service hours and supportive guidance hours. These hours were used to measure a difference if any could be made by the services provided by the success coach.

## Data Analysis Plan

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26.0). Descriptive analyses were conducted to describe sample characteristics and major variables. Linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the statistical significance of the effect of the intervention (i.e., the total service hours and the supportive guidance hours) on each posttest score in the five domains (i.e., academic mindset and the other domains of outcomes) after controlling for its pretest score.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

**Participants**

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics informing the participants' demographic

background. The study consisted of a total sample of 21. Overall, the participants were

mostly female. Most students in the study identified as White/Hispanic, leaving the rest

of the study participants scattered among races with the least being American

Indian/Hispanic and Pacific Islander/Hispanic.

**Table 2**

*Characteristics of the Sample (*N *= 21)*

| Variable | Category | *N* | *%* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Race | American Indian/Hispanic | 1 | 4.8 |
| | African American | 5 | 23.9 |
| | Pacific Islander/Hispanic | 1 | 4.8 |
| | White | 4 | 19.1 |
| | White/Hispanic | 10 | 47.6 |
| Gender | Female | 13 | 61.9 |
| | Male | 8 | 38.1 |

**Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables**

The following tables represent the inferential statistics for AY2020 data. The

SEAD assessment is used to analyze the appropriate support needed to improve students'

development and progress in their social, emotional, and academic competencies. Using

SEAD scores, the agency can determine areas in which a student needs improvement and

measure their growth as well. The study focuses on the Academic Mindset Domain that

had a pretest average of 7.29, while the posttest showed a decrease of 7.24. Along with

the Academic Mindset the Social Support Domain showed a slight decrease in posttest

scores. Interestingly, Self-Control Domain showed an increase from a pretest average of

6.63 to a posttest average of 7.31. While the Self-Control Domain had the highest

increase, an increase did occur in a total of two domains including the overall score. The

overall scores slightly increased from 7.51 in the pretest to 7.65 in the posttest. Unlike the

others that pertained an increase or decrease the Self-Perception appeared to be the only

domain that remained consistent.

**Table 3**

*2020 Service Reception and SEAD Assessment*

|  | Pretest | | | | Posttest | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Min | Max | *M* | *SD* | Min | Max | *M* | *SD* |
| *Mentor Numbers* |  |  |  |  | 1.00 | 8.00 | 2.95 | 1.80 |
| *Mentor Minutes* |  |  |  |  | 15.00 | 150.00 | 52.86 | 36.01 |
| Social Support | 4.71 | 9.78 | 7.82 | 1.44 | 4.62 | 10.00 | 7.73 | 1.55 |
| Self-Aware | 2.00 | 10.00 | 7.76 | 1.78 | 5.25 | 9.75 | 7.93 | 1.25 |
| Self-Perception | 2.00 | 10.00 | 8.06 | 1.67 | 4.00 | 10.00 | 8.06 | 1.39 |
| Self-Control | 4.00 | 9.75 | 6.63 | 1.54 | 4.50 | 9.83 | 7.31 | 1.46 |
| Academic Mindset | 2.00 | 9.00 | 7.29 | 1.40 | 3.61 | 9.17 | 7.24 | 1.25 |
| **Overall** | 3.44 | 9.29 | 7.51 | 1.18 | 5.82 | 9.21 | 7.65 | 0.88 |

## Exploring the Effect of Mentoring

**Mentoring Effect on Academic Mindset**

Multiple regression analyses were performed to explore the effect of mentoring

(Model 1: the number of mentoring sessions and Model 2: the hours of mentoring

sessions). Model 1 in Table 4 presents the results which includes the number of

mentoring services that students received during AY2020. To control the impact of the

particular outcome before the students received the services, the pretest scores were also

included in the regression model. This model significantly statistically explained the

variance of the outcome variable (i.e., posttest scores of academic mindset). The results

indicate that the overall regression model was statistically insignificant ($F$ = 11.019, $R^2$ =

0.55, $p$ = 0.001). Students who received a higher number of mentoring services had a

statistically significant lower score at the posttest (Beta = -0.735, $t$ = -4.649, $p$ < 0.001)

after controlling for the insignificant effect of pretest scores. Another regression analysis

(Model 2) was conducted by using the minutes of mentoring services instead of the

number of mentoring. The results were consistent. Students who received a higher hour

of mentoring services had a statistically significant lower score at the posttest (Beta = -

0.766, $t$ = -5.124, $p$ < 0.001) after controlling for the insignificant effect of pretest scores.

**Table 4**

*Multiple Linear Regression of Academic Mindset Posttest Scores*

| Predictor | | Model 1 $t$ | $p$ | Predictor | Model 2 $t$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pretest scores | | -0.596 | 0.558 | Pretest scores | -0.696 | 0.495 |
| Number of Mentoring sessions | | -4.649 | <0.001 | Mentoring Hours (in minutes) | -5.124 | <.001 |
| | F | 11.019 | 0.001 | | 13.368 | <.001 |
| | R² | | 0.55 | | 0.598 | |

**Mentoring Effect on Overall SEAD Scores**

Although the original plan was to test the hypothesis regarding the effect of

mentoring on academic mindset, this study conducted follow-up analyses using another

outcome variable (i.e., overall SEAD score). Table 4 demonstrates the multiple

regression analyses that were performed to explore the effect of mentoring (Model 1: the

number of mentoring sessions and Model 2: the hours of mentoring sessions). Model 1 in

Table 3 presents the results of this regression model that includes the number of

mentoring services that students received during AY2020. To control the impact of the particular outcome before the students received the services, the pretest scores were also included in the regression model. This model significantly statistically explained the variance of the outcome variable (i.e., posttest scores of the overall SEAD assessment). The results indicate that the overall regression model was statistically insignificant ($F$ = 6.253, $R^2$ = 0.41, $p$ = 0.009). Students who received a higher number of mentoring services had a statistically significant lower overall score at the posttest (Beta = -0.621, $t$ = -3.4, $p$ = 0.003) after controlling for the insignificant effect of pretest scores; Another regression analysis (Model 2) was conducted by using the minutes of mentoring services instead of the number of mentoring services. The results were consistent. Students who received a higher hour of mentoring services had a statistically significant lower score (Beta = -0.663, $t$ = -3.824, $p$ < 0.001) at the posttest after controlling for the insignificant effect of pretest scores.

     Results indicate that the effect of mentoring services on the outcome was negative; however, it was statistically significant. Though regression analysis were run on both mentoring minutes and number of mentoring sessions, in the end the outcome remained the same. Mentoring services may not have had a positive impact on the academic mindset, but one can see progress made in other domains including the overall score. Ultimately there were more increases than decreases in the posttest scores. Therefore, it should be noted that a possible outcome could have been a result of students who were at a higher risk as a result of their requests for mentoring services.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

High school can be a very difficult phase of many students' lives, so much so that it can result in dropout (Chan et al., 2020). Dropping out can then lead these students to experience greater issues (i.e., higher delinquency rates, unemployment, low income etc.) (Kamrath, 2019; McFarland, 2016). However, having a supportive community can be of great influence in their lives positively impacting their mindset and overall success. In the research that studies mentoring as a dropout intervention, academic mindset is sometimes presented to explain why mentoring should prevent dropout. It was important to find a solution that could positively impact the academic mindset to potentially help reduce what is known to be a major factor of dropout (Hammond et al., 2007; National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

## Discussion of Major Findings

The study hypothesis was that if more mentoring services were provided post pretest, then it would result in a higher academic mindset posttest. However, the data presented insignificant results that could be due to the lack of statistical power by using a small number of valid cases ($N = 21$) for the regression analysis. Therefore, future studies should ensure a larger number of cases.

The regression results present that the regression coefficient of the predictor was negative and statistically significant. This direction of the association was inconsistent with the previous studies. However, the data should not evoke any conclusion established

by the data used in this study. Moreover, a study with a more enhanced research method (e.g., experimental study, representative sample, bigger sample size) may find a significant improvement. There is a probability of finding a compelling negative association.

On the other hand, one can consider the results for future studies. Other studies that reviewed the impact of services explained this possible negative influence in a non-experimental study. Kim et al. (2019) express that the impact of receiving services includes its benefits along with the ability to see the openness of those who need services. In a non-experimental study by Kim et al. (2019), they express a possible explanation to the results presented in this study. In the study by Kim et al. (2019) the participants requested academic support; as a result, a possible explanation for their need of these services could indicate vulnerability. Furthermore, the study by Kim et al. (2019) may not only depict the benefits of receiving services but the vulnerability that recipients are possibly going through. Similar to the study performed by Kim et al. (2019), students who sought out more mentoring services could indicate a higher risk. Jhangiani et al. (2019) express an alternative explanation called "history." This explanation indicates that there are other factors that could have occurred in between pre and posttests that caused a change from the pretest to posttest. This could include a difficult situation, such as COVID-19. Therefore, it should be noted that mentoring should not be interpreted as causing the decrease of the outcome. Rather, it may indicate the intensity of need of such students. For this reason, researchers need to pay accurate attention to the reasons for the results.

## Implications of Findings

The dropout prevention agency studied collects data at both the national and state level. However, according to S. McLean (personal communication, March 08, 2022) the agency faced some difficulty inputting SEAD data as a result of their database. The SEAD was created to work with the agency's national data system. For dropout prevention agency partners who choose to use the SEAD outside of Texas, after the SEAD is scored, the data are automatically put into each student's profile within the database. However, the Texas agencies use a different database. Therefore, they do not have the option for the results to automatically go in their designated spots. While SEAD assessments are scored using a software system, the scores are sent in an Excel spreadsheet. This requires success coaches to enter all pre and posttest scores by hand from the Excel spreadsheet provided, increasing the amount of time needed for data entry. Moreover, it is only required that the domains are entered when they are "low performing" or "off track" to save time. This can cause an appearance of inconsistencies in the data system when trying to draw all domain scores. Furthermore, students in the state database are not tracked over the years. Every school year, data is "closed" and the following year a new one is "opened." Thus, nothing from the previous year is seen in the new year. This prevents the agencies, particularly in Texas, from being able to see growth throughout the years. The system was not designed to include these reports, making it difficult to get very specific data without reviewing every student profile (S. McLean, personal communication, March 08, 2022). Therefore, the data used in this study may be deficient as a result of the changes made in data collection throughout the years.

**Implications for Practice**

Choppin (2002) expresses the difficulty of schools having to enter data on their own in order to do analyses. This becomes time-consuming and becomes a barrier for data collection. Swain et al. (2021) discuss the importance of effective data collection to be able to track a student's development and meet each of their individual needs. As a result, similar to the dropout prevention agency the teachers reported lack of time as barriers to data collection (Swain et al., 2021). Moreover, due to the agency having difficulty inputting data, it was troubling to view growth within the domains when they are not always all recorded. The results show an inaccuracy due to missing data. Therefore, it is important for the agency to be able to record all the data received from the SEAD to not only record growth but also be able to make a comparison between those domain scores that are not considered "low performing" or "off track."

This particular Texas agency noticed data collection was an ongoing issue; therefore, to fix the problem they created and began implementing their own data system. This brand-new data system began the 2021-2022 school year. After the system is approved it will have the technological ability to automatically upload SEAD scores to their designated student profiles. Furthermore, the new system will track student growth over the years and be flexible in retrieving and reporting data. Moreover, since the agency created the software, they can also design new ways to manage reports regarding the grouping of data (S. McLean, personal communication, March 08, 2022).

**Implications for Policy**

The results deemed inaccurate due to a considerable amount of missing data. Some of this missing data resulted from the state of Texas using a different database in

comparison to the other states. If the state of Texas was using the databases other states are using, then it would save time as it would automatically upload data, whereas now with the database used it is necessary to input all scores by hand to record data. Once Texas gets on board with the other states, this will allow the Texas agencies to align with the other states.

Furthermore, while the data did not imply that mentoring increases the academic mindset of students, the literature review explains the positive impact that mentoring has had across various high schools in the U.S. The literature discusses data that has proven mentoring to be a promising intervention (Cannon, 2021; Keating et al., 2002). Mentoring has positively impacted youth by pushing them to progress toward their goals and reinforcing alternate mindsets (Deutsch, 2020; Rhodes, 2002; Spencer et al., 2013). Therefore, incorporating mentoring in schools could benefit the school, at-risk students, and overall student population.

**Implications for Research**

Limitations for this study included COVID-19 and difficulty with data collection procedures. The study was impacted by COVID-19, as it limited the number of posttests that were able to be gathered. Through the impact of COVID-19 students were forced to participate in virtual learning. The decision for schools to move to online learning interfered with the student success coaches ability to provide the students with posttests.

Furthermore, once students returned to school they were exposed to the virus and in many cases had to quarantine. Quarantine limited student success coaches' contact with the students. The limited contact resulted in minimal communication between the success coach and the student, leaving them with limited options for communication, like

phone calls or emails. Along with limiting services for the students during this time, there is a probability that COVID-19 could have become a barrier for the academic mindset of students. Jones et al.'s (2021) findings suggest that the virus had a major impact on all families, especially among at-risk populations who were experiencing adversity before the pandemic. Additionally, multiple barriers were noticed for student learning, a multitude of students—particularly students of color—became completely disengaged in the spring of 2020 (Jones et al., 2021). Overall, the virus affected the study in terms of restricting data and the reliability of the data, causing the researcher to make adjustments to the data being drawn

Moreover, the study required lots of data information, including demographics, pre and posttests, mentoring/supportive guidance hours, and overall contact hours provided to the students. The study demanded this data to be deidentified. Furthermore, there was a limited number of people that had access to this information. Gathering the information was time consuming and accessible to few people making it difficult to draw and deidentify.

The data also consisted of limitations due to the limited SEAD data that is input into the agencies database, NAV. The domains are only entered into the database if they are "low performing" or "off track"; this includes the overall pre and posttest scores. Moreover, the data are not tracked over the years, making it difficult to check for growth. Throughout the years the data were collected differently, making it difficult to track. In 2018-2019, the SEAD assessment was not a requirement for the agency. Then in 2019-2020, COVID-19 impacted the posttests. Therefore, the measures used to collect this data overall narrowed the ability to conduct a thorough analysis of the results.

The limitations presented resulted in a lack of reliable data. This became an obstacle when attempting to prove the hypothesis. In addition, challenges were faced as access to data was limited. Inclusively the study is impacted by the inability to track growth and determine the reliability of the data provided.

## Conclusion

The study aimed to link the research gap between mentoring and its possible impact on the academic mindset of at-risk youth. To bridge the gap, the study's goal was to examine how mentoring was implemented in a specific context and explore the impact of mentoring services on the academic mindset of at-risk high school students. The results of the study were not conclusive based on the data.

The present study examined the impact of mentoring on the academic mindset of at-risk youth. The results show the study is not conclusive. However, the results are important and should not be disregarded. Considering the limitations of this study listed earlier, the conclusion of this study should be interpreted in caution. Future research is needed to continue examining the impact that mentoring has on the academic mindset of at-risk youth. While the outcomes of the research are not conclusive, it does not rule out the possibilities of the impact the intervention could cause on the academic mindset. The literature review proved mentoring to be effective, as it reviewed multiple studies. Although, mentoring could not be directly linked to the academic mindset, it is a promising intervention for the improvement of student's academic lives.

REFERENCES

Benner, A., Boyle, A., & Bakhtiari, F. (2017). Understanding students' transition to high
school: Demographic variation and the role of supportive relationships. *Journal of
Youth & Adolescence*, *46*(10), 2129–2142. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-
0716-2

Bruce, M., & Bridgeland, J. (2014). The mentoring effect: young people's perspectives
on the outcomes and availability of mentoring [PDF] (p. 15). Civic Enterprises in
association with Hart Research Associates. Retrieved from
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558065.pdf

Cannon, R., (2021). *Mentoring strategies with African American male*s (Publication No.
28413912) [Doctoral dissertation, Trevecca Nazarene University]. ProQuest
Dissertations Publishing.
https://www.proquest.com/openview/e5f1d98879088178d154cb41effa9e7b/1?pq-
origsite = gscholar&cbl = 18750&diss = y

Chan, W. Y., Kuperminc, G. P., Seitz, S., Wilson, C., & Khatib, N. (2020). School-based
group mentoring and academic outcomes in vulnerable high-school students.
*Youth & Society*, 52(7), 1220–1237.

Choppin, Jeffrey. (2002). Data use in practice: examples from the school level.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/245838727_Data_Use_in_Practice_Exa
mples_from_the_School_Level

Christenson, S. L., Sinclair, M. F., Thurlow, M. L., & Evelo, D. (1999). Promoting

      student engagement with school using the Check & Connect model. *Australian*

      *Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 9(S1), 169–184. doi:10.1017/

      S10372911000003083

Communities in Schools. (2010) Communities in Schools national evaluation five year

      summary report. ICF International.

      https://www.communitiesinschools.org/media/uploads/attachments/Communities

      _In_Schools_National_Evaluation_Five_Year_Summary_Report.pdf

Communities In Schools. (2019). SEAD scoring guide [PDF] (pp. 1-3).

Communities In Schools. (2022). Our mission: Our history.

      https://www.communitiesinschools.org/about-us/mission-and-history/

Communities In Schools of Houston (2020). Our model.

      https://www.cishouston.org/what-we-do

Dawson, P. (2014). Beyond a definition toward a framework for designing and specifying

      mentoring models. *Educational Researcher*, 43(3), 137-145

Day, A. (2006). The power of social support: Mentoring and resilience. *Reclaiming*

      *Children & Youth*, 14(4), 196–198.

Deutsch, N. L., Mauer, V. A., Johnson, H. E., Grabowska, A. A., & Arbeit, M. R. (2020).

      "[My counselor] knows stuff about me, but [my natural mentor] actually knows

      me": Distinguishing characteristics of youth's natural mentoring relationships.

      *Children and Youth Services Review*, 111.

      https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104879

District of Columbia Public Schools. (2018). DCPS connected communities' initiative

      [PDF] (pp. 45-58). Washington, DC. Retrieved from

      https://oese.ed.gov/files/2018/10/U215J180103-DCPS-Project-Narrative.pdf

 Doll, J. J., Eslami, Z., & Walters, L. (2013). Understanding Why Students Drop Out of

      High School, According to Their Own Reports: Are They Pushed or Pulled, or Do

      They Fall Out? A Comparative Analysis of Seven Nationally Representative

      Studies. SAGE Open. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013503834

Dubois, D., Karcher, M. (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring (2nd ed.)*, Sage

      Publications Inc, Thousand Oaks, California (2013), pp. 63-83.

Fagella, L. (2017). Why Every Student Should Have a Mentor (Opinion). Retrieved 4

      May 2022, from https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-why-every-student-

      should-have-a-mentor/2017/10

Fall, A. M., & Roberts, G. (2012). High school dropouts: Interactions between social

      context, self-perceptions, school engagement, and student dropout. *Journal of*

      *Adolescence, 35, 787 – 798.*

      https://ezproxy.acu.edu:2083/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.11.004

Farrington, C., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Seneca Keyes, T., Johnson,

      D., & Beechum, N. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners the role of*

      *noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature*

      *review* [PDF]. The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School

      Research. Retrieved from https://www.kipp.org/wp-

      content/uploads/2016/11/Teaching_Adolescents_to_Become_Learners.pdf

Goux, D., M. Gurgand, E. Maurin, (2017) Adjusting your dreams? High school plans and

    dropout behavior. *The Economic Journal, 127* (602) (2017), pp. 1025-

    1046, 10.1111/ecoj.12317

Hall, H. R. (2015). Food for thought: Using critical pedagogy in mentoring African

    American adolescent males. *Black Scholar*, 45(3), 39–53.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2015.1049328

Hammond, C., Linton, D., Smink, J., & Drew, S. (2007). Dropout risk factors and

    exemplary programs [PDF] (p. 26). National Dropout Prevention Center at

    Clemson University and Communities In Schools. Retrieved from

    https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497057.pdf

Harris, P. C., Mayes R. D., Vega D., Hines E. M. (2016). Reaching higher: College and

    career readiness for African American males with learning disabilities. *Journal of*

    *African American Males in Education, 7, 52-69*

Jarjoura, G. R. (2013). Effective strategies for mentoring African American boys.

    American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from

    https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Effective%20Strategies%

    20for%20Mentoring%20African%20American%20Boys.pdf

Jhangiani, R., Chian, I., Cuttler, C., & Leighton, D (2019). *Research Methods in*

    *Psychology* (4th ed.) [Ebook]. Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Retrieved from

    https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/psychmethods4e/chapter/non-equivalent-control-

    group-designs/

Jones, T. M., Williford, A., Spencer, M. S., Riggs, N. R., Toll, R., George, M., Becker,

    K., & Bruick, S. (2021). School mental health providers' perspectives on the

impact of COVID-19 on racial inequities and school disengagement. *Children &*

*Schools*, *43*(2), 97–106. https://doi-org.acu.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/cs/cdab009

Kamrath, B. (2019). Avoiding dropout: A case study of an evening school alternative

program. *Planning & Changing*, 48(3/4), 150–172.

Keating, L. M., Tomishima, M. A., Foster, S., & Alessandri, M. (2002). The effects of a

mentoring program on at-risk youth. *Adolescence*, *37*(148), 717–734.

Kern, L., Harrison, J. R., Custer, B. E., & Mehta, P. D. (2019). Factors that enhance the

quality of relationships between mentors and mentees during check & connect.

*Behavioral Disorders, 44(3)*, 148–161.

Kim Y., Ju, E., Rosenburg, R., & Farmer, E. B. M. (2019). Estimating the effects of

independent living services on educational attainment and employment of foster

care youth. *Children and Youth Services Review, 96, 294-301*.

Kirk, K. (2022). Self-efficacy: Helping students believe in themselves. Retrieved 31

January 2022, from

https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/efficacy.html

Lyons, M., & McQuillin, S. (2021). Mentoring for enhancing educational attitudes,

beliefs, and behaviors [Ebook]. National Mentoring Resource Center. Retrieved

from https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/wp-

content/uploads/2021/03/Mentoring_for_EABB.pdf

Maynard, Brandy & Hartwig, Elizabeth & Thompson, Aaron. (2013). Effects of check

and connect on attendance, behavior, and academics: A randomized effectiveness

trial. Research on Social Work Practice. 24. 10.1177/1049731513497804.

McFarland, J., Stark, P., & Cui, J. (2016). Trends in high school dropout and completion

    rates in the United States: 2013 (NCES 2016-117). Retrieved from

    http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch

Moreno, C. D., & Garza, M. (2017). A pilot study of the impact of the Peraj Mentoring

    Program on school dropout risk of Mexican children. *Journal of Community*

    *Psychology*, *45(3)*, 315–332. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21849

National Center for Education Statistics. (1992). *Characteristics of at-risk students in*

    *NELS:88* [PDF] (p. 23). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs92/92042.pdf

Neild, Ruth. (2009). Falling off track during the transition to high school: what we know

    and what can be done. The future of children / center for the future of children,

    the david and lucile packard foundation. 19. 53-76. 10.1353/foc.0.0020.

Olson, K. (2008). *The Wounded Student.* [PDF] (p.46). Educational Leadership.

    Retrieved from studentachievement.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Wounded-

    Student.pdf

Pharris-Ciurej, N., Hirschman, C., & Willhoft, J. (2012). The 9th grade shock and the

    high school dropout crisis. Social Science Research, 41, 709–730. doi:10.1016/j

    .ssresearch.2011.11.014

Raposa, E. B., Rhodes, J., Stams, G. J. J. M., Card, N., Burton, S., Schwartz, S., Sykes, L.

    A. Y., Kanchewa, S., Kupersmidt, J., & Hussain, S. (2019). The effects of youth

    mentoring programs: A meta-analysis of outcome studies. *Journal of Youth &*

    *Adolescence, 48(3)*, 423–443. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-00982-8

Rhodes, J.E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*.

    Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rumberger, R. W. (2011). *Dropping out: Why students drop out of high school and what can be done about it*. Harvard University Press.

SEAD – Communities In Schools University. (2021). Retrieved 26 April 2021, from cisu.communitiesinschools.org/student/Catalogue/CatalogueCategory.aspx?id = 2144eca0-e998-4c39-b711-3f261392c22a

Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., Evelo, D. L., & Hurley, C. M. (1998). Dropout prevention for youth with disabilities: Efficacy of a sustained school engagement procedure. *Exceptional Children, 65,* 7–24.

Spencer, R., Tugenberg, T., Ocean, M., Schwartz, Sarah E., & Rhodes, J. (2013). "Somebody who was on my side:" A qualitative examination of Youth Initiated Mentoring. *Youth & Society*, 1-23.

Spencer, R. (2007). "I just feel safe with him": Emotional closeness in male youth mentoring relationships. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *8*(3), 185–198. https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.8.3.185

Stevenson, N. A., Swain-Bradway, J., & LeBeau, B. C. (2021). Examining high school student engagement and critical factors in dropout prevention. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, *46*(2), 155–164. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534508419859655

Swain, K. D., Hagaman, J. L., & Leader-Janssen, E. M. (2021). Teacher-reported IEP goal data collection methods. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 1-8.

The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine. (2018). *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures* (pp. 109-111).

Webber, K. C. (2018). A qualitative study of school social workers' roles and challenges

in dropout prevention. *Children & Schools*, *40*(2), 82–90.

https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy003

West, S. G., Hughes, J. N., Kim, H. J., & Bauer, S. S. (2019). Motivation for educational

attainment in grade 9 predicts high school completion. *Educational Measurement:*

*Issues & Practice*, *38*(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/emip.12244

Williams, J. (2015). *Black brains matter: Why are graduation rates so low?*

http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/02/11/black-brains-matter-why-are-

graduation-rates-so-low

# APPENDIX

## Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

**ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**
*Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World*

**Office of Research and Sponsored Programs**
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

Dear Brittany,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled

(IRB# 21-038 )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects as:
☐ Non-research, and
☑ Non-human research
Based on:

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

*Megan Roth*

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs