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The Perceptions of Barriers to Establishing Mentor Relationships Relative to Gender

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Masters of Arts in Corporate
and Public Communication**

Seton Hall University

2006

Abstract

In terms of mentoring, the early years a career development can require someone to guide the way and shine the light, if you will. There has been research done in past years about the effects of mentoring, the different types of mentor relationships and the impact of having a formal or informal mentor on career development. In this study, the first phase of mentoring will be discussed in regards to possible contrasts according to gender which is *initiating a mentor relationship*. It is the first step to meeting someone who has similar interests and goals for their career. It can be a person who works for an organization with a similar position or one that a person wishes to eventually assume in their career. This great stride will help an individual to learn and build on the skills that they already possess. New skills can then be formed that are vital to career success in a particular field that pertains to the career path of the protégé.

There have been studies done on mentoring and how it is different for women than it is for men. The establishment of a mentor relationship has been studied by various professionals in the field of mentoring which aided in the review of literature for this study. Catalyst, a women's organization, contains research on many women's issues and enabled recent statistics on mentoring for men and women to be provided. A study involving mentoring and the differences between gender was done in 1990 will be one of the focuses of this thesis, specifically the survey results and discussion that were given as a part of that study. The study compiled by the author for the year 2005-2006 required a very similar survey to be distributed for making different comparisons of how things have changed in the perceptions that men and women have on the barriers of initiating mentor relationships.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take time to acknowledge some people for their support and encouragement during the road to the completion of this Masters Program. To Monsignor Mahon, Professor Kuchon, Professor Dool and all of the other faculty members that have taught me in the MACPC program for the past two years. Thank you for your time, sharing your knowledge and helping me in so many ways. I will forever use the communication skills I have attained and developed in the past two years and apply them to my professional life. I will always be able to think back to my time at Seton Hall as a worthwhile experience due to your encouraging efforts and constant guidance.

I would also like to thank all of my family and friends who have supported me throughout my time in graduate school. A special thanks to those who supported me in this program when I felt as though I would never make it! To my uncle Matt Stoessel, who encouraged me to apply to "The Hall". You have been a great influence in all aspects of my life and continue to be a constant reminder that it takes hard work to achieve success.

Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful parents, Tom and Marissa Stoessel, who are the best parents a girl could ever ask for. I apologize for the million phone calls you received in the past few months that involved only *freaking out* from my end, when I should have taken more time to question how your day was. I am so grateful to have your love and support each day and I feel extremely blessed to have you in my life!

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Chapter 1

*If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the
shoulders of giants ... Sir Isaac Newton*

Introduction

We can affirm by Newton's quote above that our ability to reach higher can sometimes be credited to "giants", or as referred to in this study, "mentors". These few words stated by a very knowledgeable man of our past, are quite appropriate for this study. In the research that has been done up until this point, it has been found that mentor relationships are related to career progress, organizational influence and advancement in organizations. These relationships have been researched as being particularly important for women since they have faced gender obstacles to career advancement including advancement issues and lack of women in management positions. One statement that is consistently found in research done on mentoring is that mentors can buffer women from discrimination and help them get the "fast-track" to career advancement (Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

In order to have a mentor and use one effectively, a relationship needs to be established between a protégé who is in need of guidance and is seeking the assistance of another person to aid in career development. This can be informal or formal, but for all intents and purposes of this study, the fact that there is a relationship is the most important aspect and the ways in which it was established is the primary issue. There have been studies as to the phases of mentoring, and the first phase is titled "initiation". This phase of initiation is important and occurs in the early years of career development. It is the initial step to improving interpersonal communications and

gaining new perspectives of various work behaviors as well as learning new ways of doing things that once may have seemed impossible to do. The initiation of this relationship can be different for men and women and the perceived barriers are what the author plans to discuss throughout this thesis.

Research Question

When considering the gender differences in approaches to mentor relationships, the following research question has been designated as the primary focus of this study:

Do men and women perceive that they face different barriers when establishing mentor relationships?

Subsidiary Questions

The following questions will also be discussed, as they pertain to the material presented in this study:

- What are the different barriers that have been researched on gender and their ability to “initiate” a mentor relationship?
- Do the barriers presented in the survey questions in 1990 still give general results that women perceive more barriers in gaining mentors?
- Do men and women perceive that they are affected by the barriers that have been researched for gaining a mentor?

- Are formal mentoring programs that are in place having the same effect on men as they do women?
 - Do men and women perceive that a lack of a formal mentoring program in their place of work prevents them from advancing in their career?

Purpose for the Study

The purpose for this study is for the author to compare research that has been done on the perceived barriers to mentoring relationships and use them to compare it a survey done on the same topic in the current year. This study will question various aspects of mentoring and use the results to compare them to the research that has been gathered for the literature review. This survey will aid in seeing the differences in men and women in their responses compared to fifteen years ago when a similar survey was completed. There will be different people taking this similar survey in 2006, but the results of men versus women should be different overall when compared to the 1990 results. More women are in the workforce today than ever before and the purpose of the study is to point out the most prevalent differences and compare them to the past and present research done on this topic.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will appear most often in this thesis study, and the author has provided scholarly definitions to help define these terms so that the reader understands their use and purpose (Ragins, 1994). There are many definitions and uses for all words in various

dictionaries and scholarly journals and books. In particular, a “mentor” has numerous definitions.

For all intents and purposes, the following will be the standard for the use of “mentor” in this study along with the definitions of other words that the reader will constantly be presented in the study. The sources that were used in the literature review of Chapter 2 provided the following definitions for the terms of most importance and they are:

Mentor: (A counselor, coach, adviser and advocate, among many other single word definitions). Often a more senior individual, frequently within the organization, although not necessarily, who shows a newcomer or protégé the ropes; Assist a junior manager or someone that is interested in a similar profession, in knowing the proper protocol, how to make decisions and whom the protégé will need to meet and impress in order to develop career skills and learn new things related to the profession of interest.

Protégé: A person who is in need of guidance and is seeking the assistance of another person to aid in career development.

Mentoring: The process that is involved with being a mentor; A cooperative relationship between someone who is more experienced and knowledgeable in a field of interest and who bestows this knowledge on a less experienced individual

Limitations

This study will allow the author to focus on gender of the protégé specifically. The age range will be unlimited and will focus on business professionals who are working in various industries. The research that Belle Rose Ragins used in her “Easier said than Done” study was specifically geared towards men and women who were working in research and development and separated them by age and rank along with various other categories. There will not be a specific industry as the focus of this study.

There will not be a comparison of race, ethnic backgrounds, age or rank. The race of the person who completes the survey will not be relevant to what is being analyzed through this study. The rank of the individual will also not be something that is questioned in the survey, nor will it be relevant what the author is seeking to find out from the respondents to make some comparisons to the research that has been sought out on mentoring relative to gender.

The main focus of the survey used in this study as well as the review of literature will be on business professionals and will not reflect lesser educated people (or blue collared positions) that do not use mentors for professional development in the same way that white collared employees would. There is also a lot of research done on “cross-gender” mentoring relationships. However in this study, the sex of the mentor involved will be a limitation. The sex of the protégé that is gaining the mentor will be the central focus. The research will reflect the gender “perception” differences of the protégé in establishing relationships.

The perceptions that are found may or may not reflect actual obstacles and barriers that are occurring in the working world as we know it. That is why the focus is on “perceptions” rather than “actual” barriers. The study will also only address things that may impede people to initiating and establishing mentor relationships as opposed to what benefits they have to form these relationships. It will also address that fact that a mentor is present, and not whether or not

the relationship is formal (as in a mentoring program provided at work) or informal (as in a more “personal” relationship). The fact that a relationship has been established and the mentor has been an influence will be the issue that is going to be of most relevance and importance for this thesis.

Chapter 2

A Review of Literature

Women, in recent years, are representing a large portion of those entering the labor market when compared to 40 years ago. Men are on top when it comes to the number of them entering various work industries, but women are working their way up and have in most recent years been significant additions to many businesses. As a result, business leaders are now aware that women who are entering the workforce today are bringing essential skills and expertise, and they have different expectations and values than they once had (Catalyst, 2001). This can be related to the fact that they had a mentor, or someone to advise them. There are many different strategies that men and women feel are important to advancing in business including consistently exceeding performance, networking with influential colleagues within an organization, and having an influential mentor or sponsor. This idea of mentoring is what the following research will encompass in order to specify the issues studied on the differences between men and women for using this as an aid to career advancement.

What is Mentoring?

For the purpose of this study on working men and women, *mentoring* can be defined as a cooperative relationship between someone who is more experienced and knowledgeable in a field of interest and who bestows this knowledge on a less experienced individual (Advancing Women, 2005). The research that has been done on mentoring is extremely broad and involves career mentoring, educational mentoring, sports mentoring as well as personal mentoring. This study focuses on the aspect of forming a mentor relationship for career purposes and the barriers

that may prevent each gender from doing so. The following research emphasizes the use of a mentor for building a positive career path.

It is important to have a mentor in the early stages of careers for both men and women because of the influence that they can have on any future decisions that he/she may make. In addition, mentoring is a workplace partnership between two people which gives employees the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences, and to grow and develop in the process. It is based upon many things including encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share ideas and skills (EEO, 2005).

Research has also indicated that mentoring is one of the crucial factors in overall business success. Having a mentor or going through some type of mentoring program can increase many chances for advancement and ongoing success throughout one's career. A mentor can help with learning from a broad base of experience as well as gaining new contacts that can have an effect on career development. In building mentoring relationships, protégé's will develop new skills, methods and work habits which the mentor has already developed for themselves and is willing to share. The assistance of a mentor will be encouraging and effective in making the correct choices when it comes to business and personal decisions (EEO, 2005)

Another important aspect of mentoring is the impact that a mentor can have on a less experienced individual on the art of networking and who to network with. This is an entirely different topic in itself but it is important to know people that will assist in career development. Networking is important for both men and women, and is something that will be discussed later in this research as something that prevents women from forming mentor relationships. A mentor should be the first member of the network for both men and women to give support and provide

advice on what further steps to take with a career, as well as personal choices that directly relate to career outcomes (EEO, 2005).

Why Utilize a Mentor?

The role of a mentor is to help someone advance, either in an organization or in their overall profession. Mentors effectively assist with learning and presenting skills that are necessary as well as values, norms and standards of the profession at hand. Mentors and advocates help men and women to identify a career path to advancing and will give advice on positions to take and which ones should be avoided. They can also help to identify possible barriers to career advancement and help increase visibility within a given organization (Brooks & Brooks, 1997).

According to a study done by Raymond Noe, a mentor is an experienced manager who relates well to a less-experienced employee and facilitates his or her personal development for the benefit of the individual as well as the organization. This idea would hold true for a formal mentor relationship. There are also mentor relationships that are formed on an informal basis. It is easier sometimes to form “informal mentoring ties” with someone who knows a lot about personal style and can accommodate to aspects of a person that a formal mentor may not be able to understand (Brooks & Brooks, 1997). Many mentor relationships have been informal, meaning that both people involved are interested in establishing this relationship. They are unassigned, whereas the formal mentor program assigns matches to mentors and protégés (Noe, 1988). Formal mentoring programs will be discussed in further detail later in this literature review. These two types of relationships are legit for this study, as the barriers to initiating these relationships will be the specific issue discussed.

The mentor may enhance the protégé's sense of competence and identity by serving as a role model that encourages new behaviors and performance feedback. There are often times when mentors serve dual interpersonal roles, acting as both an outlet for protégé's to discuss personal issues and concerns in a confidential manner as well as facilitating informal exchanges of information about work and non-work experiences (Noe, 1988). To gain a better understanding of the purpose of this study, the author would now like to examine what men and women think of mentoring as a career advancement tool

The Real Deal: What Do Men and Women Think About Mentoring?

A majority of the research in this section of the thesis will reflect on the work that Catalyst has done on the topic of mentoring. Catalyst, a nonprofit research and advisory organization, was founded nearly 40 years ago to support the generation of women entering the workforce at that time. They have done plenty of research and created reports that compare the perceptions of men and women on various business issues, including mentoring. In a recent report written in 2001 titled: "The Next Generation: Today's Professionals, Tomorrow's Leaders", the career strategies men and women perceive as important to career advancement were a topic that was focused on. Catalyst chose to spotlight men and women born between 1964 and 1975 (mid-20's to mid-30's) because this age group is part of many changes that have occurred in the workplace including more women in leadership positions. When men and women were asked what they felt were the most important strategies for career advancement, 44% of women and 41% of men strongly agreed that having an influential mentor or sponsor were among the top of this list.

When looking at this report, Catalyst went on to explain the various strategies that men and women perceive are going to empower and advance them along in various aspects of their career. The fact that 44% of women and 41% of men agreed that having a mentor was something that they perceived to be important in advancing their career is a significant percentage. Another part of the study included asking men and women what they perceived as barriers to women's advancement, by gender. The findings resulted in 50% of women and 29% of men strongly agreeing that a lack of mentoring opportunities were barriers to women.

Other barriers included commitment to personal and family responsibilities as well as lack of women role models. In terms of lacking a mentor, this percentage was the second largest when looking at all of the barriers and percentages on the results chart. Again, these respondents were not given any previous information before answering the questions and mentoring came up as a strategy for advancement, but as a barrier to women advancement. So if mentoring is perceived as a strategy to advance and it is a barrier for women to advance, how can businesses assure that the women they employ are able to work their way up the ladder as men do? Another study that was done by Catalyst reveals why having a formal mentoring program is a key aspect to developing employees (Catalyst, 2001).

This study on mentoring titled "Creating Successful Mentoring Programs: A Catalyst Guide", is a publication that lays out information and adds evidence from latest research on why mentoring is perceived as a critical strategy for career advancement. Men and women can have informal relationships and people to advise them on an "informal" basis, and this is a good option to build relationships outside of the workplace. However, an important step to learning an organization and the corporate culture would be to implement a formal mentoring program for employees. Formal programs have already been implemented within various organizations, and

some of them will be discussed later in more detail. These programs allow not only men, but women, to partake in building relationships within an organization. Everyone can be involved in a formal mentoring program at work, and can still have informal mentoring relationships with people who do not work for the same organization, but who share the same interests. (Catalyst, 2002)

When taking a look at the report that was previously discussed, mentoring is something that is not neglected by men and women. They recognize this business technique in being able to advance and learn within their organization, as well as through informal networks. Catalyst also researched why mentoring is important, and states that:

“While mentors play many different roles, their central task is to help people maximize the potential they already have. Mentors give advice about career decisions, provide insight about the political environment, and introduce their mentees to their own network.”

In 1978, the *Harvard Business Review* published an article, “Everyone Who Makes it Has a Mentor.” Thinking about this title at that time, and then comparing it to research now, it is apparent that not everyone has equal access to mentors. Women have consistently lacked mentoring opportunities as a critical barrier to advancement. As a part of this same study done on successful mentoring programs, Catalyst asked women and men across a wide range of industries and geographies about what they think is holding women back from being successful and rising above the men that they are working with. Mentoring, as previously mentioned, is an issue that continues to come up.

The glass ceiling has been broken by many women, and they give credit to mentors in helping them to achieve success. Those women who continue to struggle with advancing to more rewarding and fulfilling job positions cite the lack of access to mentors as a key barrier. For this to be widely researched and confirmed through women's responses, it connects with the research that states women as having a hard time in forming mentor relationships. The barriers that women face in obtaining mentors can directly relate to this idea of mentoring as a strategy for advancement. If women cannot obtain mentors and perceive barriers to gaining mentors, then it is difficult for them to use mentoring as a strategy for advancement. A mentor is "perceived" by both men and women as being an important factor in career success. (Catalyst, 2002)

In the same Catalyst study on mentoring, the composition of the workforce is always changing. The use of formal mentoring has been researched and many outcomes can be achieved as a result of using them. For one, they can improve personal and professional performance and give people insights into the organizational culture that is expected. New skills and can be developed and knowledge can be gained which can lead to increased productivity. A few more possible benefits would be to lessen the stress placed on employees and avoid mistakes that would otherwise happen that might harm internal and external client relationships. Employees who have mentors can also stay committed to an organization when being led in the right direction and being included as a part of the culture. The idea of creating communication ties between employees help with retention of employees. Having formal mentor programs have shown many of these benefits and a few examples can now be discussed.

PLAN

In regards to women, Ernst and Young created Women's PLAN (Partner Leadership & Alliance Network). This organization seeks to support the women who are partners at Ernst and Young through mentoring and development planning. The ultimate goal is to increase the pool of leadership talent in the firm and allow women to be a part of this pool. This program was started in response to women who were part of the firm that questioned why more women did not hold leadership positions. A factor that was brought to the attention of Ernst and young executives was that women have had limited access to senior-level mentors than male peers. The decision was made for the Center for the New Workforce to work closely with the Executive Board to address these challenges. PLAN requires each participant to be assigned a mentor from the Executive Board. The participant creates a development plan and then works with her mentor to fulfill all of the aspects of that plan. Additionally, co-mentoring groups are formed consisting of six or seven participants to provide constant support to each other. (Catalyst, 2002)

This example provides some insight as to what organizations are doing to move women to higher positions in business. The creation of mentoring programs is one way of allowing women to be placed in mentoring programs without having to initiate the relationship. This allows women to gain mentors, but not having established the relationship on their own. While networking into relationships is important to do on a formal and informal basis, it will get women moving faster if the relationship is created through a work program, and at Ernst & Young they are using PLAN as means of jumping ahead and finding mentors that will adhere to the needs of the mentee. The 1990 survey given by Ragins has shown that more women perceive barriers to forming mentor relationships.

The implementation of the formal mentor program goes a step above these barriers so that everyone can participate and openly learn within their given organizations. All other mentoring relationships that are formed by men and women would then have to be started individually, which can then present the initiation barriers. Either way, the lack of mentors and formal mentoring programs is one of the aspects that men and women feel are preventing them from being better employees the following companies, like Ernst & Young, have created mentoring programs for developing employees. (Catalyst, 2002) These will be discussed as we move along in the development of this research.

In a more recent report titled “Women in U.S. Corporate Leadership: 2003”, Catalyst assessed women’s views about the “state of the workplace” by measuring their satisfaction with their jobs and employers and whether they have seen women’s opportunities for advancement change over the past few years. This study was done in 2003, and compared the research to information given by women in 1996. In two waves, Catalyst reached out to a total of 4,899 women executives in the Fortune 1000, and 705 returned usable surveys for the study. There were many demographic differences among the respondents in terms of age, education, title and industry. Women in 2003 stated that they were quite happy with jobs and positions, but not as happy with opportunities to network and be mentored (Catalyst, 2003) Again, this points out the need for more opportunities at work for women to have mentoring opportunities.

Going back to the 2003 Catalyst study, women were asked what they were satisfied with at work and the top of the list included: their current position, current employer and respect with which they were treated by company’s leadership (in the 77-80% range of satisfaction). At the bottom of the list, only 23% were satisfied with the availability of mentors. This 23% is extremely low when compared all other percentages of work satisfaction. This small percentage

was found due to the fact that most of the women in the survey did not even have one mentor. Sixty percent of women surveyed had no mentor and only about one in five women have more than one mentor. This visibly shows actual responses of women and their lack of having a mentor. In order to advance, women would like access to mentors, but if women have no mentors to begin with then this possibility for moving upward is lacking.

Catalyst found that a lack of mentors is a concern for men and women across many different industries and levels of work. Limited access to mentors tends to be more problematic for women who are often left out of informal activities that serve to build networks. Almost 23% of women reported back to Catalyst in never having a mentor. Three quarters of women have had one or more mentors during their career. These ideas were taken from the 2003 study, so this recent information about women and their use of mentoring. This information can support the findings in the survey given to working men and women of perceived barriers to establishing mentor relationships. The fact that so many women are lacking a mentor can reflect the barriers that are perceived by women in forming these relationships.

In the same "Women in U.S. Leadership" study, women were asked to circle three barriers to women's overall advancement. While lack of mentoring did not rank in the highest of percentages, 30% of the women respondents cited this as a barrier in 1996 while only 16% cited it in 2003. This difference reflects that women are finding other factors that act as barriers to advancement to be significant, or that more have engaged in mentoring for developing their skills and being advised. All of these barriers in some way or another influence each other and form barriers that hold women back from being as successful as they might like to be. For example, one of the barriers that received a higher percentage of responses was exclusion from informal networks. The ability to access informal networks can be accomplished just by having

a mentor. A mentor can advise on how to improve networking behavior. This also can be reflected on the establishment of mentoring relationships for men and women. A barrier to women's overall advancement is exclusion of informal networks just as it is for forming mentor relationships.

Networking: A Tool for Advancement

Let's take a minute to discuss networking. This could be an entirely new study in itself, although the author found an article in the Orange County Business Journal titled, "Move Over, Boys" and feels that it relates that what all of the Catalyst studies are presenting about women's thoughts on networking. The article, written by Judy Rosener, discusses female business networks and male business networks and makes some comparisons. One reason that Rosener states women do not make it onto corporate boards or land executive positions is their exclusion from the "old boy's network".

The word "old" refers to long standing; the word "boy" refers to men; the word "network" refers to a set or group of important relationships. These types of relationships that men can have will range from golfing buddies, members in male dominated professional organizations, workplace colleagues who tend to spend time and travel together-and basically, male leaders whose path has crossed in some way due to social and professional settings.

Men who start out with social and workplace relationships will take advantage of this and turn them into opportunities for professional advancement. These personal work relationships turn into promotions, enhanced career opportunities and appointments to corporate boards. "Women are not 'boys', but the times are changing. Women are developing networks of their own" states Rosener. This article also points out something interesting in that it refers to the

initiation of female networks as being different from the initiation of male networks. This can go hand in hand with how mentoring relationships are formed. Rosener refers to the creation of female networks being because executive women realize they need a vehicle for sharing knowledge about their professions and opportunities to advance their careers. When the author thought of Rosener's point, it relates to the fact that women have more depth at times when it comes to sharing and building real relationships. Men tend to get directly to the point, that being moving up in their career. The by-product of male networks is *career advancement*, while the by-product of female organizations are *personal relationships*. The author found this information to be interesting and relevant to the studies that Catalyst has done on men and women and their thoughts on career advancement opportunities. The next subject in this literature review will touch upon Chevron and their use of mentoring programs.

XYZ Network and Chevron Corporation

This next discussion refers to mentoring as it was applied to XYZ Network and Chevron Corporation. This study was found in the Catalyst report that was previously mentioned titled "The Next Generation: Today's Professionals, Tomorrow's Leaders." Chevron Corporation in Richmond, CA is another example of mentoring programs being applied to real life situations. Ryan Miller, Founder and President of XYZ Network, began working at Chevron Products Company in 1997 as a process engineer in Technology Marketing. According to Miller, "I was 22 years old and by far the youngest person in the research group. It was hard for me to reach out to people outside of my function, and I felt a gap between age and experience, both personally and professionally."

In September 1999, Miller began networking with a new group of young recruits. They all shared the same vision that he had to start an employee network for the new employees and in the fall of 2000, the XYZ Network was officially launched. The basis of this Network is for employees for generations X, Y and Z. (Generation X employees were born between 1965 and 1976 and Generation Y employees were born between 1977 and 2000. The Z refers to employees born after 2000). The purpose for Miller to build this network was to provide networking and mentoring opportunities and to encourage corporate and community involvement.

After just one year as a Network, XYZ brought value to members and to Chevron. This network built on leadership skills and developed employee careers of men and women by forming mentoring relationships and maintaining constant networking opportunities. There are many events as a part of XYZ where employees can share information and knowledge with each other and meet new people within the organization. This is a way to produce networking activities for all members in an organization that does not prevent anyone from being left out. Women who might perceive that they are lacking mentoring opportunities can use Networks such as XYZ for further development of networking skills and the meeting of potential mentors (Catalyst, 2001).

This XYZ Network is another example of how people within organizations realize the need for creating networking opportunities for employees to form mentoring relationships. The enthusiasm of employees to be able to share experiences with each other is a reward because they are learning something in the process. This network offers employees a way of coming together, no matter the generation or gender, for the common good of the company. It is also a way of professionally developing skills and making a difference in an organization. As a result of XYZ's success, Chevron has utilized the Network for strategic Planning and has enlisted them

as a strategic focus group to supply ideas and perspective on the mission and vision of the company.

AT&T

Most successful women state that they have had mentoring relationships but the concept of this has gained acceptance only recently in the last generation. A 1984 longitudinal study of AT&T female managers found that women who had mentors advanced more rapidly in the organization than those who did not have mentors. Furthermore, women who were initially evaluated as not having advancement potential, but who had mentors, advanced as far as or farther than those who were identified as having potential, but who did not have mentors.

The mentors in the AT&T study assisted women with promotions, encouraged them to continue their education and provided them with advice. They also facilitated their protégés in advancement by adding credibility and “legitimacy” to them and helping change the way in which their protégés were perceived by coworkers. It was something that could actually be heard: A person of senior level status saying publicly, “Wow, that Jane sure is a go-getter! She’s definitely going places.” This is the type of thing that mentors will do for their protégé’s. They help to build on strengths and will motivate people to want to be successful and work harder. They build self confidence in people and make them realize that they have the skills and can be encouraged to use them successfully for their career development and advancement (Brooks & Brooks, 1997).

Phases to Mentoring

Now that we know some recent statistics on what men and women feel about the use of mentoring and the utilization of formal mentoring programs, we can now discuss the phases and barriers that have been researched. Burke and McKeen have identified that there are four phases in mentor relationships. They are initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. This study focuses specifically on the first step of *initiation*. This phase is defined as a period of six months to one year and during this time the relationship is starting to develop and takes on importance for both individuals involved. The protégé learns about their mentor and the expectations become visible for both parties. The mentor will provide coaching, challenging work and visibility and the protégé will provide respect and the desire to learn and be coached.

Barriers to Mentoring

In the race to getting to the top of an organization or being the best at a given profession, mentors can make a difference between getting on the inside track and lagging behind. For Women in particular, mentors can be essential for overcoming various gender-related barriers to advancing in business. Mentors can aid in buffering women from being discriminated against and can help them to rapidly advance (Ragins, 1996). Many organizations believe that women are handicapped when it comes to forming a bond with a mentor. There are many gender related barriers to mentoring and the author will now further discuss these barriers in relationship to the gender that they have the greatest impact.

Mentors can be one of the most important factors in success for both men and women. However, having an effective mentor is said to be more important for women than men since many men that are on the “fast track” have received informal coaching through building

relationships with other men whereas women have had barriers to obtaining mentors (Brooks). For many individuals working their way through the organizational ranks, a good mentor can be a valuable career asset. Not only do mentors provide their protégés with important career advice and emotional support, but they can also open doors that could otherwise remain shut. As a result, mentored individuals tend to enjoy more advancement opportunities and can end up with higher wages than their non-mentored counterparts (Nemanick, 2000). Having someone to directly influence and guide you is important for developing interpersonal skills and to learn about a given profession from someone who has experienced each aspect and has firsthand knowledge to share (Brooks).

The research that has been done by Raymond Noe includes a number of barriers. The first barrier presented by Noe is a *lack of access to information networks*. Lack of information networks will be discussed further in terms of women and networking. This would be something that could prevent women from developing mentor relationships because of the limited contact that they hold with potential people that could serve as mentors to them. This could be due to a lack of knowledge on how to develop and manage an informal network of people. It could also be in part due to a preference for interacting with others of similar status in an organization as well as the intentional exclusion of women by male managers. Evidence indicates that women have had fewer interactions with people of higher positions and who have power in an organization (Noe, 1988).

Ragins discusses “making the first move” as a barrier to mentoring. When considering any relationship, there is ultimately someone who makes a first move into proceeding forward and initiating the relationship. Women tend to face different barriers to initiating a mentor relationship than do men. The primary reason for this is the shortage of women at upper levels

of organizations and women are faced with having to approach someone of the opposite gender. When referring to forming these mentor relationships at work, there are at least three factors to consider when women pursue the idea of obtaining a male mentor and they are: sexual issues, sex-role expectations and opportunities for meeting mentors (Ragins, 1996).

When referring to *sexual issues*, women may be reluctant to initiate a relationship with a male mentor for fear that the approach will be misconstrued as a sexual advance. The perception itself is enough to prevent women from initiating mentor relationships whether it is really what is intended or not. Overall, the basic idea is that sexual issues may be a significant way to block the development of mentoring relationships for women due to jealous spouses and various other reasons for women to pass up on choosing a male as her mentor (Ragins, 1996).

Sex-role expectations have encouraged men to take on aggressive roles and women to take passive roles in initiating relationships. This can lead to many consequences, including women having more difficulty than men initiating cross gender mentoring relationships. Women may hesitate being assertive in initiating relationships and this can lead to threatened mentors as well as disapproving supervisors and coworkers. The result of this would be women being more likely to wait for the potential mentor to do the initiating of the relationship. As for sexual issues, the barrier is something that can be reinforced by others in the organization and supervisors and coworkers may also react negatively to women who actively try to initiate mentoring relationships. Women might then get labeled as “overly aggressive” and while men are expected to actively seek a mentor, women are supposed to wait until they are chosen.

When compared to male counterparts, *women may have fewer formal and informal opportunities for developing mentoring relationships*. Women lack access to many settings that potential male mentors are used to using as a part of daily interactions. Examples of these would

be men's clubs, sports activities and golf outings (Ragins, 1996). This was also what Rosener referred to in her "Move Over, Boys" article in the earlier *networking* section of the literature review. The author understands that some of this research has been done many years ago, and there are several changes since then in terms of opportunities for women to network and build relationships for mentoring purposes. The methodology will be what determines any changes that are most obvious in terms of the results of the survey that will be accompanying this research.

In summary, the research provided will serve as a framework for the rest of the Chapters involved in this study. The idea of being able to compare the results of the survey provided in to the actual research provided will create a conclusion and some possible recommendations for further research. The author was also able to use the research as a tool for creating the survey questions so that they were uniform with the perceptions that women and men have about mentoring and the initiation of this relationship. Chapter 3 will now provide how the author completed the execution of the survey and discussion of the survey questions.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The literature review provided in Chapter 2 summarized the research that has been done on mentoring regarding what it is, how it can benefit career development and the differences for men and women in establishing mentor relationships. The focus of this study is to provide readers with information of research on the barriers to forming mentor relationships between men and women. There were various percentages given in Chapter 2 that discussed men and women's thoughts on mentoring and the effect that it can have on career advancement. This study will also show results of a survey given to currently working men and women and be able to compare the results of this survey with the overall results discussion of a similar survey that was done in 1990 by Belle Rose Ragins. The survey given in Ragin's study produced results that *more barriers to gaining a mentor were perceived by women than men.*

Although the surveys discussed were not exactly the same, they both use the same concepts. The author thought that by using these concepts fifteen years later could potentially show differences in men' and women's responses. The results of the survey in 1990 were not based on percentages, but were rather by using factor analysis. There will not be a factor analysis done for the current survey, rather percentages will be shown and cross tabulations will be used for gender comparison. The results in the past survey were also based on one specific group of people in one specific industry. The current survey that the author created will not focus in on one particular industry or job position, but rather target people who are in the beginnings of their career who might utilize a mentor for career aid and advancement.

The survey that Ragins provided in a study titled “Easier Said than Done: Gender Differences in Perceived Barriers to Gaining a Mentor”, was given to 880 men and women who worked in research and development organizations and she specifically separated them by department, level and specialization to represent equal numbers. There were 510 surveys returned with a response rate of 58 percent. There were various questions given to the respondents from if they had mentors at all, to whether or not they felt that they had enough access to finding a mentor. A key finding in the study was that *women perceived the presence of more barriers than men*. This study will be based on whether men and women perceive the same or different barriers and point out the most recent developments through the survey respondent answers.

When formal mentoring programs are brought into play, there is the argument that these “assigned” positions do not require any barriers to be broken down. However, the fact that a relationship must be formed requires both people involved to initiate this establishing of a bond. In most cases, an informal relationship requires more of an “initiation” phase because there has to be a first move made by someone, whereas formal mentoring programs are organized within the company and place people together with others who work in the same department or have a position that is similar. The following will discuss the survey given on Zoomerang to help the author determine what perceptions are most prevalent today and to make some comparisons on various aspects of mentoring for men and women.

The Survey

The following is the survey that was posted on Zoomerang for the purposes of gaining responses from men and women on the topic of mentoring. The survey was designed

specifically to show if women and men perceive different barriers to establishing mentor relationships. It will also find out some additional information in using an open-ended question at the end as well as general questions that could be useful to the author in making some comparisons of actual survey results to the research that was done in Chapter 2. The research has clearly stated that both men and women feel that mentoring is an important aspect to career advancement, and that women in the past have perceived more barriers to initiating mentor relationships. The primary purpose of the survey will help the author to make some conclusions as to where the thoughts of men and women lie today and then some conclusions and recommendations can be made as to what the author thinks when the results from the survey are analyzed.

In Appendix A found at the end of this thesis, the author shows the questions that were placed onto Zoomerang and allows the reader to see how the questions were grouped before the survey was placed onto the website. The survey was then sent via email to the respondents who were then able to link to the website to take the survey. When looking at the survey in Appendix A, it is shown this way to point out why the statements used were placed in the order that they appeared on Zoomerang due to the grouping.

Discussion of Survey Questions

In regards to the survey that was posted on Zoomerang, the author would like to point out that the Likert Scale was used for a majority of the survey questions. This was due in part to the fact the respondents were provided with statements in which they had to determine their degree of agreement or disagreement. To clarify, the Likert Scale asks respondents to specify their level

of agreement to each of a list of statements. It was named after Renis Likert, who invented the scale in 1932. The use of this scale aided the author when it came to analyzing the feelings that men and women had on the various statements presented and the results were clear in nature in terms of a concrete answer.

The survey was similar to Ragins survey in 1990, although after research was done on the various Catalyst reports and other sources were investigated, the author decided that the survey should also have some added statements to see the degree in which the respondents agreed or disagreed. These new statements complimented the statements used in the 1990 survey and gave additional information to be analyzed. Overall, the survey was a method of gaining actual data and comparing it to the research that has been done to date on mentoring and comparing the male respondent answers to the female respondents. This helped to determine if women and men still perceive the same barriers to establishing mentor relationships and will acknowledge strides that have been made in the past fifteen years on mentoring. It will also acknowledge the fact that women are more prevalent in the workforce in the year 2006 and have different ways of thinking when it comes to the development of their skills and abilities because they have proved themselves to be successful when compared to men.

The survey was created by grouping questions together and the author hoped to gather answers to the following questions by distributing this survey to working men and women:

Access to Mentors:

- Are there significant differences in the number of men and women that have mentors?
- Are there differences in the kind of mentor that men and women have?

- Do men and women only have a mentor due to an actual mentoring program at work that places them with people at work?

Fear of initiating a Relationship:

- Do women and men feel that their gender plays a part in how they initiate mentoring relationships?
- Do men and women differ in their thoughts on how a mentor relationship should be established?
- Do men and women think that it is up to the potential mentor to initiate the relationship?
- Do men and women think that it is other people who may not want to begin the relationship?

Mentoring for Career Advancement Purposes:

- Do men and women feel the same way about using mentors for career advancement?
 - Do men and women have mentors and feel that it is because of this person's help that they have advanced in their career?
- What industries do these men and women currently work?

General Information:

- What job titles do these people currently hold?
- What industry is the respondent a part of?
 - Could both of these questions pose new ideas for further research in mentoring for different types of careers? (discussion in Chapter 5)

The survey was sent to various working men and women and the results were gathered. The survey contained 19 questions, 16 of which had multiple choice answers and the remaining three were open ended questions that were optional. The answers that were provided for the multiple choice questions were yes/no, true/false and Likert Scale answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The use of these types of answers provided a degree to how the respondents felt on a specific question which allowed the author to record the results and see differences among responses.

Chapter 4 will provide the results given by this survey and allow the author to elaborate on specific questions as to how the research that was provided either complimented or was inconsistent with the answers of the respondents. This will then flow into Chapter 5 in which the author will be able to make conclusions about the research and survey answers as a whole and make further recommendations for the future of initiating mentor relationships among men and women.

Chapter 4

Results

As stated in Chapter 1, the author has put past and present research together about men and women and their perceptions of barriers to establishing mentor relationships. The “problem” that has been brought to the author’s attention is whether or not women and men perceive different barriers to establishing mentors relationships. The research and survey that was distributed in 1990 states that more men currently had mentors, and men were able to form this relationship more easily than women. Current numbers are showing more women in the workforce than ever before, so the author felt the need to create a new study on working men and women to see any differences in the year 2006.

The author created and distributed a survey on the Zoomerang website to test the differences in men and women and their use of mentors, specifically their approach to initiating mentor relationships and utilizing the help of a mentor for a career advancement purposes. The reason for wanting to learn more about this specific topic is the interest of women in the workforce. This is changing both research and analysis of how women approach situations at work, and the typical stereotypes of women are changing everyday. The fact that women are now able to hold stereotypical “male” positions at work suggests that women are using their resources differently in 2006 when compared to fifteen years ago. Although women are also perceived as being the “housewife” or the “mother”, career is now important to many women.

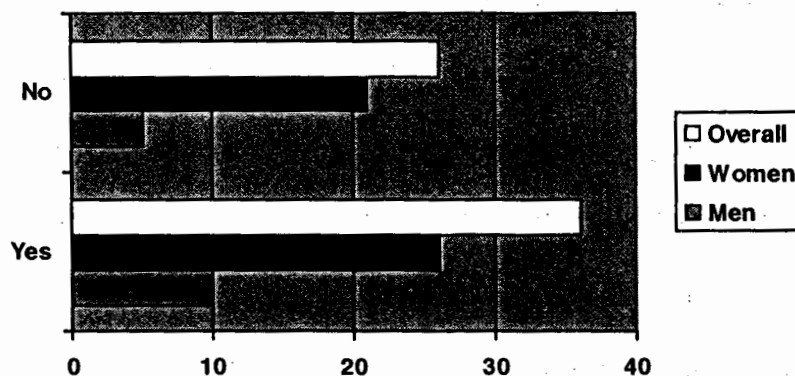
The sample for this study was drawn from people who are currently working in positions that could potentially utilize the guidance of one or more people to aid their career advancement. This person or persons can provide feedback about their work style, goals and abilities. The

respondents were all working in various positions and holding various job titles that will be discussed later. This survey was not given to a set group of people working in the same company, nor do they all hold the same positions.

The survey link was distributed through email to over 100 people and 85 total people viewed and attempted to take the survey. By “attempted”, the author would like to point out that there were 85 people who went to the site of the survey and the end result was 62 completed surveys for use in this Chapter. There were 6 partially completed surveys which were disregarded and not used as a part of the final survey analysis. The results to each of the following statements will now be provided. This will include number, percentages and graphs to emphasize the differences among men and women and their perceptions of mentoring and the barriers that have been presented in the previous sections of this thesis.

Statement 1

I currently have someone I can consider as a mentor

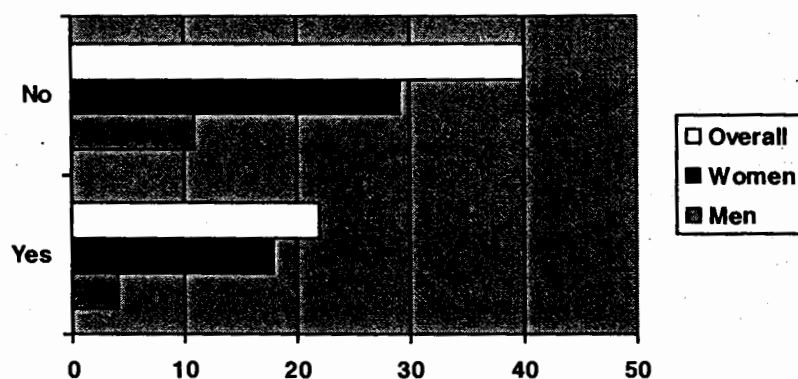


The statements were grouped accordingly, starting with “mentor status” which was the first category title of the word document of the survey found in Appendix A. Statements 1-5 fall into this group. In statement 1, respondents were to choose yes or no. The statement read: *I currently have someone I can consider as a mentor*. Out of the 62 total respondents, 36 (58%) answered “yes” and 26 (42%) responded “no”. Out of these responses, 10 men responded “yes” and 5 men responded “no”. The number of women that responded “yes” were 26 (55%) and the number of women that responded “no” were 21 (44%).

When compared to research, it was consistent with what Chapter 2 provided, although there were 26 women who did state that they had a mentor. The author felt that out of the women that responded, their response was consistent with the literature provided by Ragins. In terms of this survey, the overall percentage of men having mentors is greater than the women, indicating that more men have mentors.

Statement 2

I have more than one mentor

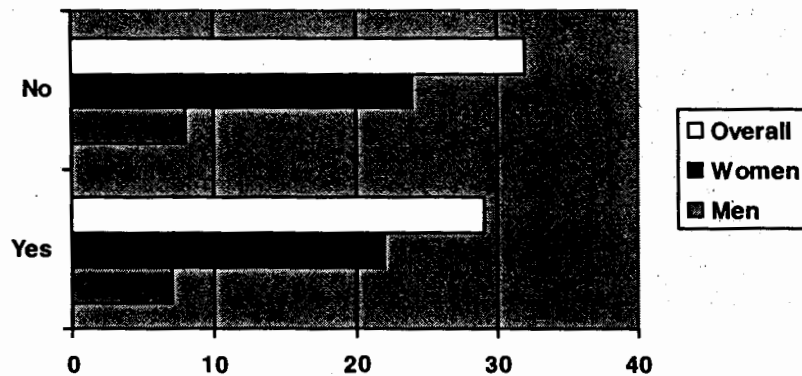


In statement 2, respondents were asked to choose yes or no. The statement read: *I have more than one mentor*. As an overall group, 22 (35%) of the respondents answered “yes” and 40 (65%) answered “no”. Out of these responses, 4 (26%) men responded “yes” and 11 (73%) men responded “no”. The number of women that responded “yes” was 18 (38%) and the number of women who responded “no” was 29 (61%).

This statement suggests that even though more men than women have a mentor, women (almost 40% as shown through the results of this statement) are more proactive in their pursuit of building a mentor relationship and have more than one. There were only 4 men who responded that they had more than one mentor, indicating that they did not take as large of an initiative as the women in having a mentor.

Statement 3

I have an informal mentor who does not work with me



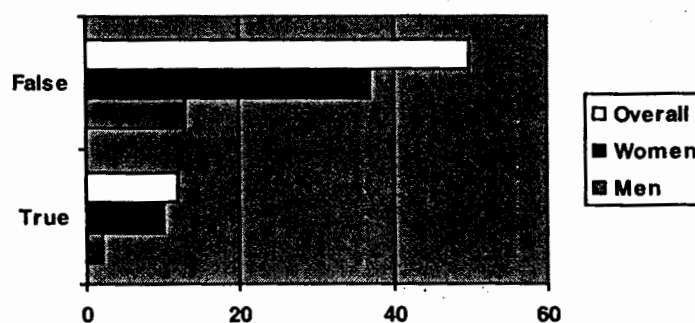
In statement 3, the respondents were to choose yes or no. The statement read: *I have an informal mentor who does not work with me*. In terms of overall responses, 29 responded “yes” and 32 responded “no”. The responses of the men were basically even in the fact that 7 (46%) responded “yes” and 8 (53%) responded “no”. With the women, 22 (47%) responded “yes” and 24 (52%) responded “no” which is also close to an even split in their responses just as the men’s. The author was not surprised that there was such an even split between both the men and the women in terms of these responses because a mentor does not necessarily have to work with its protégé.

The mentor can be informal or formal, and the research in Chapter 2 distinguishes that there are differences between these two types of mentors for career advancement. These numbers are evenly split between the men and the women. This suggests that for women, they utilize more than one mentor and consider at least one of them informal. If this is compared to the research provided by Brooks, then it is easier to form a mentor relationship on an informal

basis which could indicate why women have both more than one mentor and 47% of them responded that they have an informal mentor.

Statement 4

I have never had a mentor

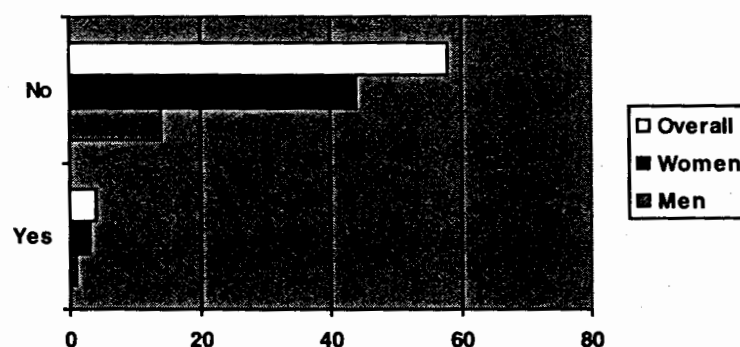


In statement 4, the respondent was asked to respond true or false. The statement read: *I have never had a mentor*. The total “true” responses in terms of the overall group were 12 (19%) responses and the total “false” responses were 50 (81%). The total number of men that responded “false” was 13 (87%) and the “true” response total was 2 (13%). The women responded differently in that 10 (22%) responded “false” and 37 (78%) responded “true”.

When comparing the men’s responses to the women’s, it is consistent with the research as well as the previous questions. There is a much greater percentage of women that responded “true” to this statement indicating that even up until today, they do not have a mentor. The large number of men that responded “false” would indicate that more of them have had a mentor at least once in their life. This statement provides very different numbers among both genders.

Statement 5

I have a mentor due to a Formal Mentoring Program at work



In Statement 5, the respondents were asked to answer yes or no. The statement read: *I have a mentor due to a Formal Mentoring Program at work*. Out of the total respondents, 4 (6%) answered “yes” and 58 (94%) answered “no”. There was 1 (7%) man that responded “yes” and 14 (93%) men responded “no” to this statement. In terms of women, there were 3 (7%-same as the men) that responded “yes” to this statement and 44 (93%) that responded “no”.

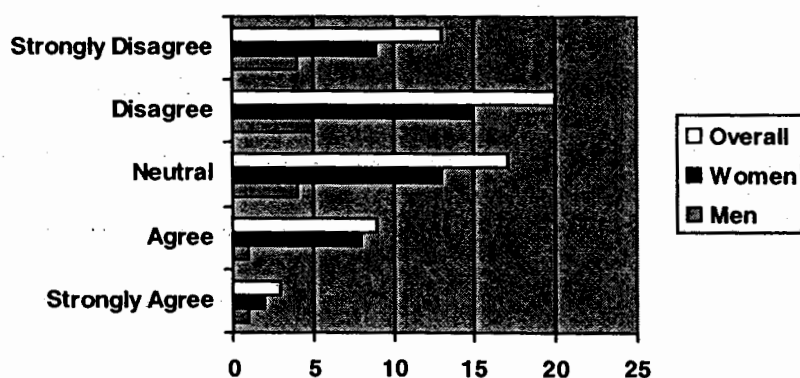
When looking at both the male and female responses for this question, both percentages are the same. The author thinks the results for this statement would leave the reader to believe that not very many businesses have a mentoring program at work for employees or the people who participated in the survey use other means of gaining knowledge for work through other sources or people.

When considering the research reports that Catalyst published, the author would like to point out that women acknowledged the fact there was not a formal mentoring program at work and said that if there had been one, they would have utilized it. The results in Statement 5 can show that a majority of both men and women answered “no” to the presence of a formal

mentoring program at work. While there might be a program in place at work, one could potentially be using an out of work mentor or someone else for career guidance. There could be many reasons why the answers to the statements turned out to be so even in the way that respondents answered and will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Statement 6

I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because of a lack of opportunity to meet potential mentors



The next grouping of statements fell under the category “access to mentors”. The Likert scale became the new way of answering and potential answers provided were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Statement 6 read: *I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because of a lack of opportunity to meet potential mentors*. In total, there were 3 (5%) “SA” responses, and 9 (15%) “A” responses. There were 17 (27) “N” responses. There were 20 (32%) “D” responses and 13 (21%) “SD” responses.

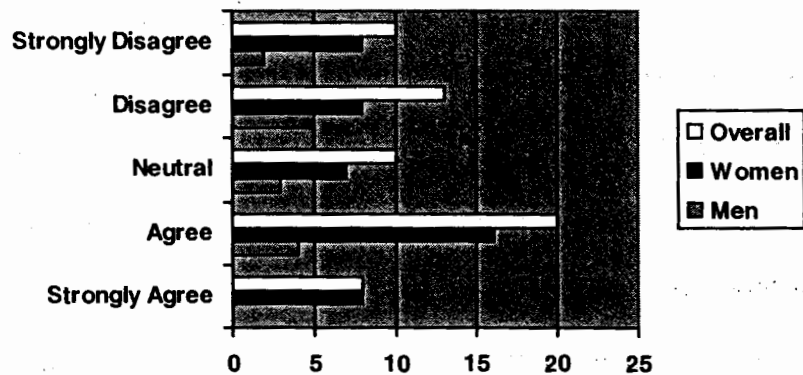
For Statement 6, there was 1 (7%) man who responded "SA" and 1 (7%) man that responded "A". There were 4 (27%) men who responded "N" and 5 (33%) who responded "D". Finally for the men, there were 4 that responded "SD". For the women there were 2 (4%) "SA" responses and 8 (17%) "A" responses. The total women who responded "N" was 13 (28%). There were 15(32%) "D" responses and 9 (19%) "SD" responses.

In looking at Statement 6, both men and women for a majority answered that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed to a larger extent than strongly agree or disagree. The largest percentage of women only responded "D" and fewer women responded "SD". The same goes for the men in the fact that there were 5 "D" and one less with 4 "SD". This could be a coincidence, but there must be an underlying reason as to why more men and women did not answer "SA" to this statement. The overall sense in the answers that were provided indicates that both women and men are unsure if they lack opportunities to meet potential mentors. It could also suggest they were reluctant to state their true feelings and they think there really are no opportunities to meet potential mentors.

There could be various reasons for these results, however, the answers by women in the previous survey leaned more towards the "SA" and "A" side. This suggests that there has been a positive move on the part of women in using networking and other opportunities to meet people. As the research stated by both Ragins and Rosener, men have been known in the past to participate in networking activities and have natural ability to meet people and take advantage of opportunities and women of the past have not done so. These results show that the women respondents do not totally agree with not being able to meet people which could indicate that they have improved networking skills.

Statement 7

I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because there is a lack of a Formal Mentoring Program at my place of work



In Statement 7, the same Likert scale was provided and it read: *I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because there is a lack of a Formal Mentoring Program at my place of work*. The total “SA” responses overall were 8 (13%) and total “A” responses were 20 (33%). As for “N” responses, there were 10 (16%) overall. The total “D” responses were 13 (21%) and “SD” responses resulted in 10 (16%). There were 0 men that answered “SA” to this statement and 4 (29%) that answered “A”. There were 3 (21%) men with “N” responses, 5 (36%) with “D” responses, and 2 (14%) with “SD” responses. There were 8 (17%) women that responded “SA” and 16 (34%) of women that responded “A”. The “N” responses for women totaled 7 (15%). There were an equal amount of “D” and “SD” responses among the women with both showing 8 (17%) women.

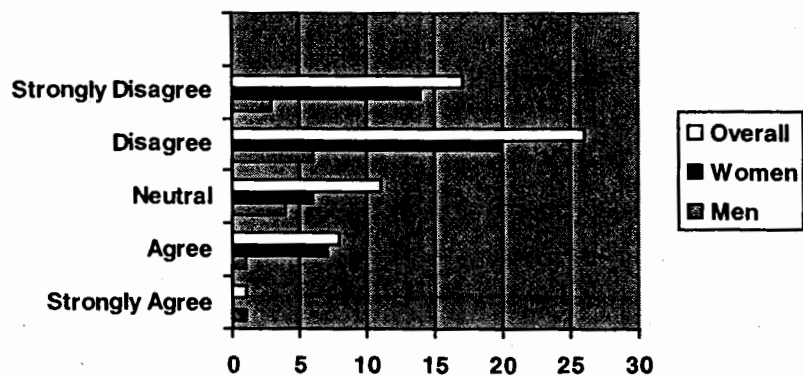
By looking at these totals, it is spread out in the answer totals among the group of respondents. This could indicate that since there is no formal mentoring program, it may not

have anything to do with initiating a mentor relationship. It could suggest that this group does not initiate a relationship for an entirely different reason other than not having a formal mentoring program.

This response is consistent with the research of Noe about formal mentoring programs that was found in Chapter 2. His research specifies that the formal mentoring program will match mentors and protégés, and this could be a good way of gaining a mentor for both men and women because it completely bypasses the networking function. The mentors in a formal mentoring program tend to specialize in what their protégé's need to know.

Statement 8

I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because I am uncomfortable taking an assertive role in approaching a potential mentor



In Statement 8, with Likert scale answer options, it read: *I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because I am uncomfortable taking an assertive role in approaching a potential mentor*. There was 1 (2%) “SA” response, and 8 (13%) “A” responses. As for the

rest, there were 11(18%) “N” responses, 26 (42%) “D” responses and 17 (27%) total “SD” responses. As for the men who responded, there was 1 (7%) that had a “SA” response, and 1 (7%) that had an “A” response. There were 4 (27%) men that remained “N”, 6 (40%) who responded with “D” and 3 (20%) that responded “SD”. There were 0 women who responded with “SA”, 7 (15%) with an “A” response and 6 (15%) with an “N” response. There were 20 women who responded with “D” and 14 (30%) that gave a “SD” response.

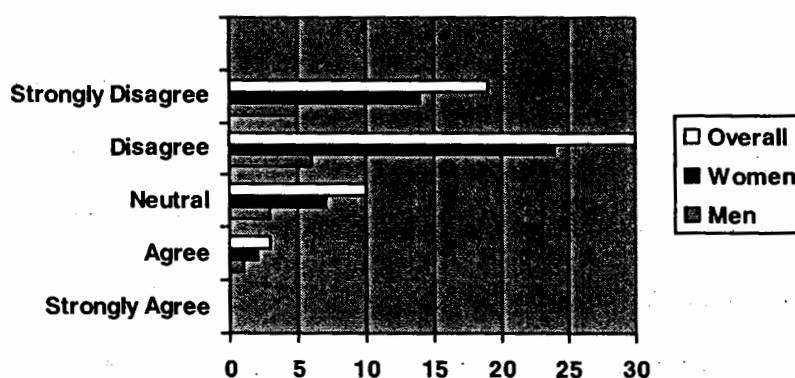
In looking at statement 8, the topic of assertiveness would be the key word and the largest number of people “disagreed” with this statement. This allowed the author to gather that the majority of both the men and the women either think that they have the assertiveness to approach a mentor or that this is not what is preventing them from initiating a mentoring relationship. It is a close call with the numbers to this statement and for the most part, the answers among both the men and the women are consistent in terms of numbers of responses. The research in Chapter 2 done by Ragins states that women have a harder time in initiating relationships and are not as assertive as men. This response is not consistent with the research because the women who did this survey have indicated they possess the skills necessary to be assertive and initiate mentor relationships.

The answers to this question and the previous question relate to one another because there is no need to be assertive as much when there is a program in place at work to form mentor relationships. The answering among both questions suggests that while women agree that they do not have a mentor because of a lack of a formal program, they also disagree that they cannot take an assertive role. If they *can* take an assertive role, this would indicate that they can form a mentor relationship without a program. It also can relate to statement 2 because it suggests that

since the women respondents are more assertive, this skill leads them having more than one mentor.

Statement 9

I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because I believe that it is up to the mentor to make the first move

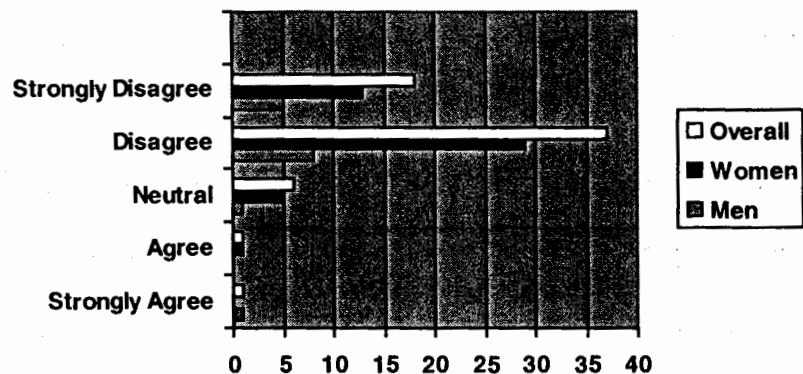


In statement 9, the Likert scale was provided again, and it read: *I am prevented from initiated a relationship with a mentor because I believe that it is up to the mentor to make the first move*. Overall, there were 0 “SA” responses to this statement. There were 3 (5%) “A” responses and 10 (16%) “N” responses. The “D” responses totaled 30 (48%) and the “SD” responses totaled at 19 (31%). The men’s responses had 0 responding with “SA”, 1 (7%) responding with “A”, and 3 (20%) responding with “N”. There were 6 (40%) men that responded “D” and 5 (34%) that responded “SD”. The women’s responses had a similar pattern in that 0 responded with “SA” and 2 (4%) responded with “A”. There were 7 (15%) “N” responses, 24 (51%) “D” responses and 14 (30%) “SD” responses.

As for the meaning of responses in Statement 9, the consistency among the responses between the men and the women could be because both parties for the most part “disagree” that other people should be making the first move in forming mentor relationships, but do not “strongly disagree” because they may see it as being a two-way relationship. The results of statement 9 compared to the results of statement 8 have a similar pattern in answers between the men and the women and they both address assertiveness. Statement 8 indirectly refers to assertiveness because it is stating that it should be up to the mentor to make the first move. If one is lacking assertiveness, then it would be tough to directly approach a potential mentor. The author was not surprised in the consistent results provided by these two statements.

Statement 10

I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me



In statement 10, with Likert scale options, it read: *I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me*. The overall result showed that 1 (2%) responded “SA” and 1 (2%) responded “A”. There

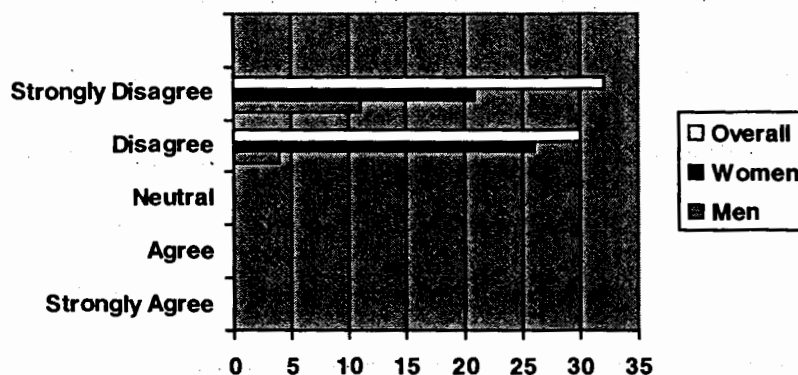
were 6 (10%) "N" responses, 37 (60%) "D" responses and 18 (29%) responded with "SD". The "SA" responses totaled at 1 (7%) and 0 men responded "A". There was one man who responded "N", 8 (53%) responded "D", and 5 (33%) that responded "SD". Similarly, the women's responses overall were not too far off from the men's responses. There were 0 women that responded with "SA" and 1 (2%) that responded "A". There were 5 (11%) "N" responses, 29 (62%) "D" responses and, finally, 13 (28%) "SD" responses.

Again, in statement 10, there is a commonality among the answers and percentage totals in the responses. As the research and survey from past years stated, women are more "reluctant" when it comes to forming mentoring relationships (Ragins). It also states that they are not as assertive and appears that for the most part, the men and the women are responding very similarly to the past 3 statements. This similarity that is constantly shown in the responses has left the author wondering if men and women are closer to the same page when it comes to initiating mentoring relationships.

The barriers that were once prevalent in the fact that women could not establish mentor relationships are not as clear in the results in this section of the survey. This idea will also be discussed further as a part of Chapter 5. Some conclusions can be made from these statements, or further research and different ways of collecting data will be suggested. As seen by the graphs, the results for these questions are very similar just by looking at the different bars and numerical results. The idea that more women are disagreeing with some of the statements is a positive aspect of the results.

Statement 11

I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of my gender

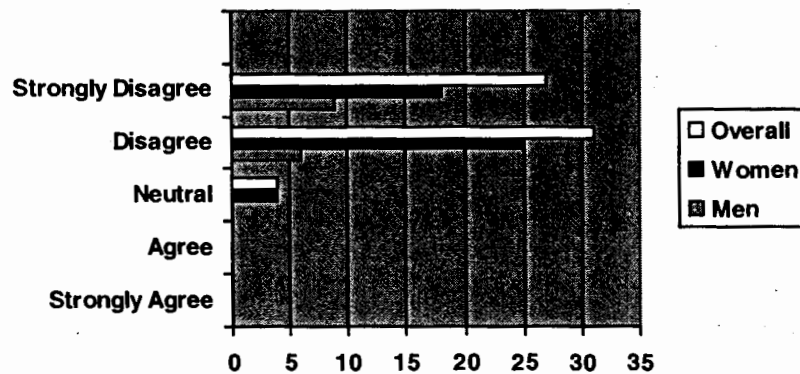


Moving along, statement 11 read: *I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of my gender.* This was very interesting to the author because there were 0 response total, both male and female for “SA”, “A” and “N”. As for the men, 4 (27%) responded “D” and 11 (73%) responded “SD”. The women were different in that there were more who responded “D”, with that totaling 26(55%) and 21 (45%) responding “SD”. By looking at the graph alone, the reader can see that there were overall responses totaling 0 for all of the “SA”, “D” and “SD” responses. This was consistent for both the men and women. It cannot be determined what the reasoning for this is per say, however, both the men and women either responded “D” or “SD” for this statement. This can reflect that neither gender will say that it is because of THEIR gender that they are not able to establish this relationship with another person. The research presented in Chapter 2

provided by Ragins refers to sexual issues. The results of this statement provide to evidence that initiating a mentor relationship is not necessarily a gender issue.

Statement 12

I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of their gender

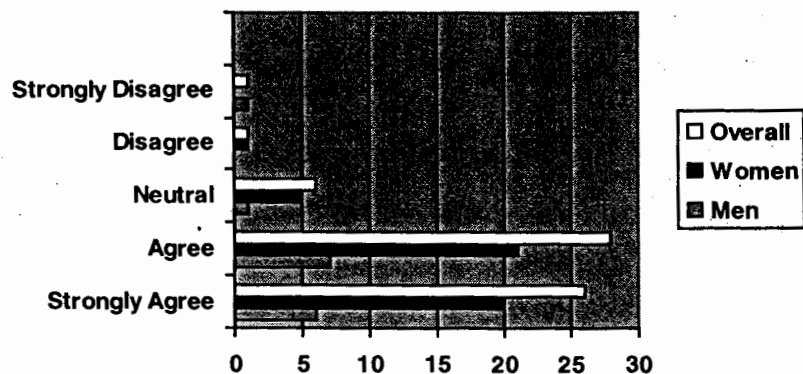


In statement 12, which was the next statement to bring up gender in the survey, it read: *I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of their gender.* The overall response showed 0 people responding "SA" and "A", while there were 4 (6%) total "N" responses. There were 31 (50%) "D" responses and 27 (44%) "SD" responses. In terms of men and women who responded, it can already be analyzed through the overall response that neither men nor the women had any agreement to this statement. For the men, there were 0 "N" responses and 6 (40%) "D" responses. There were 9 (60%) "SD" responses for the men. The women responded differently when percentages are compared. The women had 4 (9%) "N" responses, 25 (53.2%) "D" responses and 18 (38%) "SD" responses. This response for statement 12, again, refers to

sexual issues. No one agreed with this statement which can further back up the idea that gender may not have an influence on initiating a mentor relationship in regards to this group of respondents.

Statement 13

Mentors play a role in career advancement

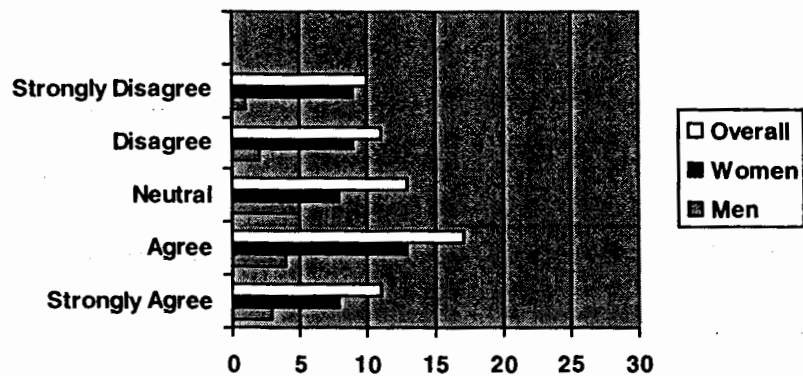


The next group of statements fell under the category “mentoring for career advancement purposes” that was found in the word document of the survey in Appendix A. Statement 13 read: *Mentors play a role in career advancement*. The overall response was largely in agreement. There were 26 (42%) total “SA” responses and 28 (45%) total “A” responses. The largest percentage of the group in fact agreed that mentoring can play a role in advancing one in their career. There were 6 (10%) who gave an “N” response and for both “D” and “SD”, there was a 1 person (2%) response.

As for making a comparison of men and women in the outcome of statement 13, the men responded with 6 (40%) total “SA” and 7 (47%) “A” responses. The total was 1 (7%) for both “N” and “SD” responses and a 0 total for the “D” responses. The women responded similarly in the fact that a majority of their responses were “SA” and “A”. There were 20 (43%) “SA” responses and these had the largest percentage for this statement. There were also 21 (45%) “A” responses which can conclude that over 80% of the females that took this survey agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring can advance one in their career. The author can compare this to the research that Catalyst did that was presented in Chapter 2. The idea for women that a mentor will play a role in career advancement can be reflected in this statement’s response.

Statement 14

I have a mentor (or more than one) and have already advanced in my career because of this relationship



In the next statement of this group, it read: *I have a mentor (or more than one) and have already advanced in my career because of this relationship*. In the overall responses, the numbers spread out pretty evenly overall but there were differences that could be seen in the

comparison of men and women. There were 11 (18%) overall "SA" responses, and 17 (27%) "A" responses. There were 11 (18%) total "SA" responses, 17 (27%) "A" responses, 13 (21%) "N" responses and 11 (18%) "D" responses. Finally, overall there were 10 (16%) "SD" responses.

The men had 3 (20%) "SA" responses, and 4 (27%) total "A" responses. They also had 5 (33%) "N" responses, 2 (13%) "D" responses and 1 (7%) "SD" response. The women's responses differed in the percentage spread in that there were 8 (17%) "SA" responses. There were 13 (28%) "A" responses for the women and 8 (17%) "N" responses. The "D" responses totaled 9 (19%) and the "SD" responses totaled 9 (19%). These results for statement 14 compliment the previous statement because while some men and women feel that mentors play a role in advancing one's career, there might not have been actual results of advancement unless there was a mentor present. This statement can reflect back on statement 1, I currently have someone I can consider as a mentor, because the numbers fit how men and women responded to this statement. There were only 26 women who said that they did have a mentor, and 20 of them agreed that this has aided in their advancement. There were 10 men that said they had a mentor and 7 stated that this has aided in their overall career advancement. This would supply information that was consistent as to who actually had a mentor (or more than one), as well as who believed this person(s) aided in helping them in their career.

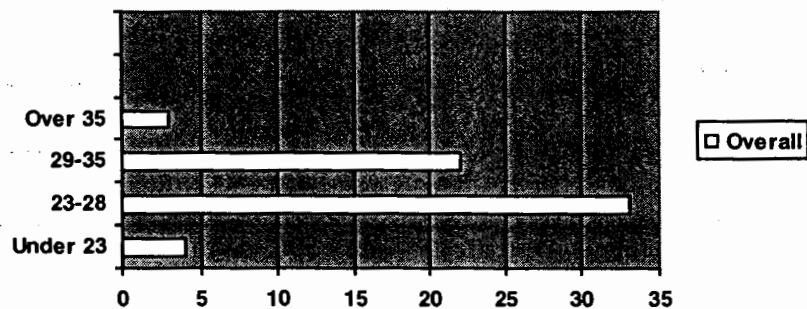
Question 15

What is your gender?

In terms of the group of questions titled “General Information”, the following results can be reported. The total respondents who were male were 15, and the total female respondents were 47. There were more women than men that responded to the survey, although the results were still clear. The author did not think it was necessary to point out this result in graph form. Although it cannot be determined why more women went to Zoomerang to take the survey, the results to the survey were still sufficient for the author to make some conclusions about mentoring.

Question 16

What is your age?



A majority of the people who took this survey, both the men and the women included; were between the ages of 23-28. This was the target age that the author would have liked the majority to be from when the survey statements were compiled. The total number of respondents

that were between the ages of 23-28 was 33 (53%). There were 4 (6%) respondents who were under 23. The total number of respondents that were between the ages of 29-35 was 22 (35%). Finally, there was a small group of respondents totaling 3 (5%) who were over the age of 35 years old.

The age of the individual was not quite as important as the gender in doing this study, however, it helped to know the total age range of the respondents because of the tendency for people to initiate mentor relationships early in their career.

Question 17

Industry that you currently work in?

The author used this as an open ended question and a variety of answers were provided by the respondents. The following chart will show grouped industries that were represented in this survey. These are not used to make any comparisons in terms of gender issues with mentoring. However, it was one of the questions as a part of the survey, so the author feels that it is necessary to show the industries for the reader to gain a perspective on the work backgrounds of the respondents.

Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations	5
Business, Consulting, Finance	21
Communications	3
Education	11

Journalism, Media	5
Student	1
Other	15
TOTAL	61

Question 18

What is your job title?

This was also an open ended question with no choices. The same was done as with industry, and a grouped chart of job titles has been provided below:

Account Management/Business Associate/ VP, Supervisor/etc..	36
Communications/PR/Journalism	6
Professor/Teacher/etc...	11
Student	1
Other	7
TOTAL	61

There were 61 total respondents who gave their job titles in the results of this survey. By providing this chart, the author was able to show the various job titles represented in the study. This will also be something to consider when making recommendations and conclusions for further research to be done on mentoring. Overall, the number of industries and job titles listed compared to the survey results provide a lot of information and openings for one to take the research further within each industry. Both totals ended at 61, providing that one person did not answer what job title they held or industry that they worked for.

Question 19

Please add any additional comments that you would like to share!

This open ended question allowed the respondents to leave any additional comments that they wanted to add about mentoring, if any. There were four total comments that were left, and they were the following:

- *“The teaching profession at the elementary level is generally made up of mostly women. Therefore, mentor-mentee relations that involve both males and females are rare.”*
- *“Mentors are essential; employers must seek out experienced employees to serve as mentors; most people are happy to share their experiences as mentors, but often they are never asked to do so!”*

- *“Having a mentor is very important, especially when you are beginning a career. Many companies do not have a mentorship program and I hear positive things about what they provide. It is a good feeling to have when you know you can go to someone for any type of career advice.”*
- *“Most of my mentoring-type relationships have blossomed from school or internships of some sort. I have a lot of people I seek advice from as it pertains to career matters, although I have difficulty labeling them as ‘mentors’. I think this is because I had a really close mentor in college that developed because I propositioned them. Very few of my current mentoring situations are quite as close as that experience.”*

These were the only four comments provided, although not known if given by a man or a woman. They each have meaning and relate to the research provided in the study. It was interesting for the author to see the comment provided by the respondent about the profession of teaching, since it is one that females are more dominant. The comments as well as the results as a whole will now be referred back to and discussed as Chapter 5. There will be conclusions and recommendations given to discuss and summarize the overall findings when compared to the research.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The author had hoped that the respondents would verify that the initiation phase of mentoring for men and women is perceived differently by women than it has been in the past. In the discussion portion of Ragins' study, women perceived that they were faced with more barriers than men. When referring to this survey, it cannot be determined if more women perceived the barriers because there was an uneven total of men and women. However, the women who participated perceive themselves as being able to overcome the stereotypical barriers that researchers of the past have listed as preventing them from initiating mentor relationships. More men, as stated in the research, are capable of initiating these mentor relationships. The author wanted to use the results of this survey to point out some areas where women perceive that they are stronger as compared to the past.

Another important aspect of the survey was that this survey touched upon the research in Chapter 2. This allowed the author to report any consistencies and inconsistencies of research applied to surveys responses. The overall results from the women respondents were positive because they were able to state that women do not perceive the barriers to initiating a mentoring relationship as they once did. The results allow the author to interpret the results as being a good example of how women are utilizing mentors for career advancement purposes. While the research provided reasons why mentors aid in career advancement, it was important for the survey to show that women felt that mentors were important for career advancement.

The author gathered research from various sources both past and present. While Ragins provided great insight about this topic, Catalyst was even more helpful when it came down to present-day information. The past research shows the initiation of mentor relationships as being more difficult for women than men. The survey results imply that women do not perceive this step in the mentoring process as tough as it may have once been.

Women today have more access to networking opportunities and are assertive enough to meet people and build relationships. They are not quite as intimidated as they may have once been because of the recent rapid advancement in business positions. Men and women who responded to the survey also acknowledged that they are assertive and their gender does not factor in when it comes to building a relationship with mentors of another gender.

When all of the survey responses were gathered and compared to the discussion of results to the Ragin's study, the author was able to see where the women have grown. The women in the 2006 survey also disagreed or strongly disagreed with statements that they once agreed or strongly agreed with in the previous survey pertaining to barriers preventing them from initiating mentoring relationships. Women today are utilizing more people, in both a formal and informal ways, to assist them in advancing in their careers. This shows the extra steps that women have taken in the past fifteen years to improve themselves professionally.

Although this is great, some recommendations would be that there should be more recent studies and research compiled on developments in mentoring and how women have been taking advantage of this as a career advancement tool. It is essential for people to see that not only are women breaking through barriers at work, but they are also realizing the importance of mentoring. As stated in the Catalyst reports, women acknowledge that mentoring opportunities aid in career advancement and this is consistent with their response on the survey. There could

be recent studies done in companies that have mentoring programs and compare the success rate of men and women in that particular organization. This study would allow even more conclusions to be drawn about specific aspects of women in business, especially within different industries.

There is no end of the road in research about any topics, especially in the changing business world that we live in. Men and women are not on the exact same level in business, but women are utilizing people and sources for rapid career development and advancement. The idea of mentoring is just as important for women as it is for men. To summarize, the author interpreted that the respondents who took the survey provided sufficient information to allow conclusions to be made about mentoring in general, as well as initiating a mentoring relationship. These main conclusions are bulleted as follows:

- The survey responses indicate that more men than women have mentors
- More women are suggested to be serious about building mentor relationships in that a greater percentage of them have more than one mentor when compared to men
- Women indicate that they are assertive in their approach to initiating mentor relationships, while they were once reluctant to engage in meeting people that were not a part of an already arranged mentor program
- Women do not agree that it is up to mentors to make the first move
- Men and women do not feel that gender plays a large role in building a relationship with a potential mentor
- Men and women both feel that mentors play a role in career advancement
- Men and women have both advanced in their careers due to having a mentor

Some other recommendations in terms of this study would have been for the author to do some interviewing of respondents to gain actual feedback and quotes on what the respondents felt about this idea of initiating a mentoring relationship. This may have proved to have been helpful because hearing the reasons why people choose the answers is a lot easier than interpreting their meaning through selected responses.

The interviews along with distributing the survey to selected ages, equal amounts of men and women and of specific industries would also be a way of further developing this study. The study could further take into consideration the many kinds of jobs and the degree to which they would require the assistance of a mentor and compare this to how these relationships are initiated by men and women. In the end, this study provided a wealth of information through research and survey responses. Further development will benefit those who wish to learn more about the perceived barriers in initiating mentoring relationships between genders.

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Appendix A: The author's survey before being placed on Zoomerang

Mentoring Survey

This survey is to assist in gathering data for a thesis project being done at Seton Hall University for completion of the Masters Program in Corporate and Public Communication. The thesis is being done on the topic of mentoring in relationship to gender, specifically the "perceived" barriers to initiating a mentoring relationship. The information collected will be used solely for the purpose of this thesis and will only take a few minutes to complete. All results will be compared to research on mentoring and the data collected will aid in analyzing and comparing research to actual results for the completion of this thesis.

Thank you for your time and assistance!

Answering for Section 1:

Y: Yes

N: No

T: True

F: False

Section 1: Mentor Status

1) I currently have someone I can consider as a mentor

Y

N

2) I have more than one mentor

Y

N

3) I have an informal mentor who does not work with me

Y

N

4) I have never had a mentor

T F

5) I have a mentor due to a formal mentoring program at work

Y N

Answering for Sections 2-5

SA: Strongly Agree

A: Agree

N: Neutral

D: Disagree

SD: Strongly Disagree

Section 2: Access to Mentors

6) I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because of a lack of opportunity to meet potential mentors

SA A N D SD

7) I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because there is a lack of a formal mentoring program at my place of work

SA A N D SD

8) I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because I am uncomfortable taking an assertive role in approaching a potential mentor

SA A N D SD

9) I am prevented from initiating a relationship with a mentor because I believe that it is up to the mentor to make the first move

SA A N D SD

10) I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me

SA A N D SD

11) I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of my gender

SA A N D SD

12) I am prevented from obtaining a mentoring relationship because potential mentors are unwilling to develop a relationship with me because of their gender

SA A N D SD

Section 5: Mentoring for Career Advancement Purposes

13) I feel that having a mentor will help me to advance in my career

SA A N D SD

14) I have a mentor and have already advanced in my career because of this person's role

SA A N D SD

General Information

15) Gender? M F

16) Age?

17) Industry you are currently a part of?

18) Job Title?

19) Additional comments on this subject that you would like to share?

