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## **Perceptions of Mentoring, Dropout Rates, School Attendance, and Academic Achievement in Core Subject Areas Among Students in the Various Branches of JROTC**

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The University of Southern Mississippi  
PERCEPTIONS OF MENTORING, DROPOUT RATES, SCHOOL ATTENDANCE,  
AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CORE SUBJECT AREAS  
AMONG STUDENTS IN THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF JROTC

by

Michael Joseph Weaver

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2012

## ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF MENTORING, DROPOUT RATES, SCHOOL ATTENDANCE,  
AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN CORE SUBJECT AREAS  
AMONG STUDENTS IN THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF JROTC

by Michael Joseph Weaver

August 2012

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of cadets in the Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTC program regarding their beliefs about mentorship and how it affects students' perceptions. Funding for education is constantly under review and programs that are considered unnecessary are facing increased scrutiny. Schools are held accountable for educating students and this accountability includes both the quality of the program provided by the district and also the commitment among students to be successful in life.

Haveman, Wolfe, and Wilson (2001) reported that graduating from high school provides benefits to society both socially and economically. Graduating from high school is but one variable that is discussed in this study; however, the research suggests that mentorship, academic achievement, and school attendance are all vital components for at-risk students. Just as students themselves report a variety of reasons for quitting school, the research literature presented in this study identified a number of factors that appeared to influence the decision.

This research study examined whether differences existed within the context of three branches of JROTC concerning the variables of school completion/dropping out, school attendance, academic achievement, and mentoring. Results from the Air Force,

Army, and Navy respondents indicate that there are no statistical differences in how students perceive these variables. Respondents viewed these school outcomes favorably, indicating that participation in a JROTC program could positively influence behaviors that pertain to these tested variables. Perceptions of mentorship ranked highest among all variables researched during this study.

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The University of Southern Mississippi

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Approved:

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Director

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Dean of the Graduate School

August 2012

## DEDICATION

This work is dually dedicated. First, to my loving and supportive wife and daughter who always allowed me the time to put together this study without question. You were always the driving force to complete this work.

Second, to the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces. Without their unwavering dedication to this great country, all that we hold true as Americans would not be. ESSAYONS!

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Each school district within this country has a unique culture and climate. The communities surrounding schools play a major role in establishing the culture and climate that students, teachers, and administrators experience and to which they contribute. It is the responsibility of leaders within the schools to implement programs that will allow students to achieve.

Individual schools and school districts often create a mission statement that helps them work toward achieving the educational goals of their communities. In doing so, they expect accountability from the students, staff, and leaders of a school district in order to achieve their mission. This accountability includes both the quality of the academic program provided by the district and also the commitment among students to be successful in life. This commitment is demonstrated by students through attending school daily, successfully completing schoolwork, and graduating.

Each branch of military service instills in its members its beliefs of what a soldier, airman, or seaman should strive to become. Although the three military services examined in this study offer separate programs, as a whole Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corp (JROTC) is a youth program designed to provide leadership opportunities for students and to educate those students in citizenship and personal growth. Similar to competition among rival sports teams, the rivalry between the various branches of military service exists to improve the JROTC student and to produce a superior product, i.e. the ideal soldier, airman, or seaman. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of cadets in the Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTC program regarding their

beliefs about mentorship and how it affects students' perceptions. It was of interest to determine if the various leadership styles and academic approaches among the three programs influence students' perceptions of academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance.

Although the JROTC program has elements of a military preparation program, its multidimensional goals include academic improvement for high school students (Glover, 2002). The number of at-risk students who enroll in the JROTC programs nationwide makes the variables of this study especially important. Coumbe, Kotakis, and Gammell (2008) estimated that nearly 40% of the high schools that offer JROTC are located in inner-city areas and about one-half of enrollees are minorities.

Mentoring and its effect on student perceptions provided the theoretical framework of this study. Although the mentoring process can be traced to the ancient Greeks and has been valued throughout subsequent history so that it is well-established process in the development of new professionals, the use of mentors with at-risk youth in modern times can be traced to the early 1990's (Freedman, 1992). Students who live in homes that lack the support and encouragement of parents or guardians often find themselves at risk of academic failure (Lamley & Johnson, 2010). In their executive summary, Jekielek, Moore, and Hair (2002) reached the same conclusions as Lamley and Johnson when they stated, "Children need positive relationships with caring adults. Parents generally fill this central need, but many children benefit from relationships with other adults to supplement – or in some cases substitute for relationships with their parents" (p. iv). The economic and social issues that face families in today's society can distract parents from the academic needs of their children. Jekielek et al. suggested that a

reason for the connection between mentoring and achievement is the students' increased sense of scholastic competence and the improved relationships between the students who participate in mentoring programs and their parents.

### Statement of the Problem

The United States Department of Education reported in October 2005 that approximately 3.5 million students age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or alternative credentials such as a General Equivalency Diploma (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). These status dropouts accounted for 9.4 % of the 36.8 million individuals that fell into this age category. The percentage fell slightly in the 2007-2008 school year when it was reported that the number of dropouts fell to eight percent (NCES, 2010). This indicates that the needs of over two million adolescents are not being met by schools (U. S. Census Bureau, 2005). MacLeod (1987) stated that if students with at-risk factors do not have appropriate intervention strategies or some type of assistance from social services, many of them perceive that the value of a high school diploma is not worth the effort needed for success in school.

Data on dropout rates vary depending on the source in which the information is gathered. Whether the datum being used is from an annual percentage rate or multi-year percentage rate does not matter; the rate of students dropping out of high school remains disturbingly high. Today, much like in the early 1990s when mentoring at-risk youth was at an infant stage, students who were not completing school was an important issue facing administrators of school districts. Dupper (1993) stated that "youth leaving school before they graduate is one of the most important social problems facing the United



States” (p. 141). Studies today focus on the failure of students to complete school as much as a social problem as when it was discussed by Dupper. One high-profile national dropout study, for example, begins by stating, “There is a high school dropout epidemic in America” (Bridgeland, DiIulio, Morison, & Civic, 2006, p. i). Whether a student failing to complete school is termed a *problem*, a *crisis*, or an *epidemic*, the large numbers of students who do not graduate from high school generate clear and widespread concern (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009).

Although it was once believed that the rate at which students were dropping out has been steady at 20%, research shows that the number of students who do not achieve their high school diploma on time is closer to 33% (Greene & Winters, 2005). The EPE Research Center (2006) reported that three in ten students do not receive diplomas. The national annual average for students dropping out of school over the period from 2004-2007 was 1 to 1.2 million students (NCES, 2007).

Poor attendance has been linked to students dropping out of school and to poor performance in school. Literature indicates that when students believe that their chances of catching up with their work are slim, the motivation to continue in school diminishes as the absences increase (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Meeker, Edmonson, & Fisher, 2009). Skipping school or individual classes was viewed by students in the Meeker et al study as one of the self-evaluated reasons for their failure. Each participant viewed his or her truancy as a poor choice (2009).

Academic achievement is often measured between states within the United States with programs such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Academic achievement is measured world-wide through assessments such as the Program

for International Student Assessment (PISA) and students within the United States are tested and ranked on knowledge of reading, mathematics and science (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). American students' reading scores showed no improvement since 2000; however, results from math and science have shown improvement since 2006 (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, and Shelley, 2010). With American students now having to compete in a global market, academic achievement has become an increasingly important variable for success in life.

How successful a student will be in life is dependent on several factors. Among those factors is regular school attendance, having academic success, and not dropping out. Each variable discussed can be viewed as dependent on the other. Research shows that regular attendance is positively related to academic achievement and if a student shows academic success, then he/she is less likely to drop out.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed through data obtained from the statistical tests used in the data analysis.

- RQ1: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive completing/dropping out of high school differently?
- RQ2: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value daily school attendance?
- RQ3: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies)?

RQ4: What are the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs?

RQ5: Do the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ with respect to the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs?

RQ6: Is there a relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance?

The research questions allowed the researcher to determine if students from the various JROTC branches have different perceptions regarding selected school performance indicators.

#### Delimitations

The following issues were acknowledged at the outset as factors that limit the generalizability of the study's results.

1. The research study included only Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTC programs based on the number of JROTC programs available in the geographical location of the researcher. Only one Marine JROTC program exists in the geographical location; this may have biased the results based on the limited number of participants in the Marine JROTC program. One goal of the research is to place emphasis on the geographical location of the Gulf States region.

2. The data used in this research study was from JROTC students only and not from a school's population as a whole.
3. The rating scale has six items. The intent of the rating scale was to give sufficient discrimination to the survey responses. This could cause some data compression based on the responses of the participants.

#### Assumptions

It was assumed that the participants would respond honestly based on their perceptions and that their responses were not influenced by a desire to influence the results of the study. It was further assumed that each person willingly volunteered to participate in this study and that participants did not fear retaliation for their perspectives. Participants were assured that at no time would responses from their individual surveys be shared with any other parties. Such assurances to the participants justify the previous two assumptions.

#### Definition of Terms

Terms relevant to this research are defined below.

*Academic achievement* - The level of performance in academic courses.

*Average daily attendance* - The total number of days of student attendance divided by the total number of days in the regular school year.

*Cadet* - A student who is enrolled in either the Army, Navy, or Air Force JROTC program.

*Cadet command* - Army headquarters located in Fort Monroe, Virginia that is responsible for supervision of all ROTC and JROTC programs.

*Character education* - An umbrella term loosely used to describe the teaching of children in a manner that will help them develop as moral, civic, good, mannered, behaved, non-bullying, healthy, critical, successful, traditional, compliant and/or socially acceptable beings.

*Compulsory schooling* - Statutes put into force by state governments that require parents to have their children go to a public or state accredited private or parochial school for a designated period.

*Department of Defense (DOD)* - The Department of Defense is the federal government department that controls all military services.

*Dropout* - A student who leaves a school at any time and for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school.

*Graduation* - The receiving or conferring of an academic degree or diploma.

*Graduation rate* - The percentage of a cohort that successfully graduated within a specific time interval.

*High School Completion Index (HSCI)* - The HSCI is used to incorporate students who finish high school through alternate programs such as the GED. The HSCI can raise or lower the accreditation rating depending on the percentage of students who actually finish the alternate programs in a particular school district.

*JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps)* - A youth development program designed to educate students for citizenship and to provide leadership opportunities for personal growth.

*Mentor* - An influential sponsor or supporter.

*Mentorship* - A developmental partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of another person.

*Non-JROTC student* - A student who does not participate in the JROTC program.

*Perception* - The belief of the mentee; what the mentee believes to be true regarding the mentoring process.

*School completion/dropping out* - While it is acknowledged that high school completion and dropping out are not statistically inverse constructs, they are used interchangeably in this study to denote the propensity of students to leave school before completion.

#### Justification

Funding for education is constantly under review and programs that are considered unnecessary are facing increased scrutiny. The effectiveness of a program justifies the funds that are required for its continued implementation. Based on the results of this study of student perceptions, school leaders in other school districts with similar demographics will have a basis for determining whether JROTC classes are worthwhile for students to choose. Although participation in JROTC programs is strictly voluntary, such findings could also be used to justify the funding and expansion of JROTC programs.

In 1991, Angrist & Krueger reported that developed countries around the world have compulsory schooling requirements, yet little is known about the effect these laws have on educational attainment and earnings. Bridgeland et al., 2006, suggested that one solution was for states to consider raising the age at which students can legally leave

school from 16 or 17 to 18. An administrator can use the results of this study to address doctrine used by JROTC instructors that emphasizes the importance of daily school attendance and to change the negative perceptions of non-JROTC students regarding attendance. The study will hopefully benefit the school by presenting leaders with options to improve Average Daily Attendance (ADA), High School Completion Index (HSCI), and graduation rates, all of which affect the assessment and accountability status of a school.

A student motivated to succeed in school enhances the learning experience for others involved in the education process. For the student to succeed academically through a well-balanced curriculum, or for an educator to motivate the student to process the lesson, a student must be present and engaged. The research questions that are addressed in this project focus on JROTC student perceptions. If perceptions are found to be statistically significant in any of the areas that will be addressed, then JROTC leaders may be provided options for improving any variable that shows positive relationships through program integration. This will allow each program to implement successful strategies from other JROTC programs to strengthen its own program. Schools also have the option to implement programs that will allow students outside the JROTC programs to achieve by incorporating techniques used by the JROTC program. If perceptions of JROTC students are not found to be statistically related to important educational outcomes, future studies can build upon the topics or ideas presented through this study.

## Summary

Student success should be the cornerstone of decisions made by today's educational leaders. Implementing programs that are effective, including student mentoring is one way to meet the challenges that educators face on a daily basis. If psychologists are correct in their belief that people can be influenced as a result of relationships with significant others, mentoring may be shown to be an important influence on students' behavior.

The rate at which students are dropping out of high school remains alarmingly high. Accountability issues force administrators to take into account the issues of why students continue to drop out of school. Students' self-esteem when dealing with academic failure sometimes gives students a feeling of hopelessness, therefore causing attendance to decrease. Students who show low levels of achievement gravitate to less prestigious employment, lower wages, and poorer housing conditions. The three variables of dropping out, academic achievement, and attendance could be considered to be linked into one continual cycle.

Mentorship programs require administrators with a vision who believe that the integration of such ideas will cultivate higher levels of self-esteem. Since the inception of the JROTC program, generations of high school students have experienced some type of mentorship that has influenced their lives either positively or negatively. The purpose of this study was to contribute to the research literature about mentorship and its effects on JROTC students. The study also sought to determine if the various leadership styles and academic approaches among the three programs influence students' perceptions of academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance.



Chapter II establishes a theoretical framework for the proposed research and provides a review of literature pertinent to this study. The review first addresses the framework that this study is based upon, which focuses largely upon mentorship. The framework is followed by background information associated with the JROTC programs and the chapter concludes with a thematic review of research literature that addresses the variables of academic achievement, dropping out of high school, mentoring, and school attendance.

## CHAPTER II

### PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of Chapter II is to examine literature that is pertinent to the study. The chapter consists of an introduction, theoretical framework, background information on JROTC programs, pertinent research and professional perspectives, and a summary. To frame the context of this study, this chapter begins with an overview of the background of the JROTC program as a whole and the lineage of each program discussed in this study. Then, this chapter reviews how mentorship provides insight into how perceptions shape student experiences. This construct is critical for students who are at-risk of failure and to understanding the factors that are contributing to their experiences in school. Finally, this chapter reviews pertinent research and professional perspectives on the variables of high school completion/dropping out, school attendance, and academic achievement.

Research that has been compiled over the years referencing academic achievement, dropout rates, mentoring, and attendance of high school students is abundant. However, how each variable influences the other is not so widely available. This review begins by discussing mentorship and how it may influence each of the aforementioned variables. Although mentoring is not a new concept, the perceptions that JROTC students have regarding mentorship is worth further investigation.

The philosophical debate continues over whether JROTC programs should be offered in public schools (Lipman & Haines, 2007). JROTC does not develop Army reserve officers and it is a far stretch from being a military training corps. Students do not inherit a military service obligation and are not part of the JROTC programs beyond

their enrollment. The JROTC program serves at-risk students and its stated goals are improving academic achievement and promoting self-confidence to prevent students from dropping out of school.

### Background

The present JROTC program evolved from a time when service in the military was compulsory for many young American males. The JROTC program can trace its beginning to 1827 when a former superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, Captain Alden Partridge, opened a military preparatory school in Norwich, Vermont. He believed in the concept of a citizen soldier and wanted to prepare young men for higher education and a possible military career (Coumbe & Harford, 1996). The *citizen-soldier* concept is based on the notion that citizens have the obligation to arm themselves to defend their communities or nations from foreign invaders and from domestic tyrants (Pema & Mehay, 2009).

The first JROTC program was started in 1911 but was not recognized by the government until the National Defense Act of 1916 (Zwartzs, 1987). The primary focus of these early JROTC programs consisted of instructional content that remains much the same today. Marksmanship, hygiene, physical training, military drill and ceremony, and customs and courtesies were the cornerstone of educating the young men for their future duties as citizens (Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, n. d.).

America's involvement in World War II ended in 1945 and the need for military personnel decreased. Governmental cost cutting measures were enacted and from 1947 until the enactment of the ROTC Vitalization Act of 1964, the Department of the Army prohibited further JROTC growth because of shortages in personnel and lack of ability to

meet the increasing costs of the JROTC program (Junior Reserve Training Corp, 1999). American involvement in the Vietnam War in 1962 generated ideas of eliminating the program as a cost-cutting measure in the Department of Defense (Coumbe & Harfold, 1996).

To continue to operate JROTC programs around the world in 1963, there was a need for at least 700 active-duty personnel at a cost of \$4.7 million. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara ordered a reassessment of defense spending, including expenditures for JROTC (Walls, 2003). A program named the National Defense Cadet Corps (NDCC) had the same objectives as JROTC but cost less than \$100,000 per year to operate (Junior Reserve Training Corp, 1999). Cost-cutting measures enacted by the government during this time influenced the decision to drastically cut JROTC funding. JROTC units that were already established in high schools were funded only if they showed a distinctly military curriculum. All other JROTC units were to be converted to NDCC units. Although these units were being converted, the NDCC would never be as widely accepted as the JROTC programs because the NDCC programs required schools to pay for items that the cost would have been shared by the federal government under the JROTC program (Durden, 2008). In 1964 Congress passed the ROTC Revitalization Act that provided additional funding for the JROTC program and new opportunities for women to enroll in the JROTC programs (Department of Defense Directive 1205.13, 2006).

It is estimated that total federal and state funds used to support the current JROTC programs is \$600 million annually. The funds support over 500,000 students in 3,400 schools (Department of Defense, 2008). The program services many at-risk and

disadvantaged students. These programs are attractive to many school districts not only because of the federal subsidy, which covers approximately 40% of the program cost, but also because of the potential for cognitive and non-cognitive skill gains by participating students (Denver Public Schools, 1996).

Department of Defense regulations state the parameters for a high school to qualify for the establishment of a JROTC unit. Department of Defense regulations prescribe that no unit may be established or maintained at an institution unless:

1. The number of physically fit students in such unit who are in a grade above the 8th grade and are citizens or nationals of the United States, or aliens lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, is not less than (1) 10% of the number of students enrolled in the institution who are in a grade above the 8th grade, or (2) 100, whichever is less;
2. The institution has adequate facilities for classroom instruction, storage of arms and other equipment that may be furnished in support of the unit, and adequate drill areas at or in the immediate vicinity of the institution as determined by the Secretary of the Army;
3. The institution provides a course of military JROTC instruction of not less than three academic years' duration as prescribed by the Secretary of Army;
4. The institution agrees to limit membership in the unit to students who maintain acceptable standards of academic achievement and conduct as prescribed by the Secretary of the Army; and
5. The unit meets other requirements as may be established by the Secretary of the Army (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp Section 2031, n.d).

The leadership and training manual provided to first year JROTC students states that the mission of the JROTC is “to motivate young people to be better citizens” (Department of Army, 1997, p. 5). This mission encourages students to make the commitment to obtain the needed skills to be successful in life by attending school daily, successfully completing school work, and graduating.

Many school systems within the nation have implemented character education programs, which has become somewhat of a nationwide movement (Milson, 2000). The article “Army’s Junior ROTC Program Builds Character and High-Calibre Capability,” a publication of the Character Education Partnership, describes the manner in which the JROTC program instills character in students (Character Education, 2001). An integral part that encompasses the JROTC program is the teaching of core values and the development of character. Bartlett and Lutz (1998) stated that JROTC is no longer job training for the military but has a life skills curriculum that is particularly effective with at-risk students. The impact of character education curricula in the past has been measured by decreases in office referrals for discipline infractions (Prestwich, 2002). This is only one aspect of character.

#### Army JROTC (JROTC)

The United States Army operates the largest and oldest JROTC program, which has approximately 1,645 units worldwide and enrolls over 286,000 cadets (JROTC White Paper, 2010). The average unit size is approximately 150 cadets commanded by two instructors. The National Defense Act of 1916 created the United States Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC). The official Army JROTC website states:

Under the provisions of the Act, high schools were authorized the loan of federal

military equipment and the assignment of active duty military personnel as instructors. In 1964, the Vitalization Act enacted JROTC to include other services. In addition, it replaced most of the active duty instructors with retirees who worked for and were cost-shared by the schools. Title 10 of the U. S.. Code declares that the purpose of Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps is to instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the value of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment. (Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, n. d.)

Curriculum instruction focuses on citizenship, leadership, physical education, and communication. State-of-the-art tools are used for the delivery of instructional content and delivery is focused on student-centered participatory learning. The U. S. Army states that its curriculum is aligned with the National Educational Goals, the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, and the President's Summit (U. S. Army Cadet Command, 2010).

#### Air Force JROTC (AFJROTC)

The AFJROTC program was established by federal law in 1964; the statute can be found in Title 10, U. S.. Code, Chapter 102. It is the second largest of the JROTC programs with approximately 609 units worldwide. The AFJROTC falls under the command and control of the commander of the air education and training command at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. The following information was obtained from the AFJROTC website. It states:

AFJROTC provides leadership training and an aerospace science program for high school students. Secondary school students who enroll in the AFJROTC

program are offered a wide variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities. The program explores the historic and scientific aspects of aerospace technology and teaches high school students self-reliance, self-discipline, and other characteristics found in good leaders. AFJROTC is open to 9th through 12th grade students who are citizens of the United States. The program is not an official recruiting tool for the military services and those students who participate in AFJROTC do not incur any obligation to the Air Force. The objectives of the Air Force Junior ROTC program are to educate and train high school cadets in citizenship and life skills, promote community service, and instill a sense of responsibility, character, and self-discipline through education and instruction in air and space fundamentals and the Air Force's core values. (Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, n. d.)

#### Navy JROTC (NJROTC)

The NJROTC program was established by federal law in 1964; this statute can be found in Title 10, U. S. Code, Chapter 102. NJROTC is the third largest JROTC program with approximately 435 units. The instructors of the program are retired officers and enlisted personnel from the Naval Services of the Department of Defense. NJROTC falls under the command and control of the chief of naval education and training in Pensacola, Florida. The NJROTC accredited curriculum emphasizes citizenship and leadership development. The official NJROTC website states that the Navy's JROTC Program has:

Additional content included are maritime heritage, the significance of sea power, and other pertinent naval topics such as the fundamentals of naval operations, seamanship, navigation and meteorology. Classroom instruction is augmented



throughout the year by extra-curricular activities of community service, academic, athletic, drill and orienteering competitions, field meets, flights, visits to naval sites, marksmanship sports training, and physical fitness training. Electronic classroom equipment, textbooks, uniforms, educational training aids, travel allowance, and a share of instructors' salaries are provided by the Navy (Navy JROTC: What is NJROTC?, n. d.).

### *Global Research Context*

Improving school attendance and reducing dropout rates are important factors when discussing the importance of mentoring programs. Previous reference has been made to sluggish growth in academic achievement among American students. The absence of a common metric across the country for gauging student performance, concerns about international competitiveness, and perceived shortfalls in current systems of student assessment have prompted states to band together to generate common standards and assessments through an initiative called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The CCSS assessments will be implemented in volunteering states in the 2014-2015 school year (Loveless, 2011). Students in participating states will be tested for the first time and those states will have a standardized teaching curriculum that will evaluate student academic progress with common metrics (U. S. Department of Education, n. d.). The CCSS will give school systems a basis upon which to judge individual student achievement and school performance across the country. To date the only states that have not adopted the CCSS are Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia (Common Core States Standards Initiative, n.d.). Currently the impacts of the Common

Core standards are not known, but what is known is that these new standards will increase rigor, depths of knowledge, and content – all at a time when concerns about student attendance, performance, motivation, and persistence are heightened.

Haveman et al. (2001) reported that graduating from high school provides benefits to society both socially and economically. Youth that graduate from high school earn higher wages and have lower rates of teen parenthood. Haveman et al. also report that “children of parents who graduate from high school are far more likely to graduate from high school than are children of parents without high school degrees” (p. 143).

In 2004 there were 27,819,000 18-24-year-olds in the United States. 21,542,000 (78%) had either graduated from high school, earned a GED, completed some college, or earned an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. The balance, 6,277,000 (22%), had not yet completed high school” (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005).

The reasons for students not finishing high school are numerous, but for whatever the reason may be, the local, state, and national government cannot continue to pay for 22% of its population not finishing high school.

According to the United States Department of Labor, the average unemployment rate for age group eighteen through twenty-four is 20.3% (U. S. Department of Labor, 2011). Eighteen and nineteen year olds showed the highest rate at 24.7% (2011). As the amount of jobs that require low levels of education become scarcer in the United States, remaining in school to gain a high school education and achieving higher academic success in higher level degrees of education is becoming critical.

Mark Tucker (2011) stated that countries with populations that receive high wages recognized that “it is impossible to justify high relative wages for skills that are no greater than those offered by people in parts of the world who are willing to work for less; we are all competing with each other now” (p. 5). Global competition now affects most individuals in the population entering the work force. In a world that has these kinds of growing expectations, students who do not attend school, do not achieve the necessary skills needed to compete in a global market, and do not stay in school are at a significant economic disadvantage.

Student performance is not the only issue facing schools. Teacher qualifications and performance have come under scrutiny with the increased expectations set by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB required that all teachers who teach in core subject areas be highly qualified by the 2005-2006 school year (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). *Highly qualified* is a term used in the NCLB language that defines the minimum requirements that teachers need in order to teach in schools that receive Title 1 funding. Title 1 is defined as:

Title 1 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (formerly known as ECIA, ESEA or Chapter 1) is the largest federally funded educational program. This program, authorized by Congress, provides supplemental funds to school districts to assist schools with the highest student concentrations of poverty to meet school educational goals (U. S. Department of Education, 2011).

NCLB focuses on putting qualified teachers in the classroom. Sandra Feldman, President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), stated in a speech given at the White House in 2001 that You can’t teach what you don’t know well (Feldman, 2001).

Additional research has indicated that teachers will be more effective in the classroom if they know the subject matter they will teach (Monk, 1994).

The depth of knowledge that an educator has is not the only variable being taken into consideration when dealing with today's youth. Educator codes of ethics and standards of conduct are also being established to better serve students. In January, 2011, Mississippi revised the established code from 1998; a section of the code describes the educator/student relationship. The Mississippi Department of Education website states the following about Standard 4 of the Mississippi Code of ethics:

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

4.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students
2. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic potential of all students
3. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
4. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students. (Mississippi Department of Education, 2011)

Literature presented throughout this literature review suggests that JROTC programs and its leadership focus on standards of the Mississippi Code. By placing the mentoring of

and advocacy for students in the code of ethics, education policymakers in Mississippi indicate that such support for Mississippi students is a priority.

With the increased standards and performance expectations that face youth across the nation, mentor programs may play an increased role in helping student face the new challenges. Increased attendance may result in students remaining academically engaged and reducing dropout rates over time. With an increase in attendance, the students should have increased exposure to the new curriculum that will be standardized throughout the nation. As students benefit from increased exposure to the academic material, an increase in achievement scores may follow.

#### Theoretical Framework

The question of whether differences exist between students' perceptions of academic achievement, high school dropout rate, and daily attendance in the various military services were answered through the research gathered on each variable. The theoretical framework for this study will be the elements that are integral to the construct of mentorship. The concept of mentoring dates back to early civilization. According to Carruthers (1993), the term *mentor* has its roots based in Greek mythology and Homeric legend. The belief is that Odysseus entrusted the care of his son Telemachus to Mentor, the son of Alcimus, and Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Mentor and Athena were to prepare Telemachus to become the future king.

Mentoring of high school students by influential senior sponsors in the community has continued in this powerful tradition. Although the mentoring process has found its way into business organizations and educational environments, defining the process of mentoring is difficult. The mentoring process takes on a variety of forms.

Because of this absence of an agreed upon defined term, research has produced confusing studies loosely associated within the concept of mentoring.

Jacobi (1991) stated that research literature is accumulating on the mentoring process in the absence of an overall accepted definition. Due to the lack of an overall accepted definition, Jacobi reported that a mentoring relationship has five general characteristics that have been agreed upon by most researchers. The first focuses on achievement or acquisition of knowledge. The second idea consists of three components: emotional and psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modeling. The third idea is that of reciprocal benefit; both mentor and mentee derive emotional or tangible benefits. The next idea is personal in nature and involves direct interaction between the mentor and the mentee. The fifth and final characteristic described by Jacobi emphasizes the mentor's greater experience, influence, and achievement within a particular organization. Each of the five characteristics can be found in most research and is used by researchers to guide their studies.

Kram (1983) formed the foundation for Jacobi's fifth characteristic when he stated that mentoring can be defined as the interpersonal exchange between a knowledgeable colleague (mentor) and a less qualified colleague (protégé). This exchange is where the mentor helps the protégé with career progression and personal development. While it is typically perceived that the mentee is the beneficiary of such a relationship, a constructive mentoring experience can mold mentors into effective leaders. Hattie (2009) addressed mentorship as a form of peer tutoring. Hattie understood that in normal circumstances an older person, usually an adult, provided the needed assistance in social and academic situations.

Several elements are shared between mentoring functions and transformational leadership (Scandura & Williams, 2004). Burns (1978) introduced transformational leadership as a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of “raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20). Mentors, who are also effective leaders serving as role models for protégés, develop the protégés leadership skills through the social learning process (Bandura, 1997; Day, 2000; Yukl, 2001).

Kram (1985) outlined two types of mentoring functions served by mentors. The first function is career functions. Career function mentoring includes the sponsorship, coaching, exposure and visibility, protection, and challenging work assignments of the protégés. The second function is psychosocial functions. This function includes acceptance and confirmation, counseling, role modeling, and friendship. The role of the mentor goes beyond teaching the required job skills to the protégé. Because of this, mentor functions are categorized into the above mentioned broad categories (Kram, 1985).

Career function mentoring is a process in which the protégé learns the basics of an organization from a more experienced team member. Kram (1985) states that the protégé’s success can depend on the power and position the mentor holds within the organization. Any support that the protégé may need for advancement within the organization is provided by the mentor. Because the protégé is provided with exposure and visibility by the mentor, the protégé’s relationships with key leaders of the organization are enhanced, thereby presenting opportunities that may have otherwise been overlooked.

Psychosocial functions include the interpersonal aspects of the mentoring process (Kram, 1985). An emotional bond is established through positive interaction between the mentor and the protégé. The personal development and growth of the protégé must be foremost on the mind of the mentor to fully be vested in the mentor process. In becoming fully vested with the protégé, the mentor assists the protégé in developing a better sense of self-confidence both professionally and personally (Kram, 1985).

Research has shown that career functions and psychosocial functions benefit protégés, mentors, and organizations in many ways (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Noe, 1988; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003). Erikson (1978) saw the mentoring process as beneficial to the mentor in midlife, as it can be stimulating, challenging, and rewarding; it can also confirm self-worth through increased visibility in the organization. The personal and professional goals of mentored protégés tend to be higher than non-mentored personnel and mentored protégés have stronger intentions to stay with an organization (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Allen et al. (2004) also states that mentored protégés feel less stressed in general.

Rhodes (2002, 2005) suggests that mentoring may affect youth in three interrelated processes. The first process focuses on enhancing a youth's social relationships and emotional well-being. The opportunities to escape from the daily stresses may be improved by this process by offering fun alternatives to everyday problems usually faced by the youth. By improving these relationships, mentored youth who typically contend with disadvantages and difficult circumstances may experience more welcome and enjoyable experiences. The first process may also give mentored youth assistance with emotion regulation. Keller (2005) suggests that mentors offer



perspectives, advice, and suggestions that might otherwise be overlooked if that same help were being offered by a parent.

The second process proposed by Rhodes was to improve youth's cognitive skills through instruction and conversation. Several mechanisms may contribute to cognitive development to include being exposed to new learning opportunities, promoting success through academics, and providing guidance and intellectual challenges to youth. Teachers are thought to play a major role in facilitating the cognitive development of youth (Vygotsky, 1978). Educational literature suggests that positive perceptions of teacher-student relationships may be associated with increases in academic achievement (Goodenow, 1992; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003).

The third process involves promoting positive identity development through having the mentor serve as a role model and advocate to the mentee. Mentors may contribute to shifting a mentee's conception of both their current identity and future identity by serving as a role model. Because lower and middle income youth have limited contact with positive role models outside of their immediate family, mentors in the school system may help youth by opening doors to educational or occupational opportunities (McLaughlin, 2000).

Researchers also categorize mentorship as formal and informal (Raggins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Informal mentoring relationships are categorized as responses to the psychological needs of the protégés or the developmental needs of the mentor. Kram (1985) saw that relationships that fit into this category emerge spontaneously through a mutual identification of the mentor and mentee without outside involvement of an organization. Raggins and Cotton (1999) noted that both mentor and protégé considered

the informal relationship as meaningful and effective when founded on the basis of mutual interests.

In direct contrast to the informal mentoring approach is formal mentoring. This process forms mentoring relationships introduced by organizational interventions, often in the form of pairing the mentor with the protégés. Pairing methods are based on availability of mentors and other attributes such as demographics (Kram, 1985; Raggins et al., 2000). Douglas (1997) reported that formal relationships are short in duration, usually no more than one year. Informal relationships last for longer periods of time, from three to six years. The main distinction between these two types of mentoring is that formal mentoring involves some type of voluntary assignment, whereas informal mentoring develops naturally and spontaneously (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992).

Mentoring research shows that in the military context, mentor satisfaction increases as the amount of mentoring functions increase (Allen et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). These findings help justify the formal mentoring process in JROTC programs. Two types of studies that are prevalent involve specific mentoring outcomes and research concerned with examination of the mentoring process itself and how it is perceived by participants.

Mentors have many roles in the lives of the students whom they impact. Children need positive experiences in their lives and mentors can fill the void that may be left due to an absent parent. Dondero (1997) stated that “mentors represent a commitment to values, and they promote a sense of personal worth, foster self-realization, help broaden opportunities, and assist in making intelligent choices” (p. 881). Curtis and Hansen-Schwoebel (1999) concluded that mentoring can reduce the number of absences, help

students to develop more positive attitudes about attending school, and make these students less likely to repeat a grade. Today, as in the late 1990s, mentoring has been discussed as a strategy for positive youth development and as a deterrent of risky youth behavior and as a way to improve the academic adjustment, retention, and success in school (DuBois & Karcher, 2005).

### Pertinent Research and Professional Perspectives

There has been very limited data that suggests a correlation between participation in JROTC and measures of student behavior and performance. Due to the lack of studies in this area, there is a need for research to investigate whether participation in JROTC makes a difference in perceptions of academic achievement, dropping out, and regular attendance in school.

### Mentoring

There is not a great deal of research that provides insight into whether the mentoring process actually impacts absences, grades, or overall dropout rate. Current literature indicates that factors that contribute to student decisions to drop out of school include absences and poor academic performance (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Balfanz & Legters, 2010; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Dube & Orpinas, 2009; Meeker et al. 2009). Past studies have found that factors such as mentoring, having students participate in extra-curricular activities, and intervention counseling help at-risk students remain in school (Eckstein & Wolpin, 1999; Epstein, 1992; Langbein & Snider, 1999; Rossi 1995). Rhodes (2005) suggests that mentoring shows promise for improving healthy decision-making on the part of youth; however, if the mentoring process is inconsistent or problematic, more harm than good may occur.

When conducting research on group mentoring, Herrera, Vang, and Gale (2002) suggest that individual mentoring may produce the best results in order to build a strong one-on-one relationship between mentoring pairs. However, a group format seems to produce better results in promoting positive peer interactions. In both cases, positive outcomes are possible when young people are engaged in high quality mentoring relationships. Literature indicates that by having mentoring relationships, student achievement and attendance rates increase, while dropout rates decrease (Dappen & Iserhagen, 2005; Lampley & Johnson, 2010; Rhodes & Grossman, 2000; Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2009).

Herrera (1999) suggested that early research has indicated that strong mentoring relationships can develop in the school environment. In order to further this bond, two principles must be present. First, the mentor and mentee should engage in social activities as well as academic activities. This will build a trust between them that is needed for further development of their relationship. Second, the school staff and administration should give strong support to the mentoring pair. Having support from the staff and administration will ensure that any problems faced by the mentor will have the proper backing when he/she deals with administrative issues.

Student scheduling is one issue that programs such as JROTC programs face when matching upperclassmen mentors with underclassmen mentees. A study by Howard and Smith-Goodwin (2010) stated that at Wilmington College, the Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) did show some success using student-to-student mentoring. Due to the issues that they faced with scheduling conflicts, students were placed in mentoring cohorts consisting of two seniors, two juniors, two to four

sophomores, and four to six freshmen. By assigning students to these cohorts, the college helped to ensure that underclassmen could be mentored at any given time without scheduling conflicts. The ATEP grew two to three percent during the next three years on a campus that had seen a drop in overall enrollment.

Campbell and Campbell (1997) conducted a study of faculty and students from a university on the west coast. The research focused on dropout rate of mentored students compared to that of non-mentored students. The study's hypothesis that the dropout rate for the mentored students would be lower than the rate for those in the matched control group was accepted. The dropout numbers in this study accounted for forty students out of 339 who might otherwise have dropped out of school. The results also showed a higher GPA for mentored students (2.45 vs. 2.29), more units completed per semester (9.33 vs. 8.49), along with the lower dropout rate (14.5% vs. 26.3%). Although this study was conducted with students at the university level, the statistics show that the dropout rate was lowered and GPAs were improved by using mentors.

In the article "Keeping Kids on Track," Fergisun (2004) states that the program *Pathways*, which was established in a local community health centre in Toronto near Mandela Park, uses mentoring to decrease absenteeism. Shortly after the implementation of the Pathways program, school absenteeism decreased by fifty percent in Regent Park, a high school located in the same area as Mandela Park. More students passed courses since the decrease in absenteeism lowered the amount of at-risk students in the student population.

Jekielek et al. (2002) concluded in a synthesis of mentoring programs conducted for the Edna McConnel Clark Foundation that:

Generally, significant positive effects increase as a mentoring relationship endures. Analyses of mentoring programs show that, compared with non-mentored youth, mentored youth in relationships lasting more than twelve months felt more confident about doing their schoolwork, skipped fewer school days, had higher grades, and were less likely to start using drugs or alcohol (2002).

Their conclusion is evident in many of the mentor programs already in place across the nation.

### Dropouts

Not only does the student dropout rate affect money that is allocated for schools, but research shows that dropouts are also an economic concern for the country. The term *dropout rate* became a meaningful way to describe the percentage of students dropping out of high school in the 1960s. A high school education earlier in the century had not been highly valued by many students. As long as there was a demand for unskilled labor, a high school diploma for most youths was not a requirement for obtaining a job (Dorn, 1996).

Dropouts tend to have certain common characteristics. Ten characteristics were found by Kronick and Hargis (1998) during interviews that were conducted with incarcerated males involved in the community Alternative to Prison Project in Knoxville, TN. Although the participants in the study were of various race, gender, and socio-economic status, the typical inmate was 25 years of age, an alcoholic or drug user, had quit school after the ninth grade, and was reading at the third grade level. The 10 characteristics defined by Kronick and Hargis in descending order of importance are:

*Academic ability* – Dropouts received poor grades and low standardized test scores.

*Age* – Dropouts were two years older than grade peer groups.

*Socioeconomic status* – Money makes a difference and not having it raises dropout risk.

*Race* – Minorities drop out more than whites.

*Gender* – Males drop out more than females.

*Family* – Dropouts have a family trend of not finishing high school.

*Locus of control* – Dropouts feel destined to drop out.

*School social status* – Dropouts tended to not being involved in school activities.

*Peer group* – Dropouts were part of the truancy and dropout group.

*Self concept* – Dropouts have a low self-esteem and self-confidence (p.65).

Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) concluded that school dropouts impact social welfare and unemployment compensation, as well as crime and prison costs. The personal and social costs of students dropping out of high school are high. A study by Toby (1999) stated that many students merely marked time by staying enrolled in school because they would not have anything better to do if they withdrew from school.

Research focused on students in the ninth grader indicates that this grade is one of the most challenging times in a student's educational journey. Ninth grade is the transition year for many students and one of the first years that high stakes testing directly affects graduation (Fulk, 2003; McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). The new academic demands and the desire to fit into the new social environment can lead to

stresses that cause a student to perceive high school in a negative light. Jerald (2006) illustrated the issues faced by freshmen in the conclusion of his study for Achieve, Inc. He discussed the changes that students encounter when they transition from elementary to middle and finally to high school. With every transition come new and more challenging obstacles that range from a larger school environment to less supportive teachers.

Dropout intervention for ninth graders could recapture an estimated \$1.9 billion in social welfare and unemployment compensation, as well as crime and prison costs, in a matter of years (Wehlage et al., 1989). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009) estimated that if the student dropouts from the class of 2009 had stayed in school and graduated, 335 billion dollars would be added to the nation's economy over the lifetime of these non-graduates. The Alliance warned that if the number of dropouts is not reduced over the next decade 12 million students will be added to the dropout rolls, costing the nation's economy three trillion dollars (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007).

Not only does dropping out reduce HSCI and graduation rates for schools, it is also a financial burden on society. When discussing the declining American high school graduation rate, Heckman and LaFontaine (2007) stated that the high school graduation rate is a barometer of the health of American society and the skill level of its future workforce. Due to dropouts being more likely to receive government support through social services, an additional 800,000 dollars over a dropout's lifetime can be subtracted from the government coffers (Vernez, Krop, & Rydell, 1999).



Students who drop out are less likely to be employed than those who do graduate. According to the article, “Straight A’s: Public Education’s Policy and Progress,” from the Alliance for Excellent Education, “In July 2009, the unemployment rate for dropouts was 15.4 percent, compared to 9.4 percent for graduates, 7.9 percent for individuals with some college credits or an associate’s degree, and 4.7 percent for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher” (p. 1). There was a 51.7% employment rate for dropouts versus 70.7% for high school graduates in 1999 based on the current census data. Students who drop out are less likely to work year-round and full-time. Only 33.4% of dropouts work year-round and full-time. The rate is 52.4% for high school graduates. Students who drop out earn substantially less than those who graduate. Dropouts earned 65.2% of the wages of the average U. S. worker; those who graduated earned 83.5% (U. S.. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, 2005). Previous mention has been made of the disproportionate number of dropouts being represented among those who are incarcerated.

Bridgeland et al. (2006) report that the reasons that students leave school early range from having to deal with academics to family issues that cause them to spend more time at a job or actually becoming a parent themselves. If the motivation to drop out from school is solely driven by the dislike for the school or for personal reasons, students are more likely to gravitate toward unstructured peer socialization and create a source of new criminal opportunities (Haynie & Osgood, 2005; Osgood & Anderson, 2004). Princiotta and Reyna (2009) reported that students dropping out of high school not only affect their own future in a negative way, but they are also changing the climates of the communities in which they live. Employers being unable to find applicants who are

qualified to fill positions directly affect community development by limiting potential investors into said community.

High school youth who are at risk of dropping out of school can benefit from the mentoring process. Smink (1990) states that dropouts often cite the absence of anyone who cared about them as one of the primary reasons for leaving school. Lefkowitz (1989) found that youths who overcame the attraction of street life were influenced by adults who showed interest in their lives. Research shows that dropouts are a drain on our nation's economy and states are having an increasingly difficult time providing for the burden of social programs that this portion of the population is placing on them. The mentoring of youth by successful individuals may provide the needed self-confidence that at-risk youth need to remain in school and become successful, productive members of society.

#### Attendance

One of the most persistent problems facing administrators in schools around the country is student truancy (Levin-Epstein, 2002). Truancy may be operationally defined as the habitual engagement in unexcused absences from school (Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett, & Wilson, 2007). Because tracking and reporting unexcused absences is very difficult, the total number is often difficult to determine. Garry (1996) suggests that up to 30% of students in urban area high schools are absent every day. This is higher than the 5.5% to 20% reported by Bell, Rosen, and Dylnacht (1994).

A report was conducted by Allensworth and Easton on 20,803 students from the Chicago public schools. In their report, they found absenteeism to be a cause for concern. Students who missed five to nine days of school during the ninth grade year had

a 63% rate of graduation compared to 87% for those who missed five days or less (Allenswoth & Easton, 2007).

Socioeconomic status (SES) may play a role in absentee rate. Attwood and Croll (2006) suggested that students from high-SES families have a lower rate of absenteeism than students from low and medium-SES families. It is suggested that this lower rate in truancy is directly related to the parents in the high-SES level being much more involved in their children's education. Teasley (2004) adds to this research by explaining that parents who are able to spend more time with their children, developing cognitive capacities, teaching responsible behavior, and encouraging academic achievement have children who will stay in school. Students who are assigned to large schools that are located in low-income districts have a higher absence rate than those who attend suburban and rural school systems (Brady, Balmer, & Phenix, 2007; Teasley, 2004)

DeKalb (1999) noted that student absenteeism is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment. DeKalb also noted that truancy is ranked among the top ten problems facing schools. Guare and Cooper (2003) surveyed 230 middle school and high school students and found that almost 30% of them deliberately miss school, 10% were often truant, and more than half sometimes skipped classes. Because of the difficulties that school districts have in tracking and reporting these absences, the rate of unexcused absences for students may be higher than what is reported.

Guare and Cooper (2003) also stated that students who miss school often are more likely to have worse grades than those who have high attendance simply because they have fewer opportunities to learn. Truancy has been reported to affect students as early

as first grade (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004).

McCluskey, Bynum, and Patchin (2004) concluded that truancy is a characteristic of students who drop out of school.

Studies are limited as far as the effectiveness of mentoring programs on attendance is concerned. McPartland and Nettles (1991) found that at-risk students who were involved in Project Raise improved their attendance in school. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) is one of many mentoring programs that has been studied that shows indications that mentoring of youth improves attendance and class participation (Herrera, 2004). Herrera (2004) also states that attendance problems begin to occur in children at the middle school years (grades 6-8). In elementary school, the child's parents are the primary reason for absenteeism; it is believed that when a child reaches middle school, attendance becomes dependent on the youth's attitude (2004).

#### Academic Achievement

Since the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, academic achievement has become an educational touchstone that requires educators to define how their jobs and programs impact students' academic growth and contribute to a school's overall success. One issue that has arisen during this study is that there is no single definition of the term *academic achievement*. The definition of academic achievement varies among educators, policymakers, and other educational stakeholders. For the purpose of this study academic achievement is defined as the level of performance in academic courses.

Participation in JROTC has been shown to improve some aspects of academic achievement. The Department of Education and the Defense Department co-sponsored a

program called *A Federal-Local Partnership for Serving At-Risk youth* in which an attempt was made to combine military style discipline, leadership, and extracurricular activities and the idea of work-based learning of the career academy (Hanser & Robyn, 2000). Elliott, Hanser, and Gilroy (2002) found few differences between the students who attended the JROTC Partnership Academies and students who attended other career academies. However, JROTC Partnership Academies did show differences which included improved attendance, grades, and graduation rates.

Academic achievement and mentoring have been researched with conflicting results. A study by Torrance (1984) concluded that men with mentors complete 17.8 years of education compared to just 15.8 years completed by men who do not have mentors. The study also concluded that women with mentors finished 18.1 years of education compared to 14.9 years for women without mentors. Participants in Torrance's study were considered middle class and generally did not fit the category of at-risk students.

An additional study of mentored students and academic achievement was performed by McPartland and Nettles (1991). McPartland and Nettles found that at-risk students who were involved in a well-organized, well-financed program, Project Raise, received higher grades on their report cards than students who did not participate in the program. As noted in the previous section, the program also saw a three percent rise in attendance for students who participated in the program.

Piatt (2007) explains that the importance that society places on an individual's education is related to that individual's social mobility. Therefore, socioeconomic status can be considered an important aspect of academic achievement. Piatt continues by

exploring the effects upon children from low income socioeconomic groups. The report states that these lower socioeconomic groups perform less successfully in all areas of academic achievement than do students from the families with the higher levels of income.

Evans and Rosenbaum (2008) added to Piatt's explanation and suggested that students who reside in a more affluent socioeconomic environment are better equipped with enhanced learning aids. These learning aids are prone to stimulate academic interests and improve academic outcome over non-use of these stimuli. Learning aids that were cited included tutoring, self-help books, reading materials, music lessons, and involvement in organized team sports (Evans & Rosenbaum). Both studies addressed students who are categorized as at-risk and can benefit from interaction through mentoring. Mentoring can be the equalizer for students of low-income families.

#### Summary

The literature discussed in this chapter cites research based on mentoring and programs that use mentorship as a model for success. Future funding for programs such as JROTC may be restricted or retracted due to fiscal accountability and budgetary shortcomings. Supporters of JROTC programs have been able to win the continued support of Congress and funding for the program has continued.

Research has linked mentoring to improvements in academic achievement, attendance, and dropouts. BBBSA has shown that mentoring of youth across the nation shows decreases in grade retention and improvement in grades, attendance, and classroom participation (Herrera, 2004). This is one of many youth mentoring programs that are used as a school based mentoring program designed to help at risk youth.

Rumberger and Lim (2008) reported poor academic achievement as one of the strongest indicators of drop outs and could be traced as early as elementary school. JROTC programs' stated goals are to serve at-risk students, improve academic achievement, and promote self-confidence to prevent students from dropping out of school. If the goals of the JROTC programs can be met, research has shown that by improving attendance students show improvement in academic achievement. The methods of the programs may vary in implementation of mentors and how those mentors are used, but the overall goal of all three programs focuses on student success. Chapter III takes the variables that were discussed in this chapter and explains the statistical approach that the researcher took to answer the pertinent research questions.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that were employed in the study. The chapter is divided into seven sections: introduction, design, participants, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and a summary. This study considered whether mentorship impacts students' perceptions about academic achievement, dropping out, and school attendance differently between the various JROTC programs. The goal of the study was to compare equivalent samples of students who differ in terms of which JROTC program (Army, Navy, or Air Force) in which they participate in order to determine whether the perceptions of the dependent variables would vary.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to address the issues that are of interest in this study, the following research questions were proposed:

- RQ1: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive completing/dropping out of high school differently?
- RQ2: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value daily school attendance?
- RQ3: Do JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies)?



RQ4: What are the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs?

RQ5: Do the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ with respect to the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective program?

RQ6: Is there a relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, school completion/dropping out, and school attendance?

The null hypotheses for these questions are as follows:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is not a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive of high school completion/dropping out.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is not a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) value daily school attendance.

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is not a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies).

H0<sub>4</sub>: There is not a significant difference in the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective program.

H0<sub>5</sub>: There is not a significant relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, school completion/dropping out, and school attendance.

The objective of this research was to measure, compare, and relate the means and proportions between the various independent variables (participation in the various JROTC programs and perceptions of mentorship). Differences found between the dependent variables can theoretically be attributed to the participation in a different JROTC program (independent variable).

#### Participants in the Study

The purpose of the study was to gain greater insight into JROTC student perceptions relevant to the aforementioned research issues. Both male and female JROTC students were invited to participate. Eligibility for participation in this study required individuals to be active students in the JROTC program. Student participant releases and informed consent documents were sent to the schools prior to sending the instruments. Students took the documents home so that parents and students could decide whether to grant permission to participate in the survey. No student or school in the study was identified by name. Only students with signed releases from parents and signed consent forms were allowed to participate in the survey. All USM Institutional Review Board requirements were met.

The researcher selected 33 high schools based on the criteria of the number of JROTC students available. The high schools were selected from the high schools in Mississippi that have JROTC programs from the various branches of the armed forces.

The purposeful selection of the high schools was also based on their geographical proximity to The University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Campus. Twenty-one high school JROTC programs (63%) agreed to participate in this study. Four hundred fifty three questionnaires were delivered to six Air Force JROTC units via UPS. Of those delivered questionnaires, 101 were returned for a return rate of 22.3%. One thousand one hundred thirteen questionnaires were delivered to nine Army JROTC units via UPS. Of those delivered questionnaires, 342 were returned for a return rate of 30.7%. One Army JROTC unit did not respond. Four hundred seventy five questionnaires were delivered to five Navy JROTC units via UPS. Of those delivered questionnaires, 127 were returned for a return rate of 26.7%. The overall response rate for the three JROTC programs was 27.9%. Army JROTC had the highest percentage of return of the three programs and therefore had greater representation among JROTC programs in this region for this study.

### Research Design

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative design. The researcher was an objective observer who neither participated in nor influenced this quantitative study. The independent variables of this study were participation in the respective branches of JROTC and student perceptions regarding mentorship. The perceptions about academic achievement in core academic subject areas, the perceptions about dropping out of high school, and perceptions about school attendance were the dependent variables used in this study.

### Instrumentation

The researcher secured IRB approval to conduct research about JROTC students in grades nine through twelve. The researcher employed a self-designed instrument

entitled JROTC Dropout, Attendance, Academic Achievement, and Mentoring Perception Instrument (Appendix A). Due to the inability to find an instrument that addressed the questions needed to conduct the research, the researcher developed this instrument to distribute to students in the selected JROTC programs.

The instrument contains a few simple questions to give the researcher and reader descriptive statistics related to the participants involved in the study. Race, gender, age, and grade level questions were placed on the instrument to be used for demographic purposes. The information provided by the participants remained anonymous. Nothing on this instrument led to the identification of participants or school that they attend. Only the type of JROTC program in which the student participates was identified.

The instrument was color-coded based on JROTC branch of service. Army JROTC units received instruments on white paper. Air Force JROTC units received instruments on light blue paper. Navy JROTC units received instruments on light green paper. Color coded paper was used for quick reference when separating the instrument based on JROTC branch.

The instrument contains questions regarding perceptions about completing school, perceptions about school attendance, perceptions about academic achievement, and perceptions about levels of mentorship. The instrument asks participants to answer each statement by marking one of six possible answers in a Likert-type scale. The Likert-type scale gives values of 1.0 for “Strongly Disagree,” 2.0 for “Disagree,” 3.0 for “Slightly Disagree,” 4.0 for “Slightly Agree,” 5.0 for “Agree,” and 6.0 for “Strongly Agree.” There are no uncertain or neutral responses available; this forces an agree–disagree rating. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) indicated that a slight advantage exists when using

an even-numbered scale with no undecided positions because a neutral position response gives no rating information. The researcher used SPSS to analyze data from the completed surveys.

*Demographic items.* A demographic questionnaire was developed for this research and asks participants about their gender (Male/Female), age (14-15/16-17/18-19/other), race (Asian/Black/Hispanic/Native American/White/Other), area in which they live (urban/suburban/rural), and grade level status (9<sup>th</sup> grade freshman/10<sup>th</sup> grade sophomore/11<sup>th</sup> grade junior/12<sup>th</sup> grade senior). These data were used for descriptive purposes. No student or school in the study was identified by name.

*High school completion sub-scale.* Nine questions (items 1 through 9) were designed to measure JROTC students' perceptions of completing school and addressed research question number one. Students scored these items using the aforementioned Likert-type scale with a possible total score of 54. Higher scores represent more positive perceptions about remaining in school.

*School attendance sub-scale.* Participants' perceptions about school attendance were measured in this section of the questionnaire and addressed research question three. There are a total of three questions in this sub-scale (items 10 through 12) and the questions were scored using the aforementioned Likert-type scale with a possible total score of 18. Higher scores represent more positive perceptions about school attendance.

*Academic achievement sub scale.* JROTC participants' perceptions about academic achievement were measured in this section of the questionnaire and addressed research question four. There are a total of five questions in this sub-scale (items 13 through 17), which were scored using the aforementioned Likert-type scale, with a

possible total score of 30. Higher scores represent more positive perceptions about academic achievement.

*JROTC sub scale.* JROTC participants' perceptions about the program itself were measured in this section of the questionnaire and addressed research question five. There are a total of six questions in this sub-scale (items 18 through 23), which were scored using the aforementioned Likert-type scale, with a possible total score of 36. Higher scores represent more positive perceptions about the JROTC program.

*Mentorship sub-scale.* Mentorship was a pivotal construct in this research and measuring how students perceive mentorship was an essential part of this investigation. Not all JROTC programs assign mentors to their underclassmen. For this reason, an additional category of *Not Applicable* was added to the Likert scale for the related items and given a value of zero. The Likert-type scale gives values of 1.0 for Strongly Disagree, 2.0 for Disagree, 3.0 for Slightly Disagree, 4.0 for Slightly Agree, 5.0 for Agree, 6.0 for Strongly Agree. Not Applicable was used by respondents if their mentor did not meet the criteria set forth by the question. Not Applicable will be treated as missing data during the data capture. There are a total of eight questions in this sub-scale (items 24 through 31) and the questions were scored using the aforementioned Likert-type scale with a possible total score of 56 and addressed research question six and seven. Higher scores represent more positive perceptions about mentorship.

*Instrument validity and reliability.* The researcher assembled a panel of experts to determine face and content validity consisting of two JROTC instructors, one former JROTC/ROTC student, one former ROTC instructor and PhD, and one retired Army Major and PhD. The panel of experts ensured that the reading level was appropriate to

the respondents and checked the sensitivity to subgroups. The panel also checked for any items that should be omitted due to redundancy or determined to be poorly worded. Each panel expert returned the validity questionnaire (Appendix B); their suggestions were taken into account and appropriate modifications were made to the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient test was used to determine reliability for each subscale. The test disclosed a reliability of greater than 0.70 for all subscales, with the exception of two, school completion and school attendance. Question 9 was not used in the scale due to its effect on the Cronbach's alpha. Once this question was removed, the school completion scale met requirements. The questions for school attendance, although not meeting the requirement of .70 were retained in the model due to the number of participants being low. Results of the pilot studies Cronbach's alpha are reported in table 1. Evaluations of reliability were conducted in order to assess the appropriateness of the instrument for application in this study. The instrument was used to gather data with which to examine the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 1

*Pilot Study Cronbach's alpha*

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha
School Completion/Dropping Out	.72
School Attendance	.43
Academic Achievement	.84
JROTC	.78
Mentor	.90

## Procedures

JROTC programs throughout the state of Mississippi were selected. The researcher distributed letters to the superintendents of the related districts requesting permission to survey students in the JROTC programs (Appendix C). Signed letters indicating superintendent approval were returned to the researcher before student participation began. All of the signed permission letters from participating school districts superintendents were included in the IRB application. The researcher applied for IRB approval. IRB was granted (Appendix D) and the researcher received written notification allowing the collection of data to begin.

The researcher contacted each building principal to set up a time to deliver the participant releases and implied consent forms. The researcher then contacted each JROTC instructor and determined how many student participant releases and informed consent documents will be delivered to the schools prior to sending the instruments. Students took the participant release and informed consent documents (Appendix E) home so that parents and students could decide whether students would participate in the survey. Consent documents were returned, and JROTC students who agreed to and were allowed by parent consent to participate completed an instrument that was hand-delivered or mailed to the school district's JROTC staff.

The data collected for this research study were viewed only by the researcher and his committee members. The consent documents contained contact information for the researcher and each participant was given the opportunity to ask any questions related to the study. The superintendents, building principals and participants were given the opportunity to discuss possible benefits or risks associated with the study.



The researcher set a deadline of one week to conduct the survey and collect the completed instruments. The researcher received the completed instruments personally by hand-delivery or by UPS in a pre-addressed, pre-paid envelopes.

#### Analysis of the Data

Descriptive statistics were run for all of the variables and any areas that contained abnormal data or outliers were discussed. The descriptive statistics allows the researcher and readers to examine information pertaining to the participants. Responses to returned instrument questions provided the researcher with information with which to compute the statistical means for the constructs of school completion/dropping out (questions 1-9), attendance (questions 10-12), academic achievement (questions 13-17), JROTC (questions 18-23), and mentoring (questions 24-31). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to answer Research Question 1, which addressed JROTC student perceptions of school completion/dropping out (dependent variable) by the type of JROTC program (independent variable). Research Question 2 used an ANOVA to compare JROTC student perceptions on attendance (dependent variable) by type of JROTC program (independent variable). Research Question 3 used an ANOVA to compare JROTC student perceptions of academic achievement (dependent variable) by type of JROTC program (dependent variable). Means and standard deviations from the responses to the questions regarding student perceptions of mentorship were used to answer Research Question 4. Research Question 5 used an ANOVA to compare JROTC student perceptions of mentorship (dependent variable) by type of JROTC program (independent variable). Research Question 6 used a Pearson correlation to address the relationships among student perceptions of mentoring, achievement, attendance, and dropping out of

school. Analysis of the data allowed the researcher to determine whether or not to reject or fail to reject the related null hypotheses.

### Summary

The effectiveness of mentoring programs remains unclear and imprecise. The overall mission statements of JROTC programs are to motivate young people to be better citizens; however, the objectives of JROTC programs are multifaceted. The mentoring styles of the various programs and their impact on attendance, persistence, and academic achievement will remain a supposition that requires further investigation. However, this investigation determines whether student perceptions regarding mentorship and selected behavioral and academic outcomes are impacted by their JROTC programs.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of cadets in the Army, Navy, and Air Force JROTC programs regarding their beliefs about mentorship and how it affects students' perceptions. It was also of interest to determine if the various leadership styles and academic approaches among the three programs influence students' perceptions of academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance. This study employed a non-experimental quantitative design. The study compared equivalent samples of students who differ in terms of the JROTC program (Army, Navy, or Air Force) in which they participate in order to determine whether the perceptions of the dependent variables would vary. Data were gathered from questionnaires completed by high school JROTC students representing various communities and demographics. Chapter III provided direction for the statistical methods for this study; Chapter IV describes the results of the captured data from the returned questionnaires.

Thirty-three high schools were approved to participate in the study by the school's superintendent. Twenty-one of those 33 schools had permission from the high school principal and the JROTC instructor. Two thousand forty-one questionnaires were sent to the 21 schools that met the requirements of superintendent, principal, and JROTC instructor permission. Twenty of the 21 schools returned a total of 570 surveys. Four hundred fifty three questionnaires were delivered to six Air Force JROTC units via UPS. Of those delivered questionnaires, 101 (22.3%) were returned. One thousand one hundred thirteen questionnaires were delivered to nine Army JROTC units via UPS. Of

those delivered questionnaires, 342 (30.7%) were returned. One Army JROTC unit did not respond. Four hundred seventy five questionnaires were delivered to five Navy JROTC units via UPS. Of those delivered questionnaires, 127 (26.7%) were returned. The overall response rate for the three JROTC programs' students was 27.9%.

There were nine incomplete questionnaires among the returned instruments. For the incomplete questionnaires, Sections A, B, C, D, and E were included in the data capture. Section F of the questionnaires was the only section not complete in those nine incomplete questionnaires; therefore, Section F was not included for the nine incomplete questionnaires in the data capture.

### Descriptive Statistics for Student Profiles

#### *Demographic Items*

Respondents were asked to provide information that was used to determine gender, age, ethnicity, type of community, and current grade level demographics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic information obtained from the respondents. Frequency tables were generated for all items. Three branches of military services (Air Force, Army, and Navy) were represented in this study. Of those responding to the instrument, 101 (17.7%) were Air Force, 342 (60%) were Army, and 127 (22.3%) were Navy. Table 2 provides the frequencies and percentages for these data.

Table 2

*Frequencies of JROTC Respondents (N=570)*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	101	17.7
Army JROTC	342	60.0
Navy JROTC	127	22.3
Total	570	100.0

Of the 101 Air Force participants, 47 (45.5%) were male compared to 54 (53.5%) who were female. Army participation produced 342 respondents, with 185 (54.1%) males and 157 (45.9%) females. Navy produced 127 respondents; 67 (52.8%) were male and 60 (47.2%) were female. Table 3 provides frequencies and percentages for these data.

Table 3

*Frequencies of JROTC Respondents' Gender (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	Male	47	46.5
	Female	54	53.5
Army JROTC	Male	185	54.1
	Female	157	45.9
Navy JROTC	Male	67	52.8
	Female	60	47.2

Table 3 (continued).

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Total	Male	299	52.5
	Female	271	47.5

Table 4 provides the frequencies and percentages for JROTC respondents' age brackets. Ages were categorized into four subgroups: 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, and other. Among Air Force JROTC respondents, 47 (46.5%) cadets were 14-15 years of age, 40 (39.6%) were 16-17 years of age, 12 (11.9%) were 18-19 years of age, and 2 (2.0%) were reported as other. Among Army JROTC respondents, 121 (35.4%) cadets were 14-15 years of age, 160 (46.8%) were 16-17 years of age, 59 (17.9%) were 18-19 years of age, and 2 (.6%) were reported as other. Among Navy JROTC respondents, 51 (40.2%) cadets were 14-15 years of age, 59 (46.5%) were 16-17 years of age, 16 (12.6%) were 18-19 years of age, and 1 (.8%) was reported as other.

Table 4

*Frequencies of JROTC Respondents' Age (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	14-15	47	46.5
	16-17	40	39.6
	18-19	12	11.9
	Other	2	2.0

Table 4 (continued).

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Army JROTC	14-15	121	35.4
	16-17	160	46.8
	18-19	59	17.3
	Other	2	0.6
Navy JROTC	14-15	51	40.2
	16-17	59	46.5
	18-19	16	12.6
	Other	1	0.8
Total	14-15	219	38.4
	16-17	259	45.4
	18-19	87	15.3
	Other	5	0.9

Ethnicity was categorized into six subgroups: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, and Other. One hundred and one Air Force JROTC respondents categorized themselves as follows: 1 (1.0%) Asian, 50 (49.5%) black, 5 (5.0%) Hispanic, 2 (2.0%) Native American, 42 (41.6%) White, and 1 (1.0%) other. Three hundred forty-two Army respondents categorized themselves as: 5 (1.5%) Asian, 122 (35.7%) black, 8 (2.3%) Hispanic, 6 (1.8%) Native American, 198 (57.9%) white, and 3 (0.9%) other. One hundred twenty-seven Navy JROTC respondents categorized themselves as: 0 (0.0%) Asian, 45 (35.4%) black, 6 (4.7%) Hispanic, 4 (3.1%) Native American, 67

(52.8%) white, and 5 (3.9%) reported as other. Table 5 provides the frequencies and percentages for these data.

Table 5

*Frequencies of JROTC Respondents' Ethnicity (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	Asian	1	1.0
	Black	50	49.5
	Hispanic	5	5.0
	Native American	2	2.0
	White	42	41.6
	Other	1	1.0
Army JROTC	Asian	5	1.5
	Black	122	35.7
	Hispanic	8	2.3
	Native American	6	1.8
	White	198	57.9
	Other	3	0.9
Navy JROTC	Asian	0	0.0
	Black	45	35.4
	Hispanic	6	4.7
	Native American	4	3.1
	White	67	52.8



Table 5 (continued).

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Total	Other	5	3.9
	Asian	6	1.0
	Black	217	38.1
	Hispanic	19	3.3
	Native American	12	2.1
	White	307	53.9
	Other	9	1.6

The type of community in which the JROTC respondents resided was an additional question that was addressed in the demographic section of the questionnaire. The questionnaire gave the respondents the opportunity to make one of three choices. The choices were urban, suburban, or rural. Of the 101 Air Force JROTC respondents, 16 (15.8%) reported that they lived in an urban environment, 34 (33.7%) lived in a suburban environment, and 51 (50.5%) lived in a rural environment. Of the 342 Army JROTC respondents, 87 (25.4%) reported that they lived in an urban environment, 165 (48.2%) lived in a suburban environment, and 90 (26.3%) lived in a rural environment. Of the 127 Navy JROTC respondents, 46 (36.2%) reported that they lived in an urban environment, 37 (29.1%) lived in a suburban environment, and 44 (34.6%) lived in a rural environment. Table 6 provides the frequencies and percentages for these data.

Table 6

*Frequencies for JROTC Respondents' Type of Community (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	Urban	16	15.8
	Suburban	34	33.7
	Rural	51	50.5
Army JROTC	Urban	87	25.4
	Suburban	165	48.2
	Rural	90	26.3
Navy JROTC	Urban	46	36.2
	Suburban	37	29.1
	Rural	44	34.6
Total	Urban	149	26.1
	Suburban	236	41.4
	Rural	185	32.5

Table 7 identifies the frequencies associated with grade levels of the JROTC respondents. Cadets of the program classified themselves as freshman (9<sup>th</sup> grade), sophomore (10<sup>th</sup> grade), junior (11<sup>th</sup> grade), or senior (12<sup>th</sup> grade). Among the Air Force respondents, 44 (43.6%) identified themselves as freshmen, 21 (20.8%) as sophomores, 18 (17.8%) as juniors and 18 (17.8%) as seniors. Among the Army respondents, 100 (29.2%) identified themselves as freshmen, 104 (30.4%) as sophomores, 69 (20.2%) as juniors, and 69 (20.2%) as seniors. Among Navy respondents, 42 (33.1%) identified

themselves as freshmen, 36 (28.3%) as sophomores, 30 (23.6%) as juniors and 19 (15.0%) as seniors.

Table 7

*Frequencies for JROTC Respondents' Grade Level (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	Freshman	44	43.6
	Sophomore	21	20.8
	Junior	18	17.8
	Senior	18	17.8
Army JROTC	Freshman	100	29.2
	Sophomore	104	30.4
	Junior	69	20.2
	Senior	69	20.2
Navy JROTC	Freshman	42	33.1
	Sophomore	36	28.3
	Junior	30	23.6
	Senior	19	15.0
Total	Freshman	186	32.6
	Sophomore	161	28.3
	Junior	117	20.5
	Senior	106	18.6

### *Mentorship*

Mentorship is a key component of this investigation and student perceptions of mentorship are addressed later in Chapter IV. The questionnaire used in this study defined a mentor as a person who shares knowledge, skills, and information to help mold the personal and professional growth of someone else. Table 8 reports the frequencies with which respondents in the different branches of JROTC consider themselves as having a mentor. Of the 570 respondents, 321 stated that they did have a mentor of some type. The respondent to survey instrument that was numbered 1307 stated that a mentor was present in his/her life, but did not list who the mentor was. Table 9 reports the various types of mentors used in the questionnaire and the related frequencies. Among Air Force respondents, 57 (56.4%) students reported themselves as having a mentor and 44 (43.6%) reported themselves as not having a mentor. Among Army respondents, 182 (53.2%) students reported themselves as having a mentor and 160 (46.8%) reported themselves as not having a mentor. Among Navy respondents, 82 (64.6%) students reported themselves as having a mentor and 45 (35.4%) students reported themselves as not having a mentor.

Table 8

#### *Frequency of JROTC Respondents Reporting Mentorship (N=570)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	Yes	57	56.4
	No	44	43.6

Table 8 (continued).

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Army JROTC	Yes	182	53.2
	No	160	46.8
Navy JROTC	Yes	82	64.6
	No	45	35.4
Total	Yes	321	56.3
	No	249	43.7

Whom a JROTC cadet views as his or her mentor was addressed in Section E of the questionnaire used in this study. Levels of mentorship were categorized as follows: the cadet's JROTC instructor, a junior or senior cadet within the JROTC program, both the instructor and a junior or senior cadet, or some other person who meets the defined parameters of a mentor. Three hundred twenty responses addressed this subsection of Section E, with 21 (36.8) Air Force cadets identifying their JROTC instructor as their mentor, 4 (7.0%) reporting a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, 22 (38.6%) reporting that both their JROTC instructor in combination with a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, and 10 (17.5%) as other. Seventy-four (40.9%) Army cadets identified their JROTC instructor as their mentor, 17 (9.4%) reporting a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, 42 (23.2%) reporting that both their JROTC instructor in combination with a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, and 48 (26.5%) as other. Twenty-six (31.7%) Navy cadets identified their JROTC instructor as their mentor, 11 (13.4%) reporting a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, 34 (41.5%) reporting that both their JROTC

instructor in combination with a junior or senior cadet as their mentor, and 11 (13.4%) as other. Table 9 reports frequencies for the categories of persons that JROTC respondents viewed as their mentor.

Table 9

*Frequencies of Whom JROTC Respondents View as His or Her Mentor (N=320)*

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Air Force JROTC	JROTC Instructor	21	36.8
	JR/SR Cadet	4	7.0
	Instructor and JR/SR Cadet	22	38.6
	Other	10	17.5
Army JROTC	JROTC Instructor	74	40.9
	JR/SR Cadet	17	9.4
	Instructor and JR/SR Cadet	42	23.2
	Other	48	26.5
Navy JROTC	JROTC Instructor	26	31.7
	JR/SR Cadet	11	13.4
	Instructor and JR/SR Cadet	34	41.5
	Other	11	13.4

Table 9 (continued).

Type	Level	Frequency	Percentage
Total	JROTC Instructor	121	37.8
	JR/SR Cadet	32	10.0
	Instructor and JR/SR Cadet	98	30.6
	Other	69	21.6

#### Final Study Analysis of Reliability and Internal Consistency

The reliability and internal consistency of the variables were explored further during the actual study using Cronbach's alpha. A Cronbach's alpha test of coefficient reliability was performed on each set of items to determine how well each set of items measured a single construct. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or greater is considered acceptable. The Cronbach's alpha test for each subscale yielded a reliability of greater than 0.70. In the pilot study the Cronbach's alpha for school attendance was .433; however, by having more respondents in the actual study, the alpha for this construct rose to .730. The results are profiled in Table 10.

Table 10

*Cronbach's alpha for Final Study*

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha
School Completion/Dropping Out	.72
School Attendance	.73
Academic Achievement	.84
JROTC	.82
Mentor	.95

## Descriptive Statistics for Key Research Constructs

Following the demographics section, the instrument was divided into six additional sections. The first four sections asked cadets to respond, using a Likert response scale, to items that measured student perceptions about school completion/dropping out (Section A), school attendance (Section B), academic achievement (Section C), and JROTC (Section D). Sections A through Section D use 1 as the lowest value, which corresponds with the response strongly disagree. The value of 2 corresponds with disagree, 3 corresponds with slightly disagree, 4 corresponds with slightly agree, and 5 corresponds with agree. The value of 6 was the highest and corresponds with the response strongly agree. The mentorship construct items (Section E) used the same Likert response scale. Not applicable was an additional response choice; however, it did not have any value in the data capture and was treated in the analyses of the research questions as missing data. The Academics vs. Electives items (Section F) used a ranking system in which cadets ranked academic classes (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies) and elective classes (Foreign Language, Physical



Education, School Activities, and School Clubs). The respondents ranked each subject on a scale from one to nine, with one being their favorite and nine being their least favorite.

Section A was divided into nine questions and asked students to choose the response that best matched their perceptions of high school completion/dropping out. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. Questions 4, 5, 7, and 9 were reverse-orientation questions to avoid response set. As stated in Table 11, Item 8 had the highest mean ( $M=5.85$ ) and Item 4 had the lowest mean ( $M=1.85$ ).

Table 11

*Descriptives for JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of School Completion/Dropping out (N=570)*

Subscale	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
School Completion	8	5.85	.52
	2	5.10	1.17
	1	4.85	1.28
	6	4.76	1.20
	3	4.61	1.25
	*5	2.75	1.43
	*7	2.68	1.31
	*9	1.85	1.44
	*4	1.74	0.97

Note. \* Reverse-orientation question.

As indicated in Table 12, Section B of the questionnaire consisted of three questions asking JROTC cadets' perceptions of school attendance. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. Question 12 was reversed in orientation to avoid response set. The highest mean was that for question 10 (M=5.04). The lowest mean was that for question 12 (M=2.93).

Table 12

*Descriptives for JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of School Attendance (N=570)*

Subscale	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
School Attendance	10	5.04	1.07
	11	4.57	1.24
	*12	2.93	1.25

Note. \*Reverse-orientation question.

Perceptions of JROTC cadets have Academic Achievement were measured in Section C's five questions. The item scale was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The highest mean was that for Items 14 and 16 (M=5.24), which ranked English and Math courses as most important. The lowest mean (M=3.75) was that for Item 13, which ranked JROTC cadets' perception of the likelihood that JROTC students will receive failing grades in core subject areas (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies). Table 13 reports descriptive statistics for JROTC perceptions of academic achievement.

Table 13

*Descriptives for JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of Academic Achievement (N=570)*

Subscale	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Achievement	16	5.24	0.87
	14	5.24	0.92
	15	5.22	0.89
	17	5.17	0.91
	13	3.75	1.44

How JROTC respondents perceived JROTC was measured in Section D. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The highest mean was that for Item 18 (M=5.37) and the lowest mean was that for Item 20 (M=4.65). Table 14 reports descriptive statistics for JROTC cadets' perception about JROTC programs.

Table 14

*Descriptives for JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of JROTC Programs (N=570)*

Subscale	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
JROTC	18	5.37	0.86
	19	5.14	0.95

Table 14 (continued).

Subscale	Questions	Mean	Srd Deviation
	22	5.04	0.86
	21	4.77	1.01
	23	4.76	1.06
	20	4.65	1.07

Research Question 4 addressed the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) who indicated that they have mentors regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree. Table 15 reports eight questions regarding JROTC respondents' perceptions of mentorship. Questions 19, 20, 21, and 22 concerned cadets' perceptions of how their mentor motivates them in school completion, school attendance, and academic achievement. The highest mean was that for Item 26 (M=5.56), in which the respondents rated their perceptions of the degree to which their mentor encouraged the cadet to stay in school. The second highest mean was that for Item 25 (M=5.55), in which the respondents ranked their perceptions of the degree to which their mentor was supportive and encouraging. The third highest mean was that for Item 28 (M=5.54), in which the respondents ranked their perceptions of the degree to which their mentor was able to motivate them to achieve high grades in core academic classes. The fourth highest mean was that for Item 27 (M=5.46), in which respondents ranked their perceptions of the degree to which their mentor was able to

motivate them to attend school regularly. The lowest mean was that for Item 24 (M=4.99).

Table 15

*Descriptives for Overall JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of Mentorship*

Subscale	Question	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mentorship	26	317	5.56	0.69
	25	319	5.55	0.65
	28	317	5.54	0.72
	27	315	5.46	0.77
	31	315	5.19	0.91
	29	315	5.17	1.05
	30	316	5.01	1.13
	24	303	4.99	0.98

### Hypothesis Results

Research Question 1 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive school completion/dropping out differently. The associated null hypothesis stated: There will not be a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive completion/dropping out of high school. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference in means of responses from students in the various JROTC programs (Air Force, Army,

and Navy),  $F(2, 567) = 1.06, p = .345$ . Based on this result, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Table 16 reports the descriptive statistics for JROTC perceptions of high school completion/dropping out.

Table 16

*Descriptives for Overall JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of High School Completion/Dropping Out (N=570)*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Air Force	101	4.94	0.64
Army	342	4.91	0.56
Navy	127	4.84	0.56
Total	570	4.90	0.58

Research Question 2 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value daily school attendance. The associated null hypothesis stated: There will not be a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) value daily school attendance. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference in means of responses from students in the various JROTC programs (Air Force, Army, and Navy),  $F(2, 567) = 5.49, p = .578$ . Based on this result, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Table 17 reports the descriptive statistics test for JROTC perceptions of high school attendance.

Table 17

*Descriptives for Overall JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of School Attendance**(N=570)*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Air Force	101	4.89	0.90
Army	342	4.78	0.96
Navy	127	4.77	0.98
Total	570	4.80	0.96

Research Question 3 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies). The associated null hypothesis stated: There will not be a significant difference in how JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies). The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference in means of responses from the students in the various JROTC programs (Air Force, Army, and Navy),  $F(2, 567) = .484, p = .617$ . Based on this result, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Table 18 reports the descriptive statistics test for JROTC cadets' perceptions of academic achievement.

Table 18

*Descriptives for Overall JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of Academic Achievement*  
(*N*=570)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Air Force	101	5.21	0.72
Army	342	5.19	0.77
Navy	127	5.27	0.67
Total	570	5.21	0.74

Research Question 5 asked if the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ with respect to the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs. The associated null hypothesis stated: There will not be a significant difference in the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs. The scale used for this section was as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, and 6 = Strongly Agree. The results of the ANOVA indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference in means of responses from students in the various JROTC programs (Air Force, Army, and Navy),  $F(2, 316) = .456, p = .634$ . Based on this result, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. Table 19 reports the descriptive statistics test for JROTC perceptions of mentorship.



Table 19

*Descriptives for Overall JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of Mentorship*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Air Force	57	5.29	0.53
Army	180	5.33	0.57
Navy	82	5.26	0.65
Total	319	5.31	0.58

Research Question 6 asked if there is a relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance. The associated null hypothesis stated: There will not be a significant relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, dropping out, and school attendance. A multiple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis. The model summary reported the variability explained by the model as 15%. Since the  $F$  is the average amount of variability and is used to test the statistical significance of the model, the ANOVA table indicated that the regression was statistically significant with  $F(3, 315) = 19.48, p < .001, R^2 = .156$ . Based on this result, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis. The results shown in Table 20 disclose that high school completion and academic achievement were statistically significantly related to students' perceptions of the degree to which they have been mentored, whereas school attendance was not.

Table 20

*Coefficients of Mentoring*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	2.95	0.31		9.33	0.000
School Completion	0.20	0.06	0.19	3.37	0.001
School Attendance	0.05	0.03	0.09	1.54	0.123
Academic Achievement	.019	0.04	0.23	4.16	0.000

Note. Dependent Variable: Mentor

### Ancillary Findings

Section F of the instrument asked cadets to rank academic classes (English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) and electives (Foreign Language, JROTC, Physical Education, School Activities, and School Clubs) in order of importance. Cadets were asked to use a scale of 1 to 9 with 1 being their favorite and 9 being their least favorite. Results from table 21 indicate that academics ranked more favorably ( $M=4.02$ ) compared to electives ( $M=5.78$ ). A t-test revealed a significant difference between the mean for academic contents compared to electives ( $t(559) = 17.014, p \leq .001$ ). Table 21 profiles the results. The lowest mean, which in this case would indicate the subject as being viewed more favorably, was mathematics ( $M=3.26$ ) and the highest mean, which in

this case would indicate less favorable rating, was school clubs (M=6.85). Table 22 reports the nine questions regarding JROTC respondents' perceptions of favorability between academic classes compared to elective classes.

Table 21

*Descriptive Statistics for Academic Classes vs. Elective (N=560)*

Subscale	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academics	4.02	1.35
Electives	5.78	1.08

Table 22

*Descriptive Statistics for JROTC Respondents' Perceptions of Favorability between Academic Classes and Elective (N=560)*

Subscale	Mean	Std Deviation
Mathematics	*3.26	2.32
English	*3.54	2.33
JROTC	**3.78	2.32
Science	*4.00	2.00
Social Studies	*5.28	2.05
Physical Education	**5.97	2.19
Foreign Language	**6.06	2.11
School Activities	**6.24	2.58

Table 22 (continued).

Subscale	Mean	Std Deviation
School Clubs	**6.85	2.17

Note. \* Academic Classes; \*\* Elective.

### Summary

Each of the five variables (school completion, school attendance, academic achievement, JROTC, and mentorship) was tested with regard to the perception of students in the three JROTC programs (Air Force, Army, and Navy). A total of 570 questionnaires were returned and used to compute the data capture. Results of the analyses related to the hypothesis indicated that there were no significant differences among the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches of service regarding school completion/dropping out, school attendance, academic achievement, and mentoring by JROTC cadets. Results of the analysis did, however, indicate that high school completion/dropping out and academic achievement were significant related to the degree to which students have been mentored, whereas school attendance was not. Ancillary findings of this study showed that JROTC respondents ranked academics as more important than electives, with the exception of JROTC classes.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of cadets in the Air Force, Army, and Navy JROTC programs regarding mentorship and how these programs affect students' perceptions. Findings also can help determine if participation in the three programs influenced students' perceptions of school completion/dropping out, school attendance, and academic achievement in core subject areas. This assistance may encourage them to stay on the path to graduate and mentor the cadets to understand their roles in society. This chapter includes a summary of the procedures, major findings, discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and a summary of the chapter.

#### Summary of Procedures

Five hundred and seventy JROTC cadets from throughout Mississippi participated in this study. Perceptions of mentoring, school completion/dropping out of school, school attendance, and academic achievement in core subject areas were examined by means of a six part survey instrument. Responses from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, t-test, and a regression model.

Approval letters were sent to a total of 60 school district superintendents throughout Mississippi. Permission was granted by the superintendents in 14 of the school districts, which included 33 schools. Once permission was received from The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board (Appendix D), contact was made with the 21 schools where permission was granted by the principal and JROTC

instructor. Twelve school principals or JROTC instructors did not grant permission for the instrument to be administered.

Two thousand forty-one surveys were mailed via UPS to the JROTC instructors from the 21 high schools. Respondents had three weeks to complete and return the instrument in pre-paid UPS boxes. Twenty of the 21 schools returned the instrument, and the returned data were compiled and entered into SPSS for analysis. Before statistical tests were performed, the Cronbach's alpha test for consistency and reliability was conducted for each of the subscales and the survey instrument as a whole. The Cronbach's alpha demonstrated adequate reliability for both the pilot test and the full study.

### Major Findings

The following paragraphs address the major findings from the demographic and basic descriptive data, and highlight the answers to the research questions that were presented at the beginning of this study. Demographic data in Table 3 in Chapter IV suggested that male and female respondents were comparably represented in this study. All JROTC groups were near 50% for both gender types indicating that gender bias is minimal in this study. Tables 4 and 5 in Chapter IV indicated that a majority of the respondents were between the ages of 16 and 17 years of age and that a majority were white, with African Americans making up the next largest subgroup of students. 2010 census data regarding Mississippi reflect that the ethnicity demographics of this study are comparable to the ethnicity demographics of Mississippi (Mississippi 2010 Census, n.d).

Table 8 reports that Navy JROTC respondents had the highest percentage of mentored cadets, with a rate of 64.6%. The Air Force JROTC had the second highest

percentage of respondents (56.4%) who indicate that they had mentors. Army respondents indicated that 53.2% had mentors. Among Air Force JROTC respondents, the largest group (38.6%) indicated that their mentors were the JROTC instructor and also senior or junior JROTC cadets; 41.5% of Navy JROTC respondents chose this response. However, the most frequently selected response to the item regarding the source of mentorship among Army JROTC respondents was that only the JROTC instructor served as their mentor; 40.9% of these cadets selected this response.

Descriptive data indicated that respondents from the three JROTC programs slightly agree that school completion and school attendance are important. No program scored a solid agree ( $M = 5.0$ ) on either subsection of the instrument. While their rating was not significantly different from the ratings in the other two branches, Air Force respondents provided the highest mean rating for school completion and school attendance. Mean rankings across the three branches of service were school completion ( $M = 4.9$ ) and school attendance ( $M = 4.8$ ).

Perceptions of the importance of school achievement and mentorship scored a solid agree on both subscales among all three JROTC programs. While their rating was not significantly different from the ratings in the other two branches, Navy respondents ranked highest among the three programs in their perceptions of the importance of academic achievement ( $M = 5.2$ ). Army participants ranked highest in their perceptions regarding mentorship ( $M = 5.3$ ).

Research Question 1 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) perceive high school completion/dropping out of high school differently. The analysis connected with Research Question 1 indicated that there were

no significant differences among students within the various branches of JROTC regarding the importance of completing school and the detriments of dropping out of school. When compared to one another, all JROTC groups answered between slightly agree and agree, indicating that although JROTC respondents have positive feelings about finishing school and not dropping out, they were somewhat unenthusiastic in their responses. Descriptives concerning individual items in the subscale portion of the instrument describing high school completion indicate that the respondents answered between agree and strongly agree when asked questions about graduation. Respondents felt rather strongly that they would graduate and agree that a graduate would earn a higher income.

Research Question 2 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, and Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value daily school attendance. The analysis connected with this research question indicated that there were no significant differences among students within the various branches of JROTC regarding the importance of attending school on a regular basis. Descriptive statistics for this study reports that respondents indicated that they slightly agree to agree that school attendance was important to them. Responses on school completion/dropping out and school attendance indicate that JROTC respondents are generally positive, though perhaps somewhat tepid about both completing school and attending school on a regular basis.

Research Question 3 asked if JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ in the degree to which they value achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies). The analysis connected with Research Question 3 indicated that there were no significant differences



among students within the various branches of JROTC regarding the value of achievement in the core academic subject area courses (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies). Unlike the previous two subscales, respondents score highly on the subscale of academic achievement indicating that as a whole, JROTC cadets are somewhere between agreeing and strongly agreeing that academic achievement is important to them. Respondents indicated that they slightly disagree to slightly agree that students within the JROTC program are less likely to receive failing grades in the core subjects. Although the respondents are enthusiastic about achieving high grades in the core subject area courses, they do not agree that students in the JROTC program receive higher grades than other students.

Research Question 4 pertained to the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) regarding the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs. Results from across the armed services branches indicated relatively strong agreement about the degree to which students believe that they have been mentored; the mean values range from 4.9 to 5.5. These results also indicate that the perceptions of respondents regarding the degree to which they have been mentored do not differ by their respective programs.

Research Question 5 asked if the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches (Army, Navy, Air Force) differ with respect to the degree to which they have been mentored in their respective programs. The analysis connected with Research Question 5 indicated that there were no significant differences among students within the various branches of JROTC regarding the degree to which they have been mentored. Descriptive statistics report that respondents agree to strongly agree that their mentor

motivates them to stay in school, attend school regularly, and to achieve high grades in academic classes.

Research Question 6 asked if there was a relationship between the perceptions of JROTC students regarding the degree to which they have been mentored and their perceptions regarding academic achievement in core subject areas, school completion/dropping out, and school attendance. The analysis revealed that there is a relationship between perceptions of school completion and academic achievement and the degree to which students believe that they have been mentored. Analysis also revealed that there is not a relationship between school attendance and the degree to which students believe that they have been mentored. Thus, as student perceptions about mentorship strengthen, perceptions of the importance of school completion and academic achievement rise.

Additional findings indicate that JROTC respondents view academic courses more favorably than non-academic classes/activities. Mathematics ranked as the favorite course, followed by English. JROTC ranked third above Science and Social Studies.

### Discussion

Literature indicated ninth grade as the transition year for many students and one of the first years that high stakes testing directly affects graduation (Fulk, 2003; McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). The largest percentage of respondents from this study, 32.6%, classified themselves as being freshmen in high school. This finding adds to the body of research about students in this age group.

How successful a student will be in life is dependent on several factors. Among those factors is regular school attendance, having academic success, and not dropping

out. Results from this study indicate that there is little difference in how the respondents from the various JROTC program viewed these three variables. Descriptive data show that Air Force JROTC respondents scored highest on school completion and school attendance. Navy respondents scored highest in the variable of academic achievement. Army respondents score second in all variables with the exception of mentorship where they ranked first.

Results of this study indicated that no one branch of JROTC students values more strongly than the others with the outcomes associated with completing/dropping out of high school, attending school on a regular basis, and academic achievement in core academic subject areas. The information also suggests that respondents from the three JROTC branches slightly agree to agree that they perceive staying in school, and attending school on a regular basis as being important to them. Respondents agree to strongly agree that they perceive academic achievement as being important to them. Past research indicates that ninth grade is the transition year for many students and one of the first years that high stakes testing directly affects graduation (Fulk, 2003; McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). The results of this study indicate that a majority of the participants are in their ninth grade year and that JROTC respondents view favorably those factors that affect graduation.

Current literature indicates that factors that contribute to student decisions to drop out of school include absences and poor academic performance (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Balfanz & Legters, 2010; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Dube & Orpinas, 2009; Meeke et al., 2009). Due to the lack of studies that have involved JROTC cadets, the perceptions of the respondents in this study are an important addition to the limited data. Although

one might desire a stronger affirmation of graduation, the findings do show that JROTC respondents from this study, irrespective of the branch of service, indicated that they slightly agree to agree that they perceive school completion as important.

Regular school attendance has been linked with graduation rates in past research. Allenswoth and Easton (2007) indicated that students who missed five to nine days of school during the ninth grade year had a 63% rate of graduation compared to 87% for those who missed five days or less. This study showed no significance difference in how the three JROTC programs answered the questions pertaining to perceptions of school attendance; however, combined responses indicated that all three branches score this subscale between slightly agree and agree that regular school attendance is important.

In 2001, No Child Left Behind brought new challenges to schools to define how students' academic growth is measured and to ensure that gaps in performance among subgroups of students are diminished as schools work to achieve universal proficiency. This study adds to the existing literature that suggests that participation in JROTC programs has been shown to improve some aspects of academic achievement (Hanser & Robyn, 2000). Perceptions from respondents in this study show that cadets agree to strongly agree that achieving high grades in core academic classes is important factors in their lives. If in fact regular school attendance as indicated by Allenswoth & Easton, 2007, and high academic performance are factors that contribute to completing school, JROTC may influence the current trend of high dropout rates.

Findings from this study indicate that mentorship is related to perceptions of academic achievement and school completion/dropping out. These results are consistent with prior research describing mentoring. Jekielek et al. (2002) concluded that

significant positive effects increase as a mentoring relationship endures. Of the respondents, 56.3% indicated that they viewed someone in their life as a mentor. Jekielek et al. also indicated in their 2002 synthesis that mentored youth in relationships lasting longer than twelve months benefitted the most from their mentors. Cadets have the opportunity to spend four school years in a JROTC program, meeting the criteria set forth in prior research.

Other mentoring programs exist that add to the concept that the mentoring of youth outside the home improves school outcomes discussed in this study. Smink (1990) and Lefkowitz (1989) both indicate in past research that the absence of anyone who showed concern about the potential dropout were main reasons for the failure of that student to stay in school. Herrera (2004) concluded that programs such as BBBSA decrease grade retention and improve grades for at-risk youth. Programs such as BBBSA in combination with in school JROTC programs add to the potential academic success of today's youth.

In addition to data collected for the purpose of testing the hypotheses, additional data were collected from respondents regarding their perceptions of how they ranked academic classes and elective classes. The purpose of these data was to determine if JROTC respondents from the three JROTC programs view academic classes more or less favorably compared to non-academic classes. The respondents were asked to rank academic classes and non-academic classes in order of most favorite to least favorite. It was interesting and, in light of other outcomes of interest in the study, encouraging to note that academic classes were ranked more favorably than non-academic classes with the exception of JROTC. JROTC could have been ranked highly due to the fact that only

JROTC students participated in this study. Although JROTC ranked more favorably than Science or Social Studies, academic classes overall ranked above non-academic classes.

There were no significant differences among students in terms of their perceptions about the school outcomes addressed in this study; however, the study did show that overall each JROTC branch appears, in general, to be doing a good job of influencing the JROTC cadets to perceive the discussed variables in a favorable way. By mentoring youth and influencing their views of the discussed school outcomes in a positive way, Average Daily Attendance (ADA), the High School Completion Index (HSCI), and graduation rates, all of which affect the assessment and accountability status of a school, could improve.

#### Limitations

This study did not involve those students outside of JROTC programs. Thus, while one gains insight into the perceptions of these students, it is not clear how these perspectives compare to non-JROTC students. The study was further limited to schools within Mississippi that offered a JROTC program.

This study did not include respondents from Marine JROTC. At the present time, Mississippi offers four programs through-out the state, but there were insufficient numbers of Marine JROTC programs to provide an adequate sub-sample. The researcher did not access actual school completion/dropout, attendance, or achievement data for student respondents. The study therefore provides insights into the perceptions of students about these school outcomes, but not the actual performance of students relative to these variables.

The attendance subscale was limited in the number of questions that were asked. Additional questions to the attendance sub-scale would increase its power and possibly leading to more statistically sound outcomes. Demographic questions or questions within the instrument did not address whether participants in this study were at-risk youth. Reports have indicated that JROTC program often service at-risk youth.

#### Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Each day school administrators are faced with the challenges of improving average daily attendance, the high school completion index, and the graduation rates of their schools. A student who is motivated to succeed in school can enhance not only his/her learning experience, but also the learning experience for others involved in the education process. Although there were no significant differences in the perceptions of JROTC students in the various branches in this study, respondents' overall perceptions of the selected school outcomes were generally favorable.

Rumberger and Lim (2008) indicated that dropping out of school is more of a process than an event. Behaviors that at-risk youth often exhibit both in school and when not in school are strong indicators of the potential to a drop-out. These indicators include, but are not limited to, absenteeism and poor academic achievement, behaviors that are often indicated as early as elementary school. Various factors distract from students being motivated to stay in school. Past research reports that students who miss school often are more likely to have worse grades than those who have high attendance (Guare & Cooper, 2003). The respondents to this study indicated that they perceive school completion and school attendance as generally favorable. School leaders could use results from this study to show stakeholders involved in the education of today's

youth that students who participate in JROTC programs are likely to perceive school completion and regular school attendance as favorable, therefore decreasing their prospects of dropping out before graduation.

Academic achievement has become an increasingly important topic of discussion since the passage of NCLB in 2001 (No Child Left Behind, n.d.). Educators are under added pressure to define how their individual efforts and their programs impact students' academic growth and contribute to a school's overall success. In addition to JROTC respondents generally perceiving school completion and school attendance as favorable in this study, cadets were even more positive that academic achievement was important to them. Included in the research conducted by Rumberger and Lim (2008) was a section on academic achievement. In their review, they indicated that poor academic achievement is one of the strongest predictors for students dropping out of school. The data from this study indicated that JROTC respondents agree to strongly agree that achieving high grades in core academic classes was important. If the results of the 25 years of research conducted by Rumberger and Lim are accurate, then participation in JROTC may strongly influence an at-risk student to remain in school. Also, examining the policies and practices in JROTC programs for their implications for the general education program may be useful in assisting districts to help students improve the academic adjustment, retention, and success in school.

Building principals can use the results of this study to justify the expansion of JROTC programs in their schools. One of the significant outcomes of this study was the impact of mentoring on school completion and academic achievement in core academic classes among JROTC respondents. As reported by Curtis and Hansen-Schwoebel



(1999), mentoring can reduce the number of absences, help students to develop more positive attitudes about attending school, and make these students less likely to repeat a grade. A majority of the respondents in this study reported that they have a mentor in their lives. Of those reporting, 78.4% stated that JROTC representatives are one of their mentors. Today, like in the late 1990's, mentoring has been discussed as a strategy for positive youth development and as a deterrent of risky youth behavior and as a way to improve the academic adjustment, retention, and success in school (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). School leadership teams could encourage students who fall into a high-risk category to enroll in the JROTC program in an effort to increase student achievement levels and high school completion rates.

School leaders and policy makers should increase opportunities for all persons employed in the field of education to build relationships with students, as this study found that JROTC respondents view mentorship as an important aspect of their academic success. The findings presented in this study add to the available research in finding ways to help students succeed in school.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers studying issues related to the topics addressed in this research could focus on extending the geographical area from which data are collected. Although the region offered the researcher some geographic diversity to include in the study, one might consider other geographical regions and see if the results remain consistent.

Perhaps the same type of study would produce different results if it were conducted with a population representing a different socio-economic or geographical profile. The results of this study were based on responses from one state.

Researchers interested in expanding this study could focus on the impact of variables included in this study. It could also be intriguing to examine the correlation between the student achievement scores at the different grade levels and other study variables. The results of this study took into account the responses from the different branches, but not grade levels.

Inclusion of the Marine JROTC would bring another aspect into the study. Although there were four Marine groups within the state of Mississippi, the researcher did not believe that adequate numbers would be achieved. To fully gain an overall perspective on the various branches of military, expanding the research to include JROTC programs outside the state of Mississippi could add a significant amount of Marine JROTC programs. The inclusion of this group may add a larger demographic to the study that could influence the outcome.

Researchers might consider comparing the perspectives of students in other non-academic classes with the perspectives of those in JROTC programs in order to contrast their perspectives and gain additional insights into the research issues addressed. The data collection would have to be expanded dramatically to obtain an adequate sample size. The addition of students outside the influence of the JROTC program would certainly add to the findings of this study and to the literature as well. The validity of the results would strengthen if comparisons were made to sports programs as well as academic and non-academic clubs.

Finally, actual performance data could be used instead of respondents' perceptions. Collecting data on the number of students who have dropped out, the number of days missed by students, and how well students are performing in school

would provide a more accurate representation of the respondent's school performance. The inclusion of actual performance data would strengthen the study.

### Summary

This research study examined whether differences existed within the context of three branches of JROTC. Factors included student perceptions of completing school, school attendance, academic achievement, and mentorship. The data used in this study were captured from 570 students representing all regions of Mississippi. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, paired t-tests, and a regression model.

The review of literature indicated that there is no single factor that completely accounts for a student's decision to continue in school until graduation. The variables addressed in this study are only a few that influence a student to make the decision to complete/drop out of school; however, results indicate that each JROTC program is having a positive effect on the participants' perceptions.

Completing school was viewed similarly by students in the three JROTC programs in this study. Respondents felt rather strongly that they would graduate and agreed that a graduate would earn a higher income. Regular school attendance was also viewed similarly by students in the three JROTC programs, although mean scores indicated a lukewarm response in their perspectives. Academic achievement had the second highest ratings among the variables researched among the three JROTC programs. Respondents tend to agree that academic achievement is an important aspect in their lives.

Perceptions of mentorship ranked highest among all variables researched during this study. The participants of the three JROTC programs agreed that in the case where mentors were present, the mentors motivated them in the other three variables used in this study. There was an absence of difference between the perspectives of students in the various branches of JROTC used in this study. This absence of difference may have resulted from the life skills curriculum that is particularly effective in the JROTC programs (Bartlett & Lutz, 1998).

Major findings include that the degree to which a JROTC student has been mentored was significantly related to the variables of school completion and academic achievement. These results are consistent with the literature supporting the importance of mentoring youth. These data can further the arguments presented by Lipman and Haines (2007) over whether JROTC programs should be offered in public schools.

Recommendations for policy and practice were made for educational leaders based on the results of this study and the review of literature. The recommendations are based on findings related to the variables examined in this study and how participation in a JROTC program can influence perceptions of students to ultimately remain in school, attend routinely, and strive for high academic achievement. Recommendations for future research were made concerning several factors that can add to the research data included in this study. One such factor includes the addition of non-JROTC students to the study. By limiting this study to students who were part of a JROTC program, the researcher did not account for a large demographic of students.

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE

JROTC Dropout, Attendance, Academic Achievement and Mentoring Perception  
Instrument

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ALL ITEMS IN THIS SURVEY ARE REQUIRED FOR PROCESSING  
PLEASE USE NO. 2 PENCIL OR BLACK OR BLUE INK ONLY

What is your Gender?

Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

What is your age?

14-15 \_\_\_ 16-17 \_\_\_ 18-19 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity?

Asian \_\_\_ Black \_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_ White \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Which of the following best describes the community in which you live?

Urban \_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_ Rural \_\_\_

What is your current grade level status?

(9<sup>th</sup>)Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ (10<sup>th</sup>)Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ (11<sup>th</sup>)Junior \_\_\_ (12<sup>th</sup>)Senior \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION A: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

Please check the response that best matches your opinion about the following statements:

1. High school dropout rates are a problem for society.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_\_

2. Students who graduate high school will make more money than students who do not graduate high school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_\_

3. Students who drop out of high school are viewed less favorably than those who graduate high school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

4. JROTC students are more likely to drop out of school before graduating compared to the other students.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

5. JROTC students are less likely to attend college immediately following high school than other students.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

6. Participating in the JROTC programs makes a student less likely drop out of high school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

7. My JROTC program has problems retaining students beyond their freshman year.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

8. I will graduate from high school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

9. I have thought about dropping out of school myself.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

## SECTION B: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

10. School attendance is important to me.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

11. Students who meet school attendance policies have higher grades.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

12. JROTC students do not have better attendance records than do the other students at our high school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

## SECTION C: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

13. JROTC students are less likely to receive failing grades in core subject areas (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies).

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

14. Achieving high grades in math courses is important to me.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

15. Achieving high grades in science courses is important to me.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

16. Achieving high grades in English courses is important to me.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

17. Achieving high grades in social studies courses is important to me.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

## SECTION D: JROTC

18. The JROTC program is viewed as a positive program to our school by teachers and students alike.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

19. JROTC students exhibit more leadership abilities in our school than other students.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

20. JROTC students are more active in extra-curricular activities than other students.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

21. JROTC prepares students to go to college.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

22. The JROTC program provides an opportunity for students who would not otherwise become actively involved in school activities to participate in extra-curricular activities.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

23. JROTC students, in general, exhibit more self-esteem than other students.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
(Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_

## SECTION E: MENTORSHIP

A mentor is a person who shares knowledge, skills, and information to help mold the personal and professional growth of someone else.

Do you have a mentor? If no, skip to Section F.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, who is your mentor?

\_\_\_\_\_ My JROTC instructor



\_\_\_ A junior or senior JROTC student

\_\_\_ Both my JROTC instructor and a junior or senior JROTC student

\_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

24. My mentor can meet at a time that meets my schedule.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

25. My mentor is supportive and encouraging.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

26. My mentor motivates me to stay in school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

27. My mentor motivates me to attend school regularly.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

28. My mentor motivates me to achieve high grades in Core Academic classes (Math, Science, English, and Social Studies).

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

29. My mentor spends enough time with me to influence my decisions about being successful in school.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

30. I want to mentor someone.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

31. I believe every leader should be mentoring someone.

(Strongly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Disagree)\_\_\_ (Slightly Agree) \_\_\_  
 (Agree) \_\_ (Strongly Agree) \_\_ (Not Applicable)\_\_\_

#### SECTION F: ACADEMICS VS ELECTIVES

Please rank the following items (on a scale of 1-9 with 1 being the highest and 9 being the lowest) in order of importance. Enter your ranking inside the parenthesis– example (3)

- ( ) English
- ( ) Foreign Language
- ( ) JROTC
- ( ) Mathematics
- ( ) Physical Education
- ( ) Science
- ( ) School Activities (football, soccer, baseball, volleyball, softball, band, chorus, cheerleading, dance, etc.)
- ( ) School Clubs (BETA, FFA, DECA, FBLA, Key, School Activities Club, Academic, drama, environmental, etc.)
- ( ) Social Studies

APPENDIX B

VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

JROTC Perception of Academic Achievement, Attendance, and Dropout Rate Validity Questionnaire

Thank you for volunteering time to assist with the development of this questionnaire. Your input is very important with respect to the questionnaire itself and the development of the dissertation overall. Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated.

Please rate the included questionnaire based on the following information:

- 1. Does the survey contain language that can be understood by students who have agreed to participate in the study?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If No, please write why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding perceptions of academic achievement?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If No, Please write why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding perceptions of attendance?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If No, Please write why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding perceptions of dropping out of school?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If No, Please write why: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the survey address specific and appropriate issues in the statements, as it relates to obtaining information regarding perceptions of mentoring?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If No, Please write why: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Are there any survey items that you would modify?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, Please write which question and why: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Do you find any of the survey items offensive or overly intrusive?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, Please write which question and why: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Are there any survey items that you would exclude from the questionnaire?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, Please write which question and why: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Are there any other survey items that you would include that are *not* included on the questionnaire?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, Please write type of question and why: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Please make any other comments or suggestions about the questionnaire below:

## APPENDIX C

## LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Michael J. Weaver  
Address

Date

Dear Superintendent:

My name is Michael Weaver and I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Southern Mississippi. I have completed my course work and will be conducting the research project associated with my dissertation in the near future. The topic I have chosen is *Perceptions of Academic Achievement in Core Subject Areas, Graduation Rates, Dropout Rates, and School Attendance Among Students In The Various Branches of JROTC*. The study will focus on JROTC student perceptions about the aforementioned areas during the 2011-2012 school year. I am requesting permission to contact your high school(s) about participating in my research project. I would appreciate your assistance in my quest to complete this project.

During the data collection process, the researcher will be asking JROTC students in your district to complete a short questionnaire dealing with their perceptions of academic achievement, graduation, dropping out of school, and school attendance. Each student will have the opportunity to decline participation, and the permission of each student's parents/guardians will likewise be a pre-condition for the child's participation. To complete the data analysis, the researcher will need to match each student's questionnaire to the mean scale score for their school. Participant's responses will not be totally confidential. However, the researcher will not use any individual student names in the data analysis. At no time will any party other than my statistics advisor be allowed access to the data collected during this process. To ensure a smooth process, I would like to meet with each high school principal, at his/her convenience, to go over the coding of the surveys.

Based on the results of this study of student perceptions, school leaders in other school districts with similar demographics will have a basis for determining whether JROTC classes are worthwhile for students to choose. Once the dissertation is complete, I will be more than happy to share the findings of my research project with anyone in your district. I truly appreciate your time and assistance in the educational venture.

If you choose to grant me permission to request data from your students and use their questionnaire answers in the project, please sign the attached form and fax it back to me as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you

Mr. Michael J. Weaver

(cell)

Email address

(fax)

By signing and returning this form, I give Mr. Michael Weaver permission to conduct a research study at \_\_\_\_\_ High School. I acknowledge that Mr. Weaver may meet with each high school administrator and upon approval from the administrator that Mr. Weaver will deliver consent forms and questionnaires to each JROTC instructor to during the 2011-2012 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D

## IRB APPROVAL FORM

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/irb](http://www.usm.edu/irb)**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11121503****PROJECT TITLE: Perceptions of Academic Achievement in Core Subject Areas, Dropout Rates, and School Attendance among Students in the Various Branches of JROTC****PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation****RESEARCHER/S: Michael Joseph Weaver****COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology****DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & School Counseling****FUNDING AGENCY: N/A****IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval****PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: 01/17/2012 to 01/16/2013**

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board Chair**

## APPENDIX E

## ADULT AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FOR RESEARCH FORM

University of Southern Mississippi

118 College Drive #5147

Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

(601)266-6820

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Date:

Title of Study: Perceptions of Academic Achievement in Core Subject Areas,  
Dropout Rates and School Attendance among Students in the Various Branches of  
JROTC

Research will be conducted by: Michael Weaver (228) 297-1199

Email Address: rebelsoccer119@yahoo.com

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mike Ward

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What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You, as a JROTC student are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to provide your consent to participate and your parent/guardian must also give permission for you to participate. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason at any time, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.



Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you and your parent/guardian understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given the first four pages of this consent form and the researcher will keep the fifth sheet, which contains your signature and the signature of your parent/guardian. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research study is to examine the perceptions of academic achievement in core subject areas (Math, English, History, and Science), dropout rates, and school attendance among students in the various branches of JROTC.

How many people will take part in this study?

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 900 JROTC students included in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

Parents/guardians and JROTC students will be asked to sign a consent form and JROTC students who have the signature of parent/guardian on the consent form will fill out a questionnaire, which will be handed out in JROTC class and will take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. A report of the research findings will be made available to you upon request at the conclusion of this study by emailing Michael Weaver at [rebelsoccer119@yahoo.com](mailto:rebelsoccer119@yahoo.com).

What will happen if you take part in the study?

Parent/guardians and students will be asked to sign the consent form and students will fill out a questionnaire. The student will not identify himself or herself on the questionnaire. The researcher will collect data from the questionnaire. Throughout the process of analysis, the researcher will keep the questionnaire in a locked box in a secure location. The questionnaire and consent form will be shredded upon completion of this project.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?

The benefit of the study will be the contribution of the findings to a better understanding of the role that JROTC programs have in influencing the perceptions of students about academic achievement in core subject areas (Math, English, History, and Science), dropout rates, and school attendance among students in the various branches of JROTC. The study will provide insights for administrators and policymakers into whether there are differences in these student perceptions among the JROTC programs. The results may better enable JROTC staff, principals, and policymakers to provide high quality programs to students. Participants should request a summary of these results from Michael Weaver at rebelsoccer119@yahoo.com.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved with being in this study?

The risks are that the respondents may not feel comfortable answering questions regarding the activities that they engage in and expressing their opinions regarding the roles/activities in which their mentors should be engaged or their perceptions about academic achievement, dropouts, and school attendance. These concerns may be eased by the promise of confidentiality for respondents that will be provided. Only the researcher and his university faculty advisors will view the participant responses. All responses will be kept secure and locked in the researcher's home. Questionnaires and consent forms will be destroyed after one year.

How will your privacy be protected?

Participants will not indicate their identities on the questionnaire. They will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Only the researcher and his university faculty advisors will view these questionnaires. Questionnaires will be kept secure and locked in the researcher's home. Questionnaires and consent forms will be shredded after a year.

What if you have questions about this study?

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

Title of Study: Perceptions of Academic Achievement in Core Subject Areas,  
 Dropout Rates, and School Attendance among Students in the Various Branches of  
 JROTC

Principal Investigator: Michael Weaver

Participant's Agreement:

My parent/guardian and I have read the information provided above. We have asked all  
 the questions we have at this time. We voluntarily agree to my participation in this  
 research study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian	

Signature of Research Participant (JROTC Student)	Date

Printed Name of Research Participant (JROTC Student)	

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent	Date

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent	

## REFERENCES

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