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EXPLORING GENERATIVITY IN YOUNG ADULTS:

A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

by:

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A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Major: Leadership Education

Under the Supervision of Professor Lindsay Hastings

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2022

EXPLORING GENERATIVITY IN YOUNG ADULTS:
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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University of Nebraska, 2022

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Generativity expresses one's level of care and concern for the next generation (Erikson, 1950, 1963). Initially established as a middle adulthood phenomenon, generativity has long been rooted in a middle adulthood framework both conceptually and through its psychometric dimensions. However, many studies have found generativity to be present in other stages of life, particularly young adulthood. This then raised the question of whether the traditional model used for generativity's manifestation represents young adults' experiences. This study sought further to explore generativity's manifestation in a way that is specific to young adults. Applying traditional grounded theory techniques, the present research reanalyzed secondary data from four original studies to explore how generativity is manifested within young adults. A new conceptual model of generativity was developed from these studies, and a theory depicting how generativity is manifested among this age group was generated. The new conceptual model was also compared to the traditional framework of generativity, showcasing similarities and differences in how generativity manifests among middle-aged and young adults. This study establishes foundational insight into the uniqueness of generativity's development in young adulthood and encourages future research to explore this construct further.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Generativity is identified as "the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, 1963, p. 267). It has been linked to many positive outcomes including life satisfaction (Adams-Price et al., 2018), identity development (Marcia, 2002), and well-being factors such as self-acceptance, autonomy, and purpose in life (Ackerman et al., 2000; Grossbaum & Bates, 2002). As the seventh of the eight stages of psychosocial development, generativity has traditionally been considered a midlife adulthood construct (Erikson, 1950, 1963) that can be expressed and developed through contexts such as parenthood and establishing a family (McAdams & Logan, 2004). However, in recent years more studies have explored and tested the presence of generativity among different age groups, including late adulthood (Adams-Price et al., 2018) and young adulthood (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011; Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Lawford et al., 2020; Lawford et al., 2005; Lawford & Ramey, 2015). These studies suggest that in addition to parenting, generativity can also be developed through other formats such as leadership mentoring (Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019), teaching (McAdams & Logan, 2004), active engagement in one's community (Lawford et al., 2015), and leadership within organizations (Slater, 2003).

Recent studies have also found high levels of generativity among young adults, particularly amongst college student leaders who mentor (Hastings et al., 2015, Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Sunderman, 2020a). Even though research has explored and found generativity present in early adulthood, there is a lack of research exploring generativity, specifically in adolescents and young adults (Leffel, 2008). This study sought to address

the need for research in this area. Because of generativity's traditional placement as a middle adulthood experience, there is a possibility that assessments currently used to measure generativity are also framed relevant to middle adulthood experiences (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993). The continued exploration of this phenomenon in young adulthood is imperative to evaluate generativity that is representative of this age group effectively. That is precisely what this study aimed to explore.

Hastings et al. (2015) also address the growing concern of job turnover in leadership positions. The current population holding these jobs is aging out at a fast rate, meaning young adults will soon have to answer this gap and fill these positions. This call to action for young adults can also be attributed to social responsibility, in which generativity is strongly linked (Rossi, 2001; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019), and the ideals of higher education, which aims to develop "more effective citizens," through community-based engagement (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2022). Because of these fast-approaching roles and expectations in our society, we need to explore generativity further to best understand ways to support young adults who will ultimately invest in the next generation. These young adults can find success and have positive outcomes that affect themselves as individuals and society.

Further exploration of generativity and its manifestation within this age group is critical. By better understanding how this phenomenon is developed within this population, we can ensure they are supported in the leadership roles they take over and ultimately enable them to create positive impacts. The purpose of this grounded theory study was to develop a theory to explain the process of how generativity is manifested in

young adults. Generativity centers around having an attachment to and concern for future generations. When the concept was first established, generativity was considered to be most common in midlife adulthood and associated with raising children (Erikson, 1963). However, generativity has also been commonly linked to actions that have regular interactions with the next generation beyond raising a child, such as teaching and mentoring.

Seminal researchers in this field, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) created the conceptual model of generativity. They believed generativity was first established through the motivational sources of cultural demand and inner desire. After that, generativity is channeled through concern for, commitment to, and belief in the next generation, which is then turned into action. Finally, generativity is given its sense of meaning through narration and sharing life stories with others. Since this initial placement, a handful of recent studies have shown generativity's presence in life stages beyond midlife adulthood, particularly during young adulthood. Even though studies have found generativity in this age group, the measures used to measure generativity remain rooted in midlife constructs. Doing so leaves room for potential bias and inaccurate measurements for those in life stages other than midlife. These ideas will be further discussed in the literature review.

Evidence supports generativity's presence within this population, yet research seeking to understand this construct among young adults is still limited. The focus of this study aimed to explore generativity among young adults and generate a theory based on their own experiences with the construct. A conceptual model was also created to provide further insight into the developed theory.

The term ‘young adults’ was used in the study to maintain continuity with seminal work within the field of generativity. Original studies utilize terms such as ‘midlife adults’ and ‘middle adulthood’ (Erikson, 1963; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Carrying on with this same format, this study incorporated the term ‘young adult’ to describe the population whose experiences were re-analyzed to develop the theory of generativity’s manifestation unique to this life stage. For the purpose of this study, ‘young adult’ referred to college student leaders who mentor.

1.2 Research Questions

The central question guiding the data analysis in this study was: How does generativity manifest itself in young adults? The research sub-questions to further explore this question was:

1. How do young adults describe generativity?
2. In what ways do young adults recognize their generativity?
3. What experiences do young adults associate with generativity?
4. How do young adults experience generativity?

The central and sub-research questions were framed to explore these participant experiences and generate a theory rooted in their understanding. The sub-questions were formatted to provide a guided yet flexible structure to examine further what is taking place for generativity to develop in young adults. The questions aimed to explore how young adults describe their generativity, how they recognize their generativity, in what ways young adults experience generativity development, and the thoughts, feelings, and emotions they associate with experiencing generativity. Ultimately, a central theory was developed to explain this phenomenon within young adults.

1.3 Definition of Key Terms

Generativity - “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation”

(Erikson, 1950, 1963, p. 267)

College Student Leaders Who Mentor - traditionally aged college students involved in a mentoring program at the university where this study is taking place. Individuals are identified and selected for the program due to their “significant capacity to positively influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others” (Hastings, 2012, p. 55)

Young Adults – for the purpose of the present study, young adults referred to college student leaders who mentor. The term ‘young adults’ was applied to maintain continuity with initial studies of generativity and its development (Erikson, 1963; McAdams and de St. Aubin, 1992), where the terms ‘middle adult’ and ‘middle adulthood’ are applied

Generative Action – “can be expressed [through] creating, maintaining, or offering”

(McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1006)

Generative Belief - “to believe in the (human) species is to place hope in the advancement and betterment of human life in succeeding generations” (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1006)

Generative Commitment - “taking responsibility for the next generation by making decisions about establishing goals for generative behavior” (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1006)

Generative Concern – “a conscious concern for the next generation” (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1005)

Narration - “life-story theory of adult identity [that is developed by] the gradual construction and successive reconstruction of a personal myth integrating one’s perceived

past, present, and anticipated future while specifying ways in which the individual fits into and distinguishes [themselves] in the social world” (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1006).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

When utilizing a grounded theory methodology, many researchers encourage the literature review to be incorporated and done throughout the study as new data is being generated and analyzed (Babchuk & Boswell, in press; Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). The literature review was conducted in multiple phases throughout the study, as Thornberg and Dunne (2019) recommend. Doing so allowed me to find studies and past research that best aligned with the data and critical themes as they emerged. The following literature review is the initial literature review conducted to provide a foundation of essential works and studies to establish me within the field of generativity. The initial literature review also focused heavily on the traditional grounded theory framework. Because this framework was used as a sensitizing concept within the study, its inclusion was critical to demonstrate where current research was and what the present study found. Additional literature was analyzed and incorporated throughout the study by conducting an ongoing and final literature review. Those reviews are included in the discussion section.

As shown in Figure 2.1 below, this literature review is outlined by topic and incorporates literature around generativity within each category. First, an overview of generativity as a construct is provided, followed by a review of the components and measures of generativity. This section also includes a breakdown of the conceptual model of generativity. Next, associated outcomes of generativity are reviewed, and various studies that have explored these outcomes are discussed. In the following section, generativity within different age groups is examined, and findings amongst late

adulthood, midlife adulthood, and young adulthood are compared and contrasted. In the final component, the context of generativity is narrowed specifically toward young adulthood, and generativity's connection with mentoring and Leadership Identity Development is outlined.

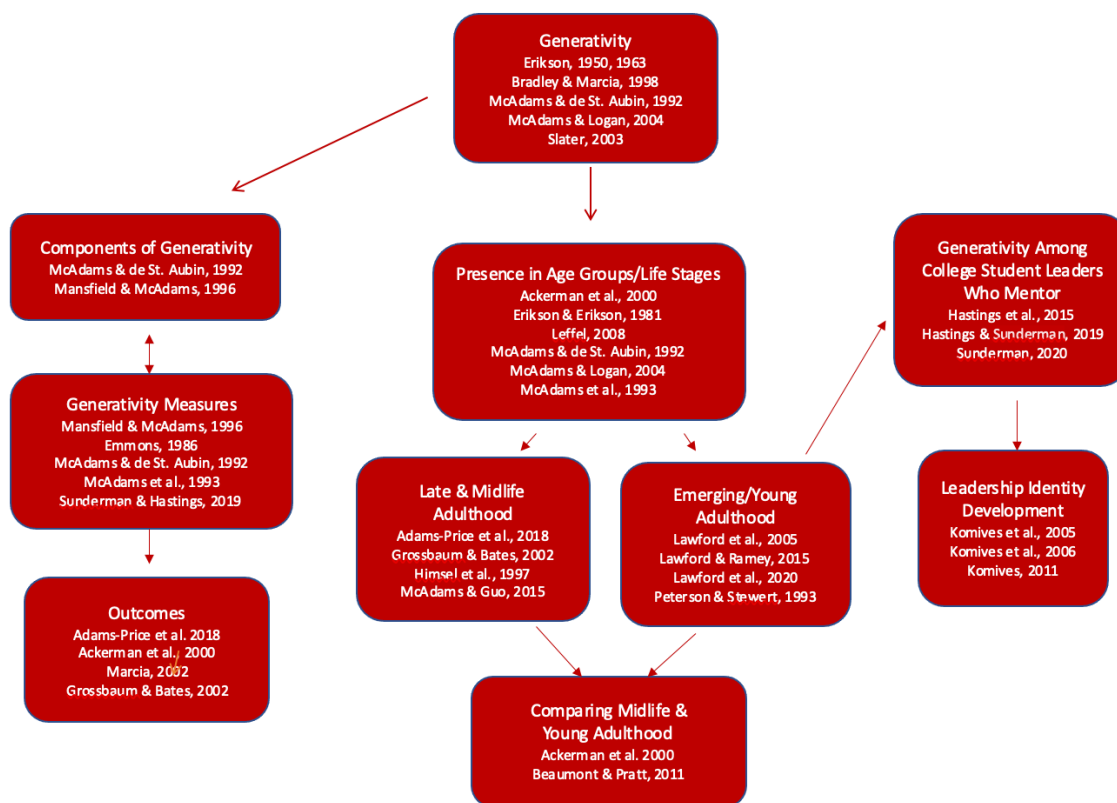


Figure 2.1

Literature Review Map

2.2 Generativity

Generativity was first introduced as one of eight stages of psychosocial development by Erik Erikson in 1950. He defined it as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” (Erikson, 1950, 1963, p. 267). Erikson

paired generativity as the opposite of stagnation in his seventh psychosocial developmental stage, which occurs when individuals feel as though they cannot positively impact those around them (Erikson, 1950, 1963). One can reach and develop generativity when they acquire a deeper level of identity and intimacy from the previous developmental stages, furthering their sense of responsibility for the next generation (Bradley & Marcia, 1998). Generativity can also be connected to a desire for immortality (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams & Logan, 2004). Through the investment of and connection to the next generation, a piece of the individual can symbolically carry on after they are gone.

As the seventh of the eight stages, generativity has traditionally been considered a midlife adulthood construct (Erikson, 1950, 1963) that can be expressed and developed through parenthood and establishing a family (McAdams & Logan, 2004). However, in recent years more studies have explored and found the presence of generativity among different age groups, including late adulthood (Adams-Price et al., 2018) and young adulthood (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011; Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Lawford et al., 2020; Lawford et al., 2005; Lawford & Ramey, 2015). These studies suggest that in addition to parenting, generativity can also be developed through other formats such as mentoring (Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019), teaching (McAdams & Logan, 2004), active engagement in one's community (Lawford et al., 2015), and leadership within organizations (Slater, 2003). These findings of generative growth beyond the traditional midlife lens in which it has historically been categorized raise the need to explore generativity among other life stages further.

2.3 Generativity Components and Measures

McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) provided a framework for the conceptualization of generativity, which is composed of seven psychological features which include (a) cultural demand; (b) inner desire; (c) conscious concern; (d) belief; (e) generative commitment; (f) generative action; and (g) narration of personal life stories. Initially, generativity stems from two significant motivations, cultural demand and an inner desire (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). When the two motivations are combined, conscious concern for, commitment to, and action toward the next generation can grow and be reinforced through beliefs and personal narrations of life stories (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993). McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) state that all seven components of generativity are essential to understanding one's generativity as a whole. This model is shown in Figure 2.2 below.

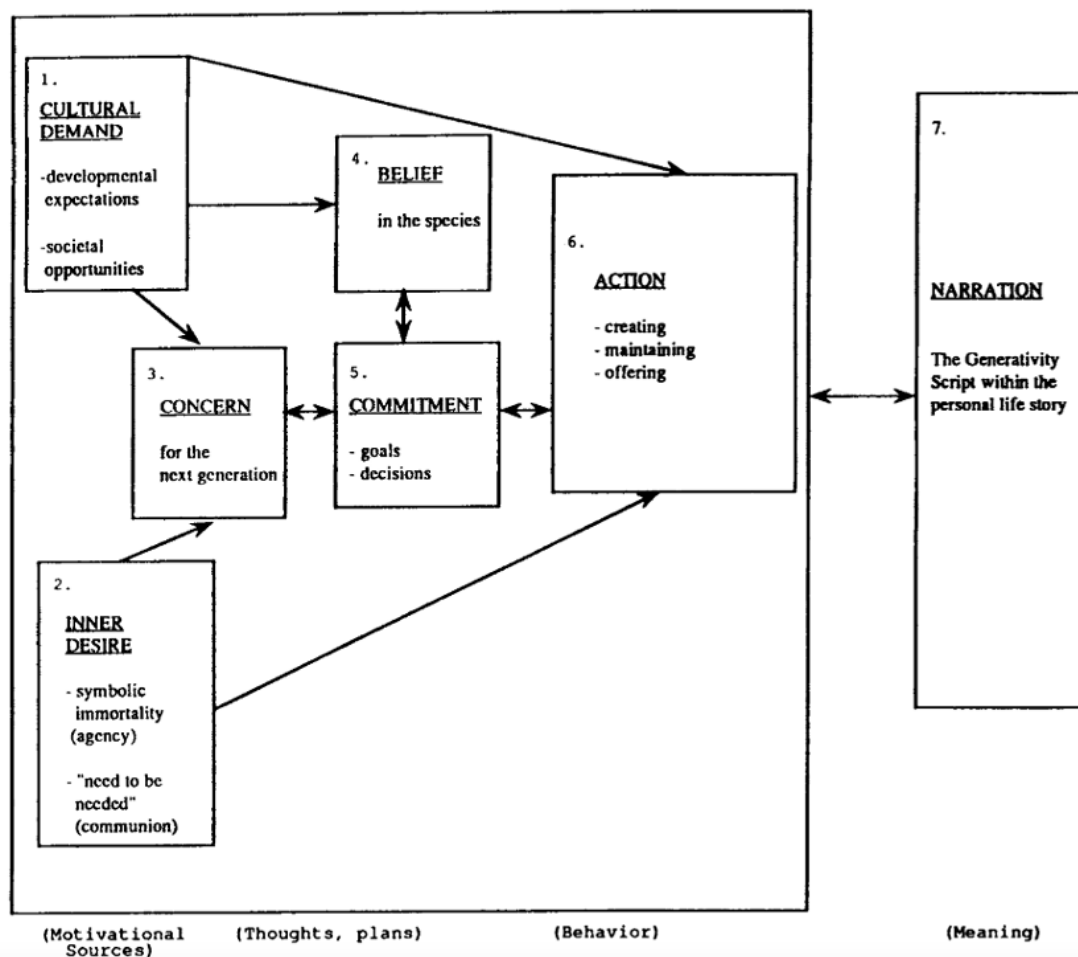


Figure 2.2

Conceptual Model of Generativity

Note. From "A Theory of Generativity and Its Assessment Through Self-Report, Behavioral Acts, and Narrative Themes in Autobiography," by D. P. McAdams and E. de St. Aubin, 1992, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62(6), p. 1005 (<https://doi/10.1037/0022-3514.62.6.1003>). Copyright 1992 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) proposed that the model for generativity first begins with two motivation sources, specifically cultural demand and inner desire. Cultural demand centers around the idea of developmental expectations and societal opportunities. Developmental expectations suggest that generativity first stems from the societal desire to care for the next generation. Individuals could feel compelled to invest in the younger generation as they increase their age and what their society is communicating as the norm. Societal opportunities are another critical component of generativity. Opportunities and challenges presented via jobs, living standards, and ways of thinking within an individual's society greatly influence their generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Inner desire is the second motivational source of generativity, composed of agency and communion. Agency centers around self-expansion and power (Mansfield & McAdams, 1996). The desire within the agency is rooted in the idea of reaching symbolic immortality by continuing to live on through those they have invested in once they have passed (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Communion is based on self-sacrifice and one's "desire to be needed by others" (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1005; Mansfield & McAdams, 1996). Individuals with high levels of generativity are led by agency and communion to guide the next generation and intentionally invest in them. Mansfield and McAdams (1996) explored the differences between agency and communion among adults with high and low generativity. The study found that adults with higher levels of generativity also had higher agency and communion levels than adults with low levels of generativity (Mansfield & McAdams, 1996). Ackerman et al. (2000) also found high levels of agency or high levels of communion to be significant

predictors of generativity in midlife adults; however, having high levels of both was not significant in the study.

Generative concern is established once the motivational sources of cultural demand and inner desire are combined. Supported by both internal and external components of caring for the next generation, an individual can transform that call into a sense of concern for the next generation (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). After generative concern has been identified, generative commitment can then be manifested. Generative commitment acts as a pledge to support the next generation by incorporating goals and decisions that allow generative behavior to be enacted (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Generative commitment can also be strengthened through generative belief or the belief that the human species is generally good and capable of betterment (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992).

Led by generative thoughts and plans, generative action can then be established once a concern, belief, and commitment are present. Generative action encompasses behaviors that one can use towards the next generation through “creating, maintaining, or offering” (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1006). Generative action creates the ability for one to put the previous components of the generativity model into motion. This is done by encouraging the creation, maintaining beneficial practices, and selflessly giving to the next generation. The final part of the model of generativity is narration. Narration serves as the piece of the model in which the individual makes sense of their generativity within their own life. Generative narration demonstrates one's awareness of their generativity and addresses the notion that one will live on through those who survive them (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992).

In addition to constructing a configuration of the components of generativity, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) also established measurement strategies to gauge individual generativity levels. The Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) is a self-report scale used to measure generative concern, the Generativity Behavior Checklist (GBC) is a behavioral checklist used to indicate generative action, and autobiographical episodes allow for the assessment of generative narration (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Along with the three measures, McAdams et al. (1993) also include Emmon's (1986) Personal Strivings measure to assess an individual's level of generative commitment. McAdams et al. (1993) theorize that generative commitments lead to generative action when used together. Additionally, generative commitments also modify generative concern into generative action.

2.4 Outcomes of Generativity

While McAdams and de St. Aubin's (1992) conceptual model offers a theoretical understanding of generativity's components as well as its motivation sources, several studies have linked generativity to positive outcomes such as identity development (Marcia, 2002), life satisfaction (Adams-Price et al. 2018; Grossbaum & Bates, 2002), and well-being (Ackerman et al., 2000; Grossbaum & Bates, 2002). Identity is "formed at late adolescence [and] is constructed both consciously and unconsciously from the part-identifications of childhood as they are experienced by the individual in his or her socialization contexts and imagined future" (Marcia, 2002, p. 14). Marcia's (2002) research linked Erikson's life cycle stage of generativity to high levels of inclusion and vital involvement in caregiving, providing growth towards identity development in adulthood.

Additional research has also linked generativity to life satisfaction and overall well-being. Adams-Price et al. (2018) found that life satisfaction was directly related to the construct when looking at generative concern in older adults. Additionally, Ackerman et al. (2000) conducted a study to explore generativity and its connection to agency, communion, and well-being. They found generative concern to be significantly related to positive affectivity, life satisfaction, and work satisfaction among midlife adults (Ackerman et al., 2000).

Another study conducted by Grossbaum and Bates (2002) found generative concern to predict life satisfaction significantly. However, there was no found connection between generative behavior and life satisfaction. Generative concern was also found to significantly predict Ryff's psychological well-being measures, including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. (Grossbaum & Bates, 2002). Recognizing these connections between generativity and positive outcomes is critical to fully understanding the benefits of generativity and its value in our society. Studying generativity in a way that is distinct to young adulthood can provide insight on ways for individuals to achieve those ideal outcomes through generativity at a younger age while continuing to foster them as they age.

2.5 Generativity Among Different Life Stages

Generativity was initially introduced as a midlife developmental construct of Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages and can still be considered as such. However, more recent studies have since challenged the idea that generativity is present only at a specific segment of the life cycle (Ackerman et al., 2000; McAdams & de St.

Aubin, 1992; McAdams & Logan, 2004). Leffel (2008), for example, encourages the fluidity of generativity during the life cycle and notes the lack of research focusing on adolescents and young adults. Erikson himself even recognized that as times change, generativity can be utilized beyond the care of biological children (Erikson & Erikson, 1981).

Many studies have been conducted to explore the presence of generativity among different stages of adulthood. While most generativity studies have focused on generativity in middle adulthood (Grossbaum & Bates, 2002; Himsel et al., 1997; McAdams & Guo, 2015), some researchers have focused on the comparison of generativity levels between middle-aged adults and young adults (Ackerman et al., 2000; Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). Ackerman et al. (2000) analyzed generativity levels in midlife adults compared to young adults based on the LGS. The results indicated that the two groups of adults reported similar levels of generative concern; however, generative concern has a more robust prediction of subjective well-being among midlife adults than young adults. Overall, these findings support the presence of generative concern before midlife adulthood. An additional study by Beaumont and Pratt (2011) examined generativity in midlife and young adulthood, studying intimacy and generativity about identity processing styles during adulthood. When comparing generativity levels among the two groups, the researchers found higher levels of generativity among middle-aged adults than young adults (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). However, they also noted that the relative difference between the two age group's scores of generativity was slight, suggesting that young adults can express generativity (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). These

findings indicate that young adults can demonstrate meaningful expressions of generativity.

2.51 Generativity in Young Adults

Specific to young adults, Lawford et al. (2005) studied the longitudinal development of generativity from late adolescents to early adulthood, testing the influence of family parenting style and their active engagement in the community on generative concern and generative action. The results indicated that late adolescents had higher levels of generative concern when they came from a family that uses an authoritative parenting style (a style of parenting that demonstrates both nurturance and setting expectations of children's behavior). Lawford et al. (2005) also found that community involvement in late adolescents was a significant predictor of generative concern when participants were in early adulthood. These components bring further insight into predictors of generativity within this life stage.

Similar studies with young adults found generativity to be significantly correlated to activity engagement (an individual's involvement in out-of-school activities) and a predictor of meaning-making for young adults (Lawford & Ramey, 2015), suggesting that participating in engaging activities may be another way to develop generative concern in emerging adults and adolescents. Lawford et al. (2020) also built support for generativity among young adults, discovering that identity style and caregiving behaviors were predictive of generative concern with no significant differences detected between adolescents and young adults. Generative concern was the most prevalent component of generativity among young adults within the above studies (Lawford & Ramey, 2015; Lawford et al., 2020). This provides insight into which aspects of generativity might be

most vital amongst young adults. Understanding potential motivators and connections to constructs such as activity engagement, identity styles, and caregiving behaviors allows for developing a complete experience of generativity, particularly among young adults.

Peterson and Stewart (1993) provided further evidence of generativity during young adulthood in their study exploring the influence of social motives on generativity in young adults. In their study, Peterson and Stewart (1993) argue a mismatch between childbearing/raising years and reaching peak levels of generativity. Suppose individuals theoretically do not get the stage of generativity until closer to mid-life (around 40 years old), as suggested in Erikson's epigenetic chart. What does that mean for individuals who are having children in their 20s and 30s? Typically, the former age range is when individuals become parents and raise children, creating a discrepancy with the time frame suggested by Erikson. Peterson and Stewart (1993) noted that their aim is not to diminish the value of generativity in parenting older children or in later adulthood but rather to provide an exploration of generativity present in young adult parents. This study provides evidence that generativity is present among young adults. However, the authors suggest a longitudinal study would be beneficial to explore the further development of generativity among this age group as they continue to age.

Looking closer into generativity levels in young adults, studies have also begun to investigate generativity among college students, particularly college student leaders who mentor (Hastings et al., 2015, Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Sunderman, 2020a). Hastings et al. (2015) tested the effects of mentoring on college student generativity. Using a mixed-methods design, the researchers found significantly higher levels of generativity among college student leaders who mentor when compared to college

student leaders not actively mentoring and general college students. These findings provided further evidence of generativity among young adults and indicated the influence of activities like mentoring on generativity in young adults. Hastings et al. (2015) also indicated a potential relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership, which was later confirmed by Hastings and Sunderman (2019) when generativity emerged as a significant and positive predictor of socially responsible leadership within the same population. In addition to socially responsible leadership, generativity also ties into leadership identity development. The leadership identity development theory and model were generated to understand and conceptualize how leadership identity develops (Komives et al., 2005). There are six stages of the leadership identity development model: awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leader differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis (Komives et al., 2005; Komives et al., 2006; Komives, 2011). Generativity, being the fifth stage in leadership identity development, occurs once a leader begins mentoring and recognizes how their choices influence those around them and strengthen their commitment to others (Komives et al., 2005; Komives et al., 2006; Komives, 2011). Generativity allows the leader to look farther than themselves and work towards sustaining the group (Komives et al., 2006). These studies contributed to the understanding of generativity among young adults.

Sunderman (2020a) continued Hastings et al. (2015)'s research via a longitudinal study to examine generativity development among college student leaders who mentor over three years. When focusing on the change of generativity over time, the findings were insignificant for generative concern (as measured by the LGS) or generative commitment (as measured by Personal Strivings). However, Sunderman (2020a) reported

a significant increase in generative behavior (as measured by the GBC) over time amongst college student leaders who mentor. Generative concern was additionally found to be a predictor of generative behavior throughout students' undergraduate careers as a mentor (Sunderman, 2020a). These studies provide evidence of the presence and growth of generativity among young adults, encouraging further exploration of generativity within this age cohort and supporting the need to develop a more precise measure of generativity specific to young adulthood.

Several studies have provided compelling evidence of generativity among young adults, as stated and shown above. However, generativity continues to be conceptualized and tested as a midlife construct. The established framework and measures associated with generativity have been constructed in ways that bias toward middle-aged adults, inadvertently affecting and limiting how generativity has been studied among young adults. The tools used to measure generativity are framed in a way that has the potential to inaccurately measure generativity among a more youthful age cohort due to the specifics and relevance of the questions being asked. The LGS, for example, includes the question, "I have a responsibility to improve the neighborhood in which I live" (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). This question can prove challenging for younger adults, particularly college-aged young adults. Traditional living environments, such as campus housing, available to college students can hinder their ability to influence their 'neighborhood' due to their structure. Rather than taking these limitations into account, the current measures would report that these individuals are simply displaying low levels of generativity.

Similarly, the GBC asks individuals to share how often in the last two months they have “attended a neighborhood or community meeting” (McAdams et al., 1993, p. 224). This question caters to middle adulthood due to the same restrictions and general lack of opportunities for younger adults to have this level of interaction with their neighborhoods. Another question on the GBC biased towards midlife adults is how often in the previous two months the individual has “read a story to a child” (McAdams et al., 1993, p. 224). The ability to interact with a child can be more limited for younger adults. The frame of this question is narrow and specific, leading to inaccurate readings of generativity. The precise nature of this question could lead a younger adult who invests in an older child or perhaps interacts with a younger individual differently to miss this question due to its level of specifications. Because of these skewed questions that have the potential to cater to middle-aged adulthood, we must examine ways in which we can accurately measure generativity among young adults.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This section outlines the qualitative analysis utilized in the present study. This methods chapter begins with an overview of generativity and restates the problem addressed within the study. The use of a constructivist grounded theory approach is then explained and justified. Following that, the researcher's reflexivity and positionality are stated. This section expresses my experiences and connections with generativity and the data. Data collection is then discussed. This starts with an overview of each of the studies used in this secondary analysis, followed by examining the data collection approach. Following data collection is the approach to data analysis, which is broken down into the three coding techniques recommended by Charmaz (2014). The final component within the methods section is a discussion of data verification to document the study's integrity.

3.2 Approach and Rationale

Generativity, identified as "the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, 1963, p. 267), has traditionally been considered a construct present in middle adulthood (Erikson, 1950, 1963) and thus raises the possibility that measures and frameworks used to examine generativity are also framed relevant to central adulthood experiences (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993). Recent studies, however, have found high levels of generativity among young adults, particularly amongst college student leaders who mentor (Hastings et al., 2015, Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Sunderman, 2020a). Even though research has explored and found generativity present in early adulthood, there is a lack of research exploring generativity,

specifically in adolescents and young adults (Leffel, 2008). The continued exploration of this phenomenon in young adulthood is imperative to effectively evaluate generativity that represents this age group to assess generativity that is representative of this age group.

The present study aimed to answer the need for theory development of generativity among young adults by utilizing a grounded theory qualitative approach. This qualitative research approach was established by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in 1967 as a method rooted in inductive processing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher is a crucial component of data collection and analysis from which the generated theory is derived. This study sought to develop a theoretical understanding of generativity in young adulthood. This was done by reanalyzing previously collected generativity data among four different studies. The data were then inductively processed and used as the driving force to develop a theory of generativity in young adults (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilizing the grounded theory approach ensured the generated theory accurately reflected the experiences communicated by those in the age group of interest as it is grounded within the data.

A constructivist worldview was assumed in this study due to its connection to theory generation as a co-constructive process between the researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2014). Constructivism is centered around how individuals interpret the world around them and make meaning of their own experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this case, the participants' experiences relative to generativity were analyzed and interpreted to develop a representative theory. The constructivist approach additionally accounts for “subjectivity and the researcher’s involvement in the construction and

interpretation of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). Approaching the study through a constructivist lens acknowledges the influence of my interpretation of the secondary data being used. Because there was no contact with participants, my understanding of their experiences and my experience as a young adult who served as a collegiate leadership mentor impacted the developed theory. Further, Charmaz (2014) notes that “people construct data- whether it be researchers generating first-hand data... or gathering documents and information from other sources (p. 29). This notion affirmed the use of the constructivist approach with secondary data.

Utilizing a qualitative research approach also reinforces the influence of my interpretation of the participant's experiences and the subsequent theory that emerged from the data. Specifically, the constructivist grounded theory approach emphasizes the notion of a co-constructed theory that is generated from both the participants and researcher, thus accounting for the role I played in the present study (Charmaz, 2014). As mentioned above, I have personal experience as a collegiate leadership mentor in my young adulthood. My own experiences lend to my interpretation of the experiences had by the participants in the secondary studies. The variations derived from my understanding of the original studies and my own experiences enabled the inductive development of a theory that describes the dimensions and process of generativity among young adults and encourages future studies to continue exploring generativity’s manifestation among young adults.

3.3 Researcher Positioning and Reflexivity

Researcher positioning and reflexivity are critical elements of qualitative research. This takes place when “researchers convey their background (e.g., work experiences,

cultural experiences, history), how it informs their interpretation of the information in a study, and what they have to gain from the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 44).

Expressing my positioning and reflexivity allows me to account for myself within the research and show my connections, ideas, and experiences relative to the field being studied.

I currently work for the mentoring program that the participants were involved in at their interview. Additionally, I am studying with and working for the department conducting generativity research on campus. During my undergraduate career, I was involved in the mentoring program as a mentor to a high school student for three years and assisted in various research studies exploring generativity among this population. My previous and present involvements and having first-hand experiences with generativity as a young adult will allow me to further connect with the data and the study. Memo-ing was incorporated throughout the data analysis process to aid in accounting for my own experiences and perspectives while remaining rooted in the participants’ experiences.

Motivation for this research stems from past involvement in the program that the participants in the studies were involved in and previous studies centered around exploring generativity among college students. Being familiar with this experience within the context of young adulthood and previous studies exploring this concept, I can have my own experiences with generativity development in this age group. Those past opportunities also allowed me to have a baseline understanding of generativity as a concept and be familiar with some of the critical research within the field. This understanding will be very impactful as I used previous studies of generativity as a guiding force in the current study through sensitizing concepts. However, I also recognize

the need to account for my personal experiences with mentoring and generativity and acknowledge but reduce their influence on present interpretations of the data.

3.4 Design and Data Collection

The use of secondary data in grounded theory studies has been discussed and reviewed almost as early as the initial generations of the grounded theory approach. One of the initial creators of grounded theory, Barney Glaser (1963), noted the potential of using secondary data within a grounded theory design and believed in the notion that “all is data” (Glaser, 2001, p. 145). Some scholars vocalize concerns about the potential limitations that arise from using secondary data, precisely the data quality, the “fit” of the data within the present study, and the relationship (or lack thereof) between the researcher and the participants (Whiteside et al., 2012). In this study, the idea expressed by Glaser that “all is data” (2001, p. 145) is embraced, and the potential limitations throughout the data analysis process are addressed and accounted for. That process is further elaborated throughout the data analysis and delimitations sections.

3.41 Origins of Data Used in Present Study

Data collection for this qualitative grounded theory study was unique in that it was collected through reanalyzing qualitative data from previously recorded one-on-one semi-structured interviews. This grounded theory study reviewed various past studies, meaning each study had a slightly different interview protocol. However, each semi-structured interview allowed for flexibility in participant responses and focused on asking experience and behavioral questions about generativity. The reanalysis and coding of these semi-structured interviews allowed for exploring the components and

manifestations of generativity among young adults beyond the achievement of theoretical saturation.

For the present study, data was collected and utilized from four previous research studies (Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Hastings et al., 2021; Sunderman, 2020b). The sampling strategy used in the initial studies was a combination of purposeful and criterion sampling. The participants were selected due to their ability to “contribute to the development of the theory,” which was discovered by the original researcher to be college student leaders who mentor (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 157). These studies all involved undergraduate college students who attended the same four-year public Midwestern university and participated in a leadership mentoring program during their interview. During each interview, generativity was defined for participants as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.” Each of the studies was conducted in differing years and was initially used to examine levels of generativity among this population. Their reanalysis provided further insight into the manifestation of generativity during young adulthood.

3. 411 Study 1. The first study used as secondary data in the present study was Hastings et al. (2015). The quantitative phase of this mixed methods research compared generativity levels among three unique groups: college student leaders who mentored K-12 student leaders in a leadership-mentoring program, college students who were leaders on campus but were not actively mentoring, and general college students (Hastings et al., 2015). All of the college student leaders who mentor were asked to participate in the study (n=80), college student leaders on campus were contacted via their faculty

supervisors from various campus organizations to gain access to participate (n = 45), and general college students were contacted using a cluster sample procedure (n = 148).

During the qualitative phase of the study, nine participants within the leadership mentoring group completed individual interviews. These participants were selected because they scored within the top third of multiple generativity measures relative to their fellow participants (Hastings et al., 2015). Due to their high scores on the generativity measures, it was believed that these participants were most likely to provide the richest insight into generativity (Hastings et al., 2015). This technique expresses a combination of criterion and purposeful sampling, in line with established qualitative research techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The specific interview protocol for the qualitative portion of this study involved one-on-one in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants who had the highest generativity scores. During the interview, participants were provided the definition of generativity and were asked questions aiming to explore the impact of mentoring relationships on generativity. The interview protocol used in the study is included in Appendix A.

The interviews were then transcribed, and the data were examined for themes focusing on “*what* the participants experienced with regard to generativity and *how* they experienced generativity in the context of a mentoring relationship” (Hastings et al., 2015, p. 662). The overall themes found within this study included having a “seed of generativity” before their mentoring experience, having a “lab” via the mentoring program in which they could harness their generativity, and integrating generativity into their persona by being involved in their mentoring experience (Hastings et al., 2015). The

findings from this study revealed that “college student leaders who mentor demonstrate additional generative components to their leadership... that extend what is currently known about how leaders influence” (Hastings et al., 2015, p. 665).

3. 412 Study 2. In the second study, Hastings and Sunderman (2019) utilized a mixed methods design to study generativity within college student leaders who mentor and its connection to socially responsible leadership. Participants were selected using a criterion sampling technique for this study, in line with qualitative participant selection techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018). College students involved in a leadership mentoring program were contacted to participate due to their higher levels of generativity than their peers, as found by Hastings et al. (2015). Participants also completed the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) during the quantitative phase of this study. An equal representation of varying scores in the SRLS was contacted and asked to participate in the qualitative portion of the study, utilizing a purposive participant sample.

This study utilized in-depth, semi-structured interviews to explore the relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership during the qualitative phase of the study. The qualitative portion of the study aimed to explain the quantitative findings of the relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019). During their interview, participants were provided definitions of generativity and socially responsible leadership. Participants were then asked about their experiences with generativity and socially responsible leadership through the lens of mentoring and their view of the relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019). The interview protocol for this study can be found in Appendix B.

Within this study, the nine participants had varying scores within generativity and SRLS, representing high, moderate, and low scores. This purposive sampling technique provided the researchers with a holistic overview of the various individuals within the population of interest while allowing researcher selection within the scoring categories (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019). The data were then analyzed for emerging themes. These themes included: (a) generativity is embodied by mentoring, (b) there is a natural association between generativity and socially responsible leadership, (c) positive social change can be increased through generativity within a mentoring context, and (d) that an increase in awareness of generativity via mentoring allowed an increase in socially responsible leadership (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019). Overall, participants believed that “an enhanced consciousness of generativity throughout their tenure of serving as a leadership mentor... ultimately led to an increase in their socially responsible leadership” (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019, p. 12).

3.413 Study 3. Sunderman conducted the third study (2020b). Participants utilized in this study were contacted due to their involvement in a leadership mentoring program which was also connected to higher generativity levels compared to their peers (Hastings et al., 2015). Following a criterion sampling technique for participant selection (Creswell & Poth, 2018), everyone involved in the program was invited to participate in the study. Ultimately, 10 participants consented to be involved. Participants completed semi-structured interviews aimed at gaining insight into generative development from their participation in the leadership mentoring program (Sunderman, 2020b).

Within this phenomenological study, the researchers interviewed students participating in a leadership mentoring program during their interview. Participants were

given the definition of generativity and were asked to respond to questions further exploring their mentoring experience concerning their generativity. The interview questions examined the development of generativity experienced by college student leaders who mentor. The interview protocol for this study can be found in Appendix C.

Significant statements were then pulled from the transcribed interviews and generated into meaning units and four overall themes. The themes identified within this study were: (a) generativity level before mentoring, (b) developmental antecedents to generativity development, (c) generativity development through mentoring, and (d) outcomes of generativity development through mentoring (Sunderman, 2020b, p. 8). Generativity before mentoring was articulated by the level of mentoring the participant noted they had prior to becoming a mentor in college. Developmental antecedents were expressed by specific experiences in which participants noted an increase in their levels of generativity, such as college courses or childhood programs. Generativity development through mentoring explicitly focused on the participant's generative development as a result of their time spent mentoring, in which all ten participants identified an increase in generativity. Outcomes of generativity development through mentoring were shown as various forms of personal development by the participant, such as self-awareness and interpersonal skills. Ultimately, participants expressed varying lower levels of generativity before their mentoring experience. Through essential experiences (developmental antecedents) and mentoring, participants shared that they could increase their level of generativity and recognize various positive outcomes as a result of their generativity development through mentoring (Sunderman, 2020b). The researchers also found that participants believed that being a college mentor positively influenced their

level of generativity, which then generated overall personal development and created a positive ripple effect. (Sunderman, 2020b).

3.414 Study 4. The final study reanalyzed in the current study drew senior participants from the same leadership mentoring program as the other studies (Hastings et al., 2021). By doing so, this study, like the others, utilized a criterion sampling technique for participant selection, meaning participants had to be involved in the program to be in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An additional criterion for this study was that only seniors in the mentoring program were asked to participate. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews and completed pictorial degree-of-change graphs to depict their perception of generativity growth. Both methods aimed to explore potential changes in participants' generativity associated with their mentoring experience and how generativity develops among college student leaders who mentor (Hastings et al., 2021).

In this study, Hastings et al. (2021) similarly used semi-structured interviews to collect data and pictorial degree-of-change graphs to document generativity development. At the beginning of the study, participants were given the definition of generativity and asked to complete the following questions about their experience with generativity and mentoring. The complete interview protocol for the study can be found in Appendix D. Participants were also asked to draw their generativity development relative to having various mentoring experiences using a line graph that depicted generativity and time spent mentoring as each of the axes.

The research question being analyzed within this study was, “what changes, if any, in participants’ generativity do they associate with their mentoring experience and why?” (Hastings et al., 2021, p. 2). Once the interviews were transcribed, significant

statements were identified, and meaning units were generated into themes. The themes found in this study included (a) understanding generativity, (b) having a ‘toolbox,’ (c) processing/feedback, (d) outcomes, and (e) a ripple effect (Hastings et al., 2021). Overall, participants articulated that “when given the tools, environment to process, and time needed to develop trusting investment relationships, their generativity levels increased.” (Hastings et al., 2021, p. 16). Participants also noted that increasing their understanding of generativity, having the ability to share that knowledge with others, and witnessing growth in both themselves and their mentee all contributed to their overall increase in generativity (Hastings et al., 2021). In the current study, data from the qualitative phases of each of the above four studies were re-analyzed. The interviews from the studies were recorded and transcribed by the respective researcher(s). These previously recorded transcripts will serve as the data for the current study.

3.42 Approach for Present Study

Data were examined and reanalyzed from the four research studies listed above for the current study. No initial sampling techniques were applied at the beginning of the data analysis, as all available transcripts were used for the present study. Transcripts were reanalyzed in their entirety due to the constant focus on generativity within each of the four interviews. Re-evaluating all the data collected from past studies in which young adult leaders who mentor demonstrated high levels of generativity in young adulthood enabled an understanding of how generativity manifests within this life stage. Individual transcripts from 61 participants from all the four studies were re-analyzed, surpassing the recommended 30 participants by Creswell and Poth (2018) for grounded theory.

Saturation was additionally reached after 58 interviews, aligning with Charmaz’s (2014)

recommendation of reaching saturation within themes and theory development. Because there was access to all 61 transcripts, all available interviews were coded regardless of when saturation was attained. Once the data were coded, the studies were reanalyzed for their manifestations of generativity, which guided theory development during the data analysis.

The central question guiding the data analysis in the current study was: how does generativity manifest itself in young adults? To further explore this question, the research sub-questions were: how do young adults describe generativity? In what ways do young adults recognize their generativity? What experiences do young adults associate with generativity? How do young adults experience generativity? The sub-questions also served as a guide to reflect on the original studies through the broader lens of generativity rather than the more refined concepts initially explored in each study.

Ultimately, the goal was to develop a central theory that articulates the psychometric dimensions of generativity in young adults. Previous studies have left remaining questions about the measurement of generativity in young adults because the existing measures appear to target midlife experiences (Leffel, 2008; Sunderman, 2020a). This study intends to fill the gap by identifying the construct dimensionality of generativity specific to young adults.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analytic procedure of this study followed the established and respected procedures for grounded theory as recommended by Charmaz (2014). Utilizing Charmaz's (2014) approach allowed for "flexible guidelines" (p. 16) and accounted for the idea that "we are part of the world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we

produce. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (p. 17). Thick and rich descriptions were another critical element of this secondary data analysis. Providing such descriptions allowed me to achieve saturation within the final themes and supported the generated theory through the participants’ voices. Thick and rich descriptions are closely associated with the constructivist perspective “to contextualize the people or sites studied” (Creswell & Miller (2000), p. 127). Undergoing Charmaz’s grounded theory approach allowed more than one core category to emerge from the data, offering “a more sensitive and flexible approach” to data analysis (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, p. 8). This approach best suited this study because it allowed flexibility for a theory to emerge from the data that could account for multiple core themes while maintaining the rigor of grounded theory methodology.

As stated above, the interviews were all previously transcribed during their initial collection. First, all 61 transcripts were read from each of the four original studies, which ensured a general understanding of the data for each of the specific studies. An initial reading of each transcript allowed for initial comparisons among the various studies. After the initial readings, the first step of the recommended grounded theory analysis process commenced with initial coding (Charmaz, 2014). General categories and themes were generated during the initial coding phase to express how generativity is manifested in young adults.

Following this phase, focused coding was then conducted. Focused coding combined and refined the categories formed during the initial coding phase to generate a more concise composition of themes. Focused coding involved pulling the codes

identified most frequently and most significantly to allow the core categories within the data to emerge and be used towards developing a theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Once the core categories were generated, theoretical coding was done to further explore the relationships between the formed categories, mainly focusing on the types of the present study and those of the original conceptualization of generativity by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992). Theoretical codes “refer to underlying logics that could be found in pre-existing theories” (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, p. 10). During this phase, a conceptual model of generativity’s manifestation in young adults was also generated to visualize the theory as it was finalized. Because the original model of generativity is widely accepted as the model of generativity for all adults regardless of age, it was critical to conduct this analysis and overlap the two theories. This analysis allowed comparisons between the original categories generated from the foundational studies (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams et al., 1993) - which focused on middle adulthood - and those formed through this study, which centered around the experiences of young adults. Comparing the generated model from the current research to the initial conceptual model of generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) showcases the general framework of generativity and the uniqueness of generativity’s manifestation in young adults.

3.51 Initial and Focused Coding

Following the initial readings of the transcripts, the initial coding phase commenced by creating general categories/themes that ultimately express how generativity is manifested in young adults. Charmaz (2014) describes coding as the bridge connecting the collected data to the emerging theory that reflects the data. Initial

coding allows the researcher to remain open to the data presented solely based on the participants' responses and experiences (Charmaz, 2014).

Focused coding then took place following initial coding. Charmaz (2014) notes that the transition from initial to focused coding is typically seamless; however, the process is not always linear. During this coding process, "you use [initial] codes to sift, sort, synthesize and analyze large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). Babchuk and Boswell (in press) further this idea by saying that focused coding "is the process of identifying the most frequent or important codes to further test against the data" (p. 5). In doing so, commonalities within the initially recognized themes were identified, and a more succinct list of articles that express how generativity is manifested in young adults was established.

The previously mentioned research sub-questions guided the initial coding phase: How do young adults describe generativity? In what ways do young adults recognize their generativity? What experiences do young adults associate with generativity? How do young adults experience generativity? These questions guided the analysis and framed the original studies through a new lens.

Additionally, significant statements were identified and coded during this phase to explain how the participants experienced and expressed their generativity. The initial codes were primarily derived from "words that reflect action," as Charmaz (2014, p. 116) recommended, ensuring that the focus was on the data, not the participants. Memos were also written throughout the data analysis process, noting ideas and commonalities between categories and transcripts as they were coded.

Data were coded using a combination of coding sentence-by-sentence and groups of sentences expressing the same idea. This coding technique was inspired by the analytic cues from respected scholars within the field of leadership education and the researchers behind one of the most seminal pieces in the field of leadership identity development (Komives et al., 2005). This coding approach was also appropriate for this data analysis as it accounted for the phenomenological roots of the initial studies. Within the initial studies, the data were collected for another purpose. The nature of the studies and the participant responses were expressed in more significant portions of dialogue. Utilizing a groups-of-sentences approach to coding allowed the same ideas to be coded and represented as one unit while encouraging me to remain close to the data. (Charmaz, 2014).

Initial coding began by reading through the transcript. Once completed, the interview was reread while coding each sentence or group of sentences for connections and while writing memos of potential overall categories. Each interview was coded in its entirety. After reviewing each study's interview protocol, it was quickly apparent that all the questions asked in the studies were connected to and provided insight into the process of generativity's manifestation within the age group of young adulthood. As the interviews were coded, they were compared to the transcripts coded before them to generate an overall theory of how generativity manifests within this population. This technique is called the constant comparative method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Despite the data originating from four different studies, the overall focus on generativity and how the participants conceptualized generativity within their own lives allowed for solid connections and commonalities between the studies. Because of this, all four studies

centered around the overall theme of generativity and its development in young adulthood. In total, 2,998 phrases were coded throughout the transcripts, with 55 initial codes generated during the first data analysis phase. The list of initial codes from the initial coding phase of the study can be found in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Open Coding Themes

A-C	D-M	O-Z
Ability to reflect as individual	Desire to emulate others that have created an impact on them	Opportunity for generativity to be in practice throughout life
Ability to reflect within group	Desire/hope for generativity to grow as it's being practiced	Other opportunities to be generative/opportunities to practice
Active investment	Desire/Passion for next generation and to make an impact always present	Ownership/claiming generativity relationship/responsibility
Apply generativity/generative skills to investee; real-world application to see impact	Empathy Increase	Potential to influence others
Awareness of generative ability/Self-awareness of impact potential	Engaging with those in similar situations	Receiving positive feedback
Awareness of others and their emotions/connections	Enjoyment of the process	Reciprocal relationship/mutual impact on both investor and investee from the relationship
Awareness/Recognition of generativity as a concept	Filling assortment of roles for investee/giving them opportunities and situations to grow	Recognition of generative abilities/Generative impact

A-C	D-M	O-Z
Became more natural over time/Integrating into other aspects of their life	General life experiences	Recognition of long-term impact
Building foundation of generativity	Growth in self	Recognizing impact on peers
Can take a while to separate themselves from the “next generation”	Growth/Check-ins with Peers	Start as friendship to develop foundation to relationship
Challenged to grow	Having an others-focused mindset	Time
Commitment to investing	Having others invest in them and wanting to do the same for others	Trust in relationship
Communication/Affirmation from Investee	Having the opportunity to grow in how to engage generatively	Understanding how abilities/strengths can blend with investee’s strengths
Communication/ Affirmation from Leadership Positions	Integration into each other’s lives	Understanding of how to engage/interact with others in a generative way
Communication/Affirmation from Peers	Intentional one-on-one time spent with investee	Wanting to work with the next generation
Compassion/care for investee	Learning from others	Willingness from investee increased motivation of investor
Confidence in abilities	Learning with and from peers	Witnessing growth/development in investee/seeing impact they can have on others; ripple effect
Connection built with investee/realizing their needs	Model generativity for others	
Consistency in relationship	Motivation from Peers to grow in generativity/ Mimic their success	

Once the initial codes were generated, the analysis transitioned into the focused coding stage. Past memos were reflected on, and new memos were generated to begin sorting through and creating the overall categories that best represent how generativity manifests itself in young adults. Initial codes with similar ideas were combined, and codes with broader concepts expressed larger ideas, eventually becoming independent categories within the generated theory. When developing the focused codes, the tentative categories were tested with a group of strategically selected transcripts from each study to ensure that the codes accurately represented the process being expressed by participants before being finalized. This was done through theoretical sampling, meaning data were sampled to build upon and clarify the categories as they were emerging (Charmaz, 2014). Two transcripts from each of the four independent studies were reanalyzed to conduct theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling was incorporated into the data analysis to strengthen the developing categories and general theory (Babchuk & Boswell, in press). The process of confirming these tentative codes from the initial codes is coined by Charmaz (2014) as “the skeleton of your analysis” (p. 141). Six themes emerged from the focused coding stage of the data analysis, each with four to five sub-categories. These themes were then generated into a theory and updated conceptual model representing generativity’s manifestation in young adults. The focused codes generated from the current study are included in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Focused Coding Themes

Focused Code	Incorporated Themes
Generative Awareness	Awareness/Recognition of Generativity as a Concept
	Awareness of Generative Ability/ Self-Awareness
	Awareness of Others
	Ownership of Generativity
Generative Desire/Motivation	Desire and Passion for the Next Generation/Natural Ability
	Having Others Invest in Them and Wanting to do the Same for Others
	Others-Focused Mindset Recognition of Impact
Opportunities to be Generative	Applying Generativity to Various Settings/Roles
	Life Experiences
	Mentoring Opportunity to Practice Generativity Throughout Life
Growth	Time
	Growth in Self
	Challenged to Grow
	Outcomes of Confidence and Active Investments

Focused Code	Incorporated Themes
Generative Relationships	Establishing the Relationship
	Commitment from Investee
	Connecting Emotions to Relationships
	Witnessing Growth in Investee
Generative Community and Opportunities of Reflection	Affirmation From Others
	Learning From and With Others
	Motivation from Peers to Grow in their Generativity
	Reflection

3.52 Theoretical Coding

After establishing the core categories and general theory that expresses the manifestation of generativity within young adults, theoretical coding was utilized to highlight the connections of the generated model to the original conceptual model of generativity established by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992). Theoretical coding allowed for the exploration of connections between the categories (Babchuk & Boswell, in press) while also creating the opportunity to “move [my] analytic story in a theoretical direction” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 151). The categories generated during focused coding were analyzed to explore further the theoretical relationships between the categories generated within the present study’s model for young adults and those of the traditional model.

During this stage, the themes of the traditional model were compared by looking at each section of the original model and examining its presence or absence in the new conceptual model. The reverse was also done by comparing the latest model to the

traditional model. While this took place, memos were also written to record similarities and differences between the models. Similarly, memos also noted if a theme expressed similar sentiments between the two models but was not accounted for through the same measures. There was a significant overlap between the two models during the theoretical coding stage. However, this overlap was expected to be present due to the successful longevity of the established traditional model.

The overall purpose of this study was to develop a theory that explains the manifestation of generativity among young adults. The final themes formulated from this analytic process are presented through a comprehensive figure (See Figure 4.1 in the next chapter). It provides a visual to demonstrate the relationships between the found themes and their connection to the overall emergent theory. This figure also serves as an adapted conceptual model of generativity from McAdams and de St. Aubin's (1992) original conceptual model, specifying the construct dimensionality of generativity in young adults. Ultimately, it is hoped that this adapted conceptual model can be used to develop an appropriate psychometric measurement of generativity in young adults in future studies.

3.6 Data Verification

3.61 Qualitative Data Verification Measures

Due to the nature of this study and its use of secondary data, member checking was not an available verification method. Member checking is applied when the informants in the study review the study results to ensure proper interpretation of their responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, in this study, the participants were no

longer a resource for the researcher. Thick and rich descriptions of the data and emerging themes were utilized within the data analysis. Creswell and Miller (2000) highlight the value of thick and rich data because thorough description “creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (p. 129). Doing so allows readers to connect with the findings and provide a rationale for the connections made during the coding phases.

An external auditor was also integrated into the verification process to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings from a methodological standpoint. Incorporating an external auditor is a validation technique in which the study is reviewed by another individual familiar with the methodological approach being used in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An external auditor examines the study through a methodological lens that keeps the researcher honest and ensures appropriate methodologies and data analysis were followed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, a peer with a deep understanding of grounded theory methodology reviewed the data analysis process and provided feedback to enhance the study’s holistic relevance. To analyze the data, the external auditor was provided with the eight transcripts used for theoretical sampling. There was much agreement between me and the external auditor as four of the six categories were found in our independent data analyses. Though these categories differed slightly in name, the essence of the themes found was similar. Those categories include having a desire to be generative, awareness, growth, and generative relationships. The final two themes, opportunities to be generative and generative communities with opportunities to reflect, were finalized after thorough discussion. During these conversations, additional

data from the transcripts and interview protocols were provided to the external auditor and the development of the additional themes were shared. Throughout this process, the external auditor was provided with an opportunity to share and discuss any dissenting opinions. After incorporating additional transcripts and engaging in rigorous discussion, the final two themes were agreed upon and confirmed. Once the six final themes were established, the comprehensive model showcasing generativity's manifestation within this population was collaboratively discussed. From this process, the themes that emerged from the data were confirmed by the external auditor as representative of this process. A visual model expressing the manifestation of generativity within young adults was additionally deemed trustworthy.

To best enhance reliability within the findings, code meanings were written throughout the analysis of the transcripts. This verified that the definitions of each category were maintained throughout the analysis process. After focused coding was completed, code meanings were reexamined. The final categories were compared to the original codes to confirm that the initial definitions were maintained throughout the study and remained present in the final results. Along with these general qualitative data verification methods, specific grounded theory verification elements were incorporated into the study.

3.62 Grounded Theory Verification Methods

Brief memos were written within the transcripts during the initial readings and coding processes, while fuller memos were written within a memo bank, as Clarke (2005) recommends. The memos were used to process my personal connections to the data to ensure that I was not assuming meaning of the experiences while analyzing the data.

Specific language and experiences are utilized within the mentoring program, such as terms for connections and mentoring-based lectures, making it critical to separate my own experiences and be guided by the participants. They were also utilized to record thoughts and ideas and to bridge themes together to solidify the beginning categories during the focused coding stage.

The final six themes established from focused coding were compared to memos written during the initial readings of the data. Using these initial reflections identified from the memos verified that the final codes were representative of the central ideas being reexamined and remained rooted in participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2014). Transcripts were used as archival documents and created an objective approach to the current study as there was no present influence on the documents that were reanalyzed (Charmaz, 2014). A methodological journal was also kept to record decisions and connections made throughout the data analysis process at the recommendation of Charmaz (2014). The methodological journal also served as a place to keep track of the varying interview protocols between the studies used and note any potential differences and similarities between the studies.

The constant comparative method was applied throughout the data analysis process. The constant comparative method allowed the intentional discovery of similarities and differences within the data to identify patterns during the data analysis process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were compared to other data and the general categories emerging from previous interviews as the transcripts were analyzed. The constant comparative method established a baseline for sorting the data to begin the overall theme and generation (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).

Theoretical sampling was also conducted as a means of verification. Transcripts from each study were analyzed again and compared to the final theory that was generated. The transcripts chosen for this process represented a variety of participant perspectives and were also thick and rich in their descriptions. Theoretical sampling provided a method for comparing theoretical categories with one another to solidify each category as its independent concept within the process (Charmaz, 2014). Doing so ensured that all categories and themes that emerged from the participants' experiences were represented in the final theory and model.

Following the recommended and respected procedure of Charmaz (2014), this grounded theory study utilized open, initial, and theoretical coding to examine generativity's manifestation within young adults. Data verification methods were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings and elaborate on the steps taken to ensure the study remained rooted in grounded theory methodology and participants' experiences. Six themes emerged from the data through the coding procedures and grounded theory techniques. They were formatted into a comprehensive model representative of the expressed process of generativity's manifestation in young adults. The next chapter will further explore the analysis results and present the updated conceptual model of generativity for young adults. The following chapter will highlight where this model fits into the present literature surrounding generativity and recommend next steps for this study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to generate a theory to describe the process of how generativity is manifested in young adults. The study's central question was: How is generativity manifested in young adults? The following sub-questions were used to guide the analysis further: how do young adults describe generativity? In what ways do young adults recognize their generativity? What experiences do young adults associate with generativity? How do young adults experience generativity?

The research questions utilized within the study played a vital role throughout the data analysis process. The use of secondary data meant reframing and exploring participant responses to questions they had been asked in studies before the current research. The above research questions were instrumental in analyzing participant responses and focusing on the core meanings of the responses as they related to and expressed the manifestation of their generativity.

Throughout four independent studies, sixty-one young adult participants shared their thoughts, perceptions, experiences, and feelings about generativity, offering windows into generativity's manifestation within themselves and their experiences. This chapter features each category within the emergent theory of how generativity is manifested within young adults. Participant quotes from the original studies are incorporated within this chapter to elaborate on the categories and their meaning. The

pseudonyms of each participant and the study they participated in are found in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

Participant Pseudonyms

Pseudonym of Participant	Study They Participated In
Aaron	1
Bryan	1
Glen	1
Gwen	1
Ken	1
Leslie	1
Michael	1
Renaë	1
Steve	1
Autumn	2
Beth	2
Emma	2
Hazel	2
Jane	2
Jenna	2
Leni	2
Mike	2
Tom	2
Carl	3
Chelsea	3
Danielle	3
Darcy	3
Demi	3
Emily	3
Jana	3
Lia	3
Paige	3
Tyler	3
Adam	4
Alex	4
Anna	4
Bella	4
Brandon	4
Brittney	4
Carl	4

Pseudonym of Participant	Study They Participated In
Cassie	4
Chance	4
Charlie	4
Doug	4
Gina	4
Hank	4
Isabelle	4
Jeff	4
Jenny	4
Ken	4
Kristie	4
Lance	4
Lydia	4
Maggie	4
Max	4
Michelle	4
Nolan	4
Oscar	4
Patrick	4
Ralph	4
Sam	4
Stephanie	4
Thomas	4
Vicky	4
Vince	4
Will	4

The end of the chapter elaborates on theoretical coding by discussing the theoretical relationships between each category and the overall emerging theory's relationship with the original conceptual model of generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). The emerging theory is also presented as a conceptual model of generativity for young adults in Figure 4.1. This Figure serves as a visual of the process of generativity's manifestation in young adults.

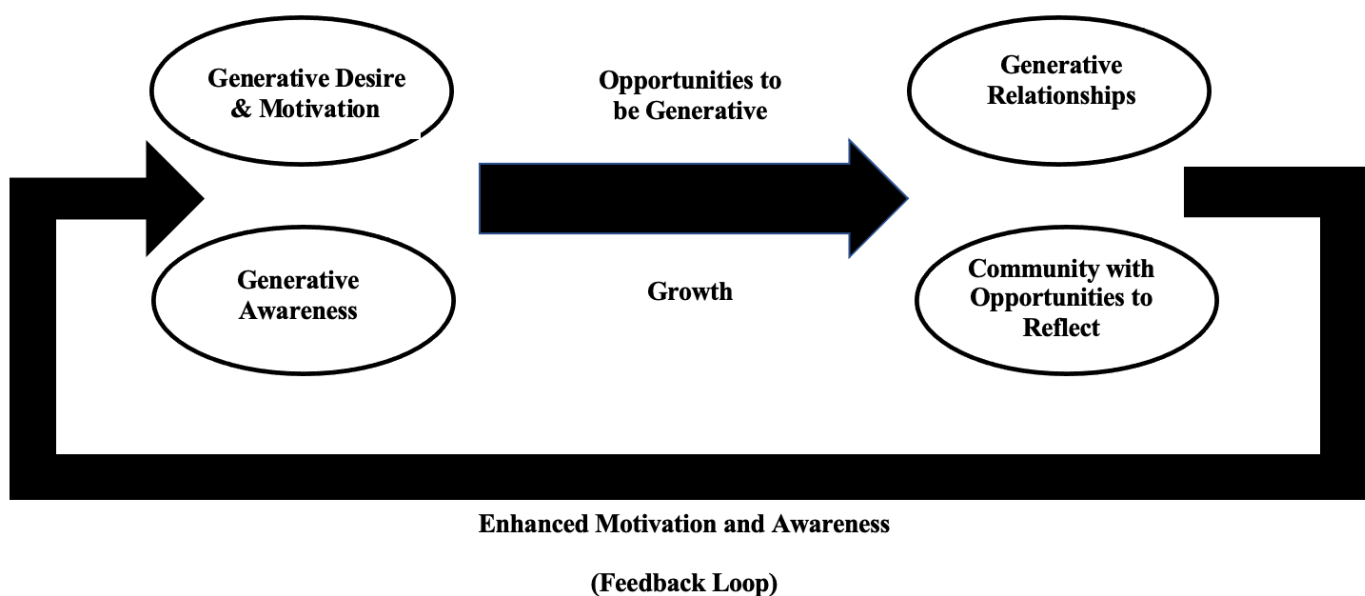


Figure 4.1

Model of Generativity's Manifestation in Young Adults

4.11 Desire and Motivation

The first component of generativity expressed by 53 participants across all four studies was having an initial sense of inner desire and motivation to be generative or behave in a generative way. Inner desire as a concept was attained through various formats and experiences. Participants most commonly articulated inner desire by identifying an innate and natural ability to be generative. Forty-seven participants in total shared their belief in their natural abilities. Mike expressed this innate ability of generativity by sharing, “if you just do what you’re capable of, it will impact someone for the better.” Chelsea carried on the idea of natural ability and desire to be generative by saying, “I feel like most of us mentors come in, and we want to be mentors for a reason. And I think that’s because we seek to invest in others, we; we just need the means of

doing so.” Not all the participants vocalized that a natural ability to be generative was always present. Some shared that this motivational component took time to become more apparent. It wasn’t until they separated their identity from the “next generation” that they engendered the desire to be generative. This is best expressed by Paige, who considered herself at a low level of generativity coming into college and beginning young adulthood, then connected generativity to their leadership abilities:

It [generativity] went from not very much, almost 0 coming out of high school, right? You’re thinking about, ‘Oh, it’s fresh, me.’ I’m thinking about how I can be a leader, and I’m very focused on myself. Therefore, throughout my college career, I then learned the importance of being engaging with and investing in the next generation, not only in younger college students that I’ve found myself in organizations with but also with the younger generation as in community members and other students—thinking ‘Oh how can I lead... on the floor?’ instead of ‘How can I lead through culmination of those? How can I lead through example? How can I kind of take this selfish aspect out of leadership and therefore apply it within to then ensure, like I said, that the next generation understands all that goes into a certain organization, and therefore how they can then apply what they have learned from me, from others to the future?’

Though Paige admitted that they initially did not feel a generative desire before college, they did address the “switch” in motivation and recognizing the impact of generativity as they became more involved and aware of generativity. Many of the participants

expressed a natural ability to be generative. Still, there were many ways shared in which the participants indicated their motivation to be generative was influenced.

One of these ways was recognizing the impact of being generative. From each of the four studies, 51 participants attributed the recognition of the effects they could have on others through generativity as manifesting their overall generativity. Adam verbalizes this by sharing, “here’s where I’m at now and influencing other people and the impact that I have on them and now our relationship is going. What value am I adding?” This reflection on their impact potential allowed Adam to recognize their generativity and be motivated through this heightened awareness of impact potential. Ken further expands this thought in Study 1 by stating, “I get to see that there is going to be life after me, and I should care about that because it’s for the betterment of society.” By recognizing the “larger picture” within their environment, young adults noted an increase in their desire to be generative because they wanted to better those within the next generation and help them continue to make positive impacts in the community.

This idea was expressed both within the betterment of individuals, as recounted by Ken above, and through the improvement of an organization. Emily noted their generative investment within the leadership mentoring organization when they were selected to interview the next class of mentors for the program. When articulating this opportunity, Emily said, “I’m taking a step back; I’m not doing anything next year with [the mentoring program], but this moment I’m helping to foster the growth of all of [the organization] through the picking of these students.” They went on to share that through this process, they recognized a “responsibility because it has so much to do with bringing in the next generation of students who are going to work with the literal next generation

of students.” In this instance, Emily expressed a desire and motivation to be generative to reinvest in the leadership mentoring program for its continued success beyond their time actively engaged as a mentor.

Thirty-five participants also noted that having another individual invest in them while growing up was key to growing their desire and motivation to be generative. They were able to experience the impact being invested in can have on younger individuals, and they wanted to be able to create that impact for someone else. Michelle shared their experience of being a part of this impact by saying:

I think I saw [that impact] working on me from older individuals who had been my difference makers... So, I think that would be an ah-ha moment, realizing who was doing this for me and then understanding... how they’re forming a relationship with me and then how I could form a relationship with someone else.

Even individuals who did not feel they had a “difference maker” in their own life expressed the perceived impact of having someone in that role for them when they were younger. Will observed their desire of having a someone intentionally invest and be generative towards them when sharing:

I just think back, where would I be if I had something like that [a generative mentor] if I were younger? You know, had I had some good coaches and some good men, good difference makers when I was younger. Had a good family, so I had a lot of good things going for me, but you didn’t have that [mentoring]... where you have that goal or someone pushing you to actually develop.

Regardless of if the participant recognized an individual that created a generative impact on them, participants were still able to identify the significance of that role and expressed a desire to have that same generative impact on the next generation. Overall, an innate desire to be generative, as a natural ability and or through recognizing the power of a generative impact was established as the first component of their desire to be generative.

In addition to natural abilities, recognizing the potential to have an impact, and having others create positive differences within their own lives, 42 participants from the 61 transcripts also noted that engaging in an others-focused mindset attributed to their desire and motivation to be generative. Oscar admitted that focusing on others can strengthen over time, sharing their shift in thinking when they said, “when I’m planning something or when I want to make a decision, at first, I just chose to be me. And now I... include others in my decision making.” This others-centered mindset was also articulated by Chelsea, who said that an others-centered perspective provided them with a sense of purpose: “Even on the hardest days of teaching, I can see that what I’m doing has a purpose. And I can see those [generative] concepts... what we do together, come to life.” In sum, participants shared that when they were able to put their investee at the front of their intentional interactions, they could express their desire to be generative and focus on them and their needs.

Ultimately, 47 participants expressed a general baseline ability to be generative, which initiated their generative development. This general ability was asserted as an inner desire and the motivation to act on that desire, suggesting that generativity is first manifested as an innate part of young adults. The participants vocalized that their desire to be generative was part of who they were; they simply needed to recognize this desire

and have the opportunity to live out those desires. When the awareness to be generative and options were then presented, they could truly begin to manifest their generativity.

4.12 Generative Awareness

Once participants articulated a sense of generative motivation, they noticed awareness of their generativity as a critical initial element to their manifestation of generativity. Overall awareness of generativity emerged as the next key element to establishing the foundation of generativity's manifestation in young adults. Throughout the studies, 45 participants indicated that the first development in their awareness of generativity was the conscious understanding of the notion of "generativity" and being able to place a word with the concept they were living out. Jenny expressed this awareness and their overall generative ability when asked to share why they verbalized a growth in their generativity during their time spent mentoring:

I think through [mentoring], learning the specifics, and even just what generativity is and all of the concepts around it, I was able to take what I knew, what I wanted to do, or what I already cared about and was [able to then] bring it to [others].

Jenny considered this awareness of generativity and their ability to be generative as a guiding force to build and expand their generativity. Michelle also placed importance on gaining the understanding of generativity as a concept:

So then, getting into college, I was like, 'Oh, this is what that concept means.' It's kind of been touched on, like the word, I've heard these words before, but I never learned what the concept is to match it. So I think actually learning what it is is just so much more meaningful. And then I

was better able to apply that. So I saw that growth just from learning about it more and then me being able to actually apply it to my relationship with my mentee.

Once Michelle learned the name of the intentional care they had been acting on, they could gain a deeper awareness of their generativity because they could connect these experiences. Participants across the studies shared similar experiences.

Beyond becoming aware of generativity and their newfound ability to place a name with the experience, 58 participants from the 61 transcripts that were reanalyzed noted the influence of gaining a sense of awareness of their generative abilities. This awareness stemmed from their motivation and desire to be generative. Participants began to recognize and become self-aware of their generative ability when taking part in opportunities to be generative, whether through mentoring, involvements, etc. This awareness gave them the confidence to explore further and develop their generativity. Demi attributed their awareness of their abilities to their time spent within the leadership mentoring program:

My [leadership mentoring program] experience, I would say, it's developed a lot of self-awareness in me, which has obviously spilled into so many other aspects of my life with understanding what it looks like for me to be successful in school, understanding what my goals might be for my career path, also just my relationships with people. I think that one of the biggest things I took away from [leadership mentoring program] is how focused it is on strengths and recognizing that in yourself and others. And so that's helped me so much on a personal level. And then it's

definitely enhanced the ways I invest in [mentee] and my friendships and my family because I feel like [leadership mentoring program] has really helped me recognize the individuality of anyone I work with or interact with and how important it is to speak to that and focus on that at least in some sort of way when you're interacting with people. And I think that's just been an incredible skill I've taken away, and I'm super thankful for that.

Through their participation in the leadership mentoring program, Demi recognized their own ability to be generative and make intentional investments in others due to this awareness. Brandon echoed the value of self-awareness and its influence on their overall generativity. Over time, Brandon shared that they had “become more self-aware as well. Being more self-aware has helped me to have a better impact on others because I know what I do best. And I know how I affect people better.” Having a high level of awareness allowed Brandon to make stronger generative connections with those around them.

Awareness grew from participants' sense of self and came from understanding those around them and their recognition of others' emotions. Forty-nine participants said the awareness of their generative abilities increased when they could see their generativity's impact on others. Adam verbalized these ideas by sharing, “I think understanding interpersonal relationships is huge for seeing how people are affected by your actions and words and emotions.” Recognizing the impact, they could have on those around them, Adam became more aware of their ability to be generative.

Gaining awareness through others was also attributed to connections with their mentee. Will shared how their awareness impacted their generative relationship with their mentee:

It's [focus on mentee] definitely something I've developed because I would say, okay. I think I said earlier, you see people have strengths in different areas, and when you kind of have the self-awareness, you kind of know what you're good at, where your strengths are, and where your strengths aren't... So, I think that's definitely developed over the course of these three years, is having that self-awareness and the wanting to not only develop yourself and you see the things for yourself, but then your care for your mentee and wanting to see them grow.

Having the opportunity to have a mentee created the need for self-reflection and awareness so that Will and their mentee could make the most out of their time together. Being self-aware and aware of those around them allowed Will to spend intentional and quality time with their mentee.

Through this sense of awareness, 49 participants from the studies also shared that they experienced ownership of their abilities and recognized a sense of responsibility to engage in generativity. They held generativity as an innate part of who they are. Emily expressed this sentiment by sharing, "generativity itself is a very foundational part of my core." Brittney also provides insight into this idea of claiming their abilities. When reflecting on their generativity, Brittney said, "now I'm at a point where I don't necessarily have to think about [being generative]. I just naturally feel the need to invest in other people when the opportunity presents." By becoming more aware of generativity,

their ability to be generative, and their impact on those around them, participants acknowledged a sense of responsibility to be intentional with their generativity. Combined with their desire to be generative, their awareness and acceptance of their abilities further fostered generativity's manifestation within this population. They encouraged young adults to seek out ways to continue expanding their generativity.

4.13 Opportunities to be Generative

Once participants developed a baseline of generativity's manifestation through awareness and ability, 58 participants noted a consequent desire to seek out and find opportunities to be generative. Opportunities to be generative allowed participants to put their inner desires and generative consciousness into action. This was something that the participants considered as "practice" for their generativity and one of the initial components that influenced subsequent categories of generativity in the analytic process. Due to the nature of the sample used in the initial studies, all of the participants across all four studies initially connected their experience with mentoring as a critical component of their generative development. Nolan verbalized their mentoring experience and its connection to their generativity:

Through mentoring and spending time intentionally [with your investee], trying to build someone else up, [generativity] is just something you're projecting. You're just practicing identifying strengths in others. You're practicing all the time; every day, you're mentoring this one person. So, it makes it easy to take that practice, and then put it into elsewhere, like put it into all these other people. Maybe you're not going to go mentor this person for four years, but you gained all these skills and all these findings

on how you build a relationship with this mentee and how you helped provide a root for growth for them that you can take that root and modify it depending on the person.

Similarly, Anna expressed the impact of mentoring on their generativity when they said, “[Mentoring’s] put someone else’s life, like their feelings and emotions are kind of underneath my care as well. So, it’s given me a sense of responsibility, and it’s also been so impactful.” Being able to mentor in an intentional way that calls on their generativity allowed them to develop further their ability to be generative.

While the experience of mentoring was the most common outlet participants identified as a generative opportunity, 56 participants from across all the four studies further identified additional roles and experiences that allowed them to be generative. Another frequent opportunity expressed by participants was being involved in other organizations during their college career, mainly through on-campus opportunities. Hazel shared their experience within 4-H and the connections they made through generativity in that environment by sharing, “I’m a 4-H leader within my club... the individuals that are there I’m directly influencing.” Maggie also noted the value of being in a sorority when sharing other opportunities to be generative:

I think that [having a sorority position] has definitely allowed me to practice [generativity]... That experience specifically allowed me to grow in my generativity levels because I was learning from people who were so different from me and learning ‘how did they go about handling that situation?’ or ‘how did they go about investing in others?’

Through these involvements, they could invest in the younger generations of their programs and build their generativity through those investment relationships.

Similarly, 44 participants also noted general life experiences as additional opportunities to be generative. One of the more frequent experiences outside of a formal program or college experience was being generative towards younger family members. Isabelle recalled how spending time with their cousins was an early opportunity for them to practice their generativity: “I’m the oldest, and I’ve always been known, always been told, ‘set the better example.’ When I had cousins around, I had to show them how to act.” Lydia also noticed an opportunity to be generative towards their siblings and saw strength in their relationship. Lydia said that because of their generativity, their “relationship has gotten so much stronger, and I would say we’re so much closer.” Being around young family members allowed them to practice and develop their generativity in a less formal environment than a mentoring program and created more substantial connections with the younger generations within their family.

Not only did participants see their recent life experiences as impactful to generativity’s manifestation, but 49 of the 61 participants also shared their belief that these opportunities to be generative are something that would take place throughout their life. Tyler expressed their desire to continue finding ways to be generative once their time in a formal mentoring opportunity had ended:

Some of the things you need to do are to be willing to get out there and find the opportunities to practice [generativity]. This is my last year with [the formal mentoring program]. So, one of the things that I’m going to look forward to, and this is where the generativity ties in, I’m going to

have to look for a bunch of clubs or look for a bunch of activities... to try out to try to find something. Now the only way to know for sure if it's something that's going to be a good fit is something that I feel like I can help and make an impact in... Maybe I go to a place it's not quite the best fit for me... That's okay. I don't have to go back there. But I need to go there in the first place to at least give it a try. Because if you don't try, you can't succeed [with generativity].

Gina echoed that they would also find ways to be generative over time. However, their opportunities would likely be built into their teaching career. Gina shared that:

I am also in a unique situation of having the opportunity to continue to be with younger people, getting to teach. And I don't know what grade I'll be teaching, but still being able to have the opportunity to have a lot of relationships with kids and being able to hopefully impact them in that way. I mean, that's the whole goal of generativity, is being able to impact the next generation, and that's who they are, and um, so hopefully that would continue to grow.

Participants further articulated that as long as they could find ways to be generative, which they intended to seek out, their generativity would continually develop and grow.

Participants identified many opportunities as having been meaningful ways to practice their generativity. When an opportunity was paired with their motivation to engage with the next generation, they became more intentional and aware of their generative abilities. The chance to be in an environment where they could harness and practice their generativity allowed them to expand their generative potential. The young

adults considered the opportunity to be generative to be an outlet for their abilities, which then fostered their generativity to manifest at a deeper level.

4.14 Growth over Time

While opportunities to be generative emerged as a critical element to generativity's manifestation in young adults, growth over time equally appeared to be a catalyst in this process. Throughout all four studies, 59 participants shared that as time went on throughout their opportunities to be generative, they were simultaneously able to grow their generativity. Participants recognized time as instrumental to manifesting their generativity by developing generative relationships. During study 3, Carl verbalized this belief in growth over time by relating their development in generativity to their time spent mentoring:

For the first year, year and a half, it's still getting to know him [the mentee], really forming a really strong friendship where we have that trust and everything. So, for that part, it's just a slower building process, but once we got into it, year two, year three, that's where there was just a huge jump in what we could accomplish together and what we did.

As already mentioned, relationships take time to grow. Generative relationships face the same need. Through intentional relationship building and time, participants recognized development in their generativity.

Jeff also identified time as critical to developing successful generativity. Investing in someone and building a relationship takes time to develop, but the more time one spends being generative, the more innate it becomes. Jeff articulates the need for time for development:

How you put effort into building a positive relationship with someone for three years it's just getting into that habit. And over time, it just becomes a natural part of you. I guess you just get better at reaching out to others and just building positive relationships.

Having a deep and intentional connection with someone in a way that can create a lifelong impact is not something that can happen right away. Establishing a fruitful relationship with others takes time, effort, and growth in individual generativity. As time went on, generativity was more deeply manifested and increased confidence and understanding in their abilities.

Another way participants identified growth in their generativity was through being challenged to grow. Twenty-eight participants throughout the four studies expressed this notion. Though participants noted these challenges often came by being pushed out of their comfort zone, the push was necessary for them to achieve growth in their generativity. Isabelle shared their experience of being challenged to grow from their generative community:

Being told, 'Hey, this is important, being challenged, 'Hey, in your response journals, this is what we're doing this week; you need to work on this.' Being strictly told, 'Hey, work on this week and tell me what happened, not 'Hey, this is important, and then never hearing from it again. Being challenged to work on it. Umm, [director] always would give really good examples to us and... I was like, okay, is this for real. And then, when I started using it, seeing how what I became a better listener, people were opening up to me. When I was asking questions, I was getting

more in-depth answers. If you ask surface-level, you'll get surface-level and realizing that if I asked deep questions, I'd get deeper answers. So just [generative community] ... basically helping me be intentional and notice that.

Isabelle noted that though being challenged may have been difficult at first and required a deeper investment within the community, the rewards that came from meeting those challenges allowed them to grow in their generativity. Lance also recognized their generative community as a resource for setting challenges to grow:

I would say [leadership mentoring program] has challenged me in ways [of] how I perceive different situations and encounters that I have. It really gives me an open and clearer view of where people are coming from and the strength that they bring to the table. I really have actively tried throughout my college career specifically, with that being the introduction of [leadership mentoring program] to me. I really tried to; when I meet a new person, I like to get to know them—more than just their first name. And I really like to know their likes, their dislikes, what they would consider their strengths to be. What I see their strengths are. So, I would say [leadership mentoring program] has really been the bridge point for me to be able to read people and to really get to know them after our first encounter to meet one another.

Lance shared challenges that were set less directly than Isabelle but still recognized foundational elements of addressing and working through challenges and incorporating them into their everyday lives beyond mentoring.

Participants also shared an awareness of self-growth over their time spent within the mentoring program. A total of 46 participants addressed self-growth during their respective interviews. When reflecting on the development of their generativity, participants also recognized the growth that they had as an individual during that time. Thomas said that by identifying their growth, they were able to gain a sense of confidence in their generativity:

Having so much self-growth, I think, once I was really able to figure out who I was, my ability to have that shift in paradigm and focus on another person after I was comfortable with who I was, which expands into my comfort, my confidence, my abilities to guide other people, care for other people. I'm thinking like sophomore year... that's when it [generative growth] shot out for me, where things clicked, and I feel like I can do this. I know how to do this. I know how to help other people, and I had experience with it before from [organization] leadership from other programs. But yeah, I just remember that being a really good year for me in terms of feeling like I can fully pour into other people now that I know who I am.

Alex articulated this same notion of recognizing a growth within themselves. Through this process, Alex verbalized "more internal fulfillment" within themselves. How Alex realized their growth came through reflecting on their relationships and validation from others:

You can definitely see it, even just straight-through text with [mentee]. On Thanksgiving, we texted each other and it was just a cool conversation. It wasn't forced, and it wasn't fake. You could tell that there was actual

growth and bonding there. Even their parents commented on how far we've come together over three years. And I guess that's more external, but that validation is just like, 'Okay, we're at, we did something. This is great.' And it really does show, even in just interacting with people that we were in the class with, interacting with people that took the class the next year, and in project. It would be all so obsolete; there would be a big hole if it didn't exist. And that's why looking back, and how much time is spent in [leadership mentoring program] and honestly how much growth and how much satisfaction comes out of it. Yeah, it probably influenced that higher increase.

Growth at the individual level incorporates many different recognitions (e.g., reflection, affirmation, time). Participants across the studies remarked that being allowed to recognize their personal growth in generativity was critical to its manifestation among them. Doing so allowed them to increase their awareness and desire to act on their generativity while simultaneously recognizing more substantial impacts and success when implementing their generativity.

Over time, the final component of growth was the outcomes associated with generative growth. Specifically, 23 participants from the four studies voiced an increase in confidence as an outcome of growth over time. Further, 37 participants shared their ability to actively invest in others as the second direct outcome of development over time. Danielle spoke of their increase in confidence and its connection to their growth in generativity:

[Leadership mentoring program] has helped me a lot with my self-view or view of myself. So getting to see where I started and see where I ended in, my confidence level has grown a lot. Just the way that I am able to interact with people and my ability to know that I can make a difference in someone's life. So getting to see my [mentee] from where we started to where she is now, even though she's got a lot going on in her life, I can still tell that my presence in her life has impacted her in a serious way, which is really cool. And so that's given me a lot of confidence to know that moving forward, I know that I can make a difference in people's lives.

Danielle's growth influenced their confidence in their abilities, allowing them to gain a sense of connection to others and strengthen relationships through that confidence.

Tyler expressed the second outcome of growth, active investment, through an application over time. Because of the opportunity to intentionally practice generativity and subsequently grow by doing so, Tyler was able to explore ways to be generative beyond their mentoring relationship confidently:

It's [generativity] definitely improved it, I would say. It's, like I said, given me not only the review..., knowledge, and experience, but it's also shown me the practical ways to apply it. And it's given me the ability to seek out situations where I'm able to practice it a little bit better and a little bit more.

Growth over time allowed Tyler to gain experience and comfortability with their generativity. Because of this, they were able further to incorporate generativity into other facets of their life. Participants identified growth as a catalyst and opportunities to be

generative as a facilitator of generativity's manifestation. Opportunities to implement generativity and recognize growth served as a stimulus for their overall awareness and desire to be generative. This, in turn, positively influenced their willingness to seek out intentional relationships and generative communities.

4.15 Generative Relationships

Participants channeled their desire and awareness to be generative through growth over time and sought opportunities to be generative. They were then pulled to seek out specific relationships in which they could engage their generativity. All 61 participants from each of the four studies verbalized their desire to establish relationships in which they could foster an intentional and committed connection between themselves and the investee where they could apply their generativity. The participants mainly articulated these purposeful investments through their mentoring relationships, which was the focus of the initial four studies. At the beginning of these relationships, 49 participants specifically stated the importance of establishing and building a solid relationship with their mentees. Patrick, for example, noted the value of generating a stable relationship:

Especially from the beginning of our mentoring relationships, it's a lot about building trust, a lot about building the groundwork for those relationships. While that is incredibly important in any relationship and it's important skills to have, those aren't necessarily, at least in my experience, mentoring a high schooler. Those aren't the actions and words that a student will go away necessarily remember, going, 'oh, this person took the time to build my trust in these few weeks, so I'm going to go and

do that for another person.’ But as that goes along, everything you do builds off of what has come previously.

These relationships started from the ground up and took time to build and grow. Trust, communication, and intentionality were recognized as invaluable foundational elements to creating a generative relationship through this same factor of time. In this sense, Doug also articulated the need to establish openness and commitment when in a generative relationship:

First and foremost, the relationship needs to be constructive. It needs to be open and willing to critique one another. And I think once we’ve got that established, I think the true difference-making comes in in this positive psychology standpoint of here’s what you’re really good at, we’ve identified all of these things, your personality is laid out like this, and then taking deliberate and intentional effort. I think intentionality is the key to any difference-making relationship. The intent, the purpose, has to be there because you can’t do it halfheartedly, and once you’ve identified those underlying traits, [you focus] immense effort on growing them, whether that be through discussion or stimulus situations.

It was the establishment of a strong relationship that allowed the development of one’s generativity. Generativity was further manifested when participants recognized how to and practiced building strong relationships rooted in generativity.

As these relationships strengthened over time, participants also identified specific emotions they experienced due to their relationship with their mentee. As these relationships grew, participants shared a heightened sense of care and concern for their

mentees. In all, 47 participants across the four studies articulated experiencing a heightened sense of emotion for and connection to their mentee due to their generative relationship. Darcy recognized growth in their relationship with their mentee when what started as a general care for their mentee developed into intentional compassion and guidance for their success:

My first year of [leadership mentoring program], it is primarily building that relationship with [mentees] and so yes, you have concern for them, but I feel like it's more you're building trust. You're getting to know them. Whereas later on, you're really challenging them more, and guiding them, and talking about more difficult conversations... I think also just the awareness and also being older so generativity outside of [leadership mentoring program] you see those future generations when you're a senior.

Darcy additionally considered the construct of time and an increased awareness of generativity as allowing them to harness those emotions and connect with their mentee. Hank had a similar experience with their mentee. They shared that they were able to develop a solid and intentional connection with their mentee through gaining comfortability with one another:

The small talk, just trying to get to know each other. And then, once you reach your comfort level and have a certain amount of trust, that's when you start talking about bigger topics and getting more personal with things. So that's how I knew that we were growing because I was able to

make a relationship for the first time with someone I didn't really know and build it to its magnitude with intention of doing that.

When Hank recognized that connection with their mentee, they were able to be intentional with their investment and engage in generative actions towards their mentee.

While the process of the mentor/investor is a critical element in the development of a generative relationship, it is only one half of the relationship. The other key factor within these relationships is commitment from the mentee/investee. Twenty-eight participants shared that when they recognized a dedication to the relationship from their mentee, they were then more motivated to further invest in and develop them. Carl offered one of the most representative statements to this idea of witnessing their mentee commit to their relationship during Study 3:

I think that [commitment] definitely showed a respect between our relationship and he actually valued what I was saying. It wasn't just something I was saying, and he was like, 'Ahh you know, I'll think about it.' But it was something that he actually consciously thought about and processed, which I think is a big thing. And then I think it also just shows in our relationship like him giving me the updates and telling me like 'hey, [what] we talked about worked.' He's actually invested, he cares, he appreciates what we're doing together.

Being able to see the equal care and value that their mentee placed on their relationship created a sense of affirmation for the mentor to continue being generative. This element of commitment from the mentee was also expressed through having a reciprocal relationship with one another.

A total of 33 participants vocalized that when they were mentoring, they received just as much out of the relationship as their mentees and experienced a reciprocal relationship. In fact, Brittney said they were able to learn more from their mentee than their mentee learned from them:

I was learning a lot from [mentee]. I always say that I think I learn more from her than she learns from me just because the way that she talks and the way that she interacts with other people. She has really good people skills. So I would say not only was I learning from her about interacting with other people, but then after investing in her I was learning what it felt like to invest in somebody else at the level of what mentoring is. And so I would say the effects then were how I was taking what I learned from her and how to interact with other people, and seeing what that looked like for me and my own friendships.

Through mentoring, Brittney was given the opportunity to explore their own generativity and find ways to reflect on and recognize the various ways it fits into their life.

Though majority of the participants noted the benefits to having their mentee commit to their relationship, this was not always the case expressed by all participants. A few of the participants voiced that when their mentee was not interested in their relationship, their desire to be generative and engage in that generative relationship was negatively impacted. Leni experienced this disconnect with their mentee, which over time negatively influenced their desire to be generative:

I was frustrated a lot with my first [mentee] for a variety of reasons that were a little bit out of my control and reasons that she decided to leave the

program. It was very frustrating and scary, like ‘what am I doing wrong? Why isn’t this working out and why am I putting so much time into this?’ But then having a [mentee] who I mesh super well with, I look forward to hanging out with her every week. I put time into seeing what she really needs to grow and she really challenges me because she is a genius.

When in a relationship where generative intentions were not being reciprocated, it was difficult for Leni to channel and grow in motivation to act on their generativity. Once in a relationship in which the mentee is also invested, Leni was able to rekindle their generative desire. The reciprocal investment of both the mentor and mentee was found to be a critical element to generativity’s manifestation for young adults, particularly when fostering generative relationships.

Another mentee-centered element that emerged as an instrumental part of generativity’s manifestation within young adults was witnessing their mentee grow. Similar to recognizing commitment from their mentee, 50 participants from the four studies verbalized a surge in their generative motivation and desire when they saw their mentee grow because of their impact. Vince shared this experience of witnessing growth in their mentee:

So, it’s kind of like you start with the original person and then the next generation would be like [mentee], and then the next generation would be, you know, his friends at school for example. So, I’m kind of starting to see that cycle and that’s what makes me feel like I’m kind of increasing my generativity.

This cycle was also referred to as the ripple effect. As Vince referenced above, a cycle of impact was created in which they are creating a generative impact on their mentee, and then they are beginning to see their mentee having generative impacts on others, and so on. Hazel echoed this statement of a ripple effect:

How I think about the ripple effect of how you can focus on the one [person], and it spreads out. So my focus on [mentee] and I'm helping her realize her values, helping her realize her strengths and her beliefs and how to influence those around her. So, if I'm focusing on her and she, through reinvestment and all that, she causes a ripple effect out.

In this instance, Hazel viewed their mentee as the individual who initiated ripple effects outside of their relationship and onto others.

However, not all participants expressed that they could see an immediate ripple effect with their mentees. Cassie, who mentored a younger mentee at the time of their interview, shared their desire to witness growth in their mentee, eventually hoping to create a ripple effect as their mentee got older. Cassie shared, "having that skill set and being able to learn those things. Apply them to relationship and then actually teaching those to [mentee] as well so that she can apply those to her relationships and just throughout her life." Ultimately, participants found the motivation to be generative from seeing growth in their mentees. Growth in mentees was an output of their impact as mentors and allowed the young adults to see the results of their generativity visually. This experience ultimately poured back into their desire to develop their generativity further.

4.16 Generative Community and Opportunities of Reflection

The final element of generativity's manifestation in young adults was expressed as having a generative community and opportunities for reflection from that community. The notion of community was considered by 58 of the participants from the four studies to be an additional intentional opportunity they recognized as a growing and evolving their generativity. Participants were given an environment of peers to learn from through this sense of community, learn with, and receive support from. The first significant element of the generative community was the opportunity to receive affirmation from others.

Affirmation provided a sense of confidence and encouragement while manifesting their generativity. Forty-eight of the participants shared a recognized understanding of assurance in what they were doing and in their generative relationships. Nolan articulated this feeling by sharing that affirmation from others “was just the reinforce[ment], knowing that it’s not myself that’s seeing this, but others too, so it must be real. And then that provides a sense of like, knowingness that like okay like I am making progress.” Having others recognize their generativity and the strides they were making with their mentee affirmed Nolan with what they were doing.

Charlie also shared the impact that affirmation from others had on their own generative development. Specifically, Charlie noted that affirmation from other mentors was particularly beneficial to their generative development:

From other leadership mentors. Just because the students surrounding me, especially the ones that had seen me grow with [mentee] have always been so encouraging and so motivating. And of course, we had a lot of younger

ones that year, but that was always like such a good and steady understanding for me. I was having a hard time... being able to meet with [mentee], just through her like activities and stuff, and getting more one-on-one time with her rather than just going to activities. Yeah, that constant encouragement, like 'No, that matters.', 'You're still being consistent', like 'You're still doing those things' really helped show me what the skill is rather than what the potentially drop it down a little bit.

Having peers point out the positives in the relationship and the strides being made allowed Charlie to recognize the positive work they were doing.

In a similar respect, 55 participants across the four studies also articulated that learning from and with others was a factor within their generative community. This concept represents engaging with peers and having the opportunity to deepen their understanding of generativity alongside them. Gwen shared that by having a group of peers to be around, they were able to develop strong connections with other generative-minded individuals:

I would say honestly my first wonderful experience in [leadership mentoring program] was when I started going to kind of shadow groups, small groups. Because coming to college, you're in a huge group of people and becoming part of such a small, close, tight-knit group is wonderful. So, I come here and I almost feel a bit more at home, because not only is it a smaller group of people to connect with, but it's a small group of wonderful people to connect with. It's people who all share similar

values, similar morals. Honestly, that was probably my first time where I felt like [leadership mentoring program] made an impact.

Through this experience, Gwen vocalized a sense of connection and support from those around them, from the program, and from the larger community they were a part of.

Beth also brought up their connection to generative community and what learning from and with peers did for their generativity. Through peer interactions, Beth was supported and found motivation to develop their own generativity - an experience they attribute to being a part of a generative community:

I think it's largely impacted [my generativity] because I mean maybe there would have been other avenues I could have taken to involve myself with younger students and affecting the next generation, but I really don't think so. And I really don't think it would have happened without the older people in [sorority] telling me about it and sharing their own desire and purpose for developing younger people with me then I wouldn't have stepped into that role myself. And so I think it just follows the whole train effect or domino effect of older people telling me about it who are kind of like sort of influencing the next generation in doing that so then I can make purposeful steps in influencing the next generation after that.

Being part of a larger community and connecting with those around them allowed Beth to recognize and grow their generativity while also establishing a desire to create ripple effects of their own.

The construct of a generative community also created a sense of motivation for participants to garner from their peers. Thirty-nine of the participants expressed a desire

to be like those around them, especially when they were able to see others having success. Michelle provided strong support for the idea of wanting to be like those around you:

I think it's because you're just being surrounded by people who are also practicing such high levels of generativity that it, again, it makes you want to get there too. Like you're seeing how they're making you feel, seeing how they're practicing. I think that's why it like influences those levels [of generativity].

Witnessing the generative success and growth of peers encouraged participants to act on and develop their own generativity. Participants, like Michelle, looked to others as guides to explore how they could develop their generativity. Seeing others find success in their generativity created a sense of external encouragement to be continually improving their own. In this same notion of motivation from peers, participants expressed an increase in generative growth by being in a community with peers that shared their mindset and desires to be generative. When asked about their experience being a mentor, Jenna brought up her peers by saying, "it's been cool to serve with like so many people who have the mindset of others, [and are] not just [thinking] about themselves constantly." Having the opportunity to be surrounded by and learn from individuals who share generative ideals and want to consistently harness their generativity through mentoring created an environment that encouraged generative development.

The final element of being a part of a generative community was having the opportunity to reflect. Forty-two participants articulated that through their generative community, they were able to reflect on and express their generativity. This sense of

reflection came through both individual reflection and external reflection by sharing experiences with others. Leslie verbalized the opportunity for self-reflection in order to create meaning of their generative ability:

Well I have definitely become a much better listener and a lot more perceptive to what's going on around me. And so much more intentional with the relationships that I have with other people, and more intentional about what it is that I want to do with my life. I think that [leadership mentoring program] has made me look into myself a lot deeper and I realize that I have an opportunity to do something that I like and something that I'm good at. And before I don't think I had really realized that.

Leslie recognized through reflection that being a part of a generative community allowed them to gain further awareness of their generativity. Having the opportunity to reflect on their generative ability and create a sense of meaning behind their relationships allowed Leslie to further develop their generativity.

Hank similarly noted the value of reflection on generativity development. Hank shared independent and group methods of reflection when asked what elements fostered a growth in their generativity:

A lot of reflection. I feel like nowadays, there's not a lot of reflection that people do, but [leadership mentoring program's] given so many different circumstances where you have to be introspective and reflect on things that you've done and kind of see how certain actions you take, see how they actually end out affecting other people. So, with reaction journals and

also project meeting, it's pretty easy just like have a one-on-one and leave the one-on-one and look forward to the next, but the project meeting really helps you reflect because everyone's sharing, offering advice for everyone. So that's a time where it's really a lot of time to be thinking about what you're doing and what you can do.

Hank articulated that through reflection, both within independent journaling and in small groups with peers, they could further make sense of their generativity. From that reflection, they could look for ways to continue developing their generativity.

Participants identified that their generativity was manifested through generative communities, specifically from affirmation, learning from and with others, being motivated by peers, and having points of intentional reflection. When combined with generative relationships, these elements also provided an environment for participants to learn, practice, and reflect on their generativity, leading to further growth and seeking additional opportunities to be generative. These factors then increased their desire and awareness of generativity. It is through this constant cycle that generativity is manifested in young adults.

4.2 Fluidity of Model

The model developed from this study is represented by a fluid process. This fluidity is illustrated in Figure 4.1 through the cyclical process, which shows how the model is continually influenced by and building off itself. The desire to be generative, along with a generative awareness, feeds into the individual searching for opportunities to be generative. Doing so also contributes to growth over time in the individual's abilities. From these avenues, generative relationships and generative communities with reflection

are formed. However, this process does not stop once these connections are achieved. Participants then noted that as a result of being in these generative relationships, communities, and having opportunities to reflect, they were further motivated to be generative and experienced a resurgence of their generative awareness. This continued the cycle into seeking opportunities to be generative and experiencing growth, leading to additional generative relationships and communities with reflection. The components of the model remain the core six themes of generativity's manifestation within young adults. However, each time the cycle begins, the component is at an enhanced state compared to where it was prior. Meaning the sense of motivation that young adults capture when the cycle filters back to the beginning of the model is at a heightened level of motivation compared to when they initially experienced generativity's manifestation.

4.3 Summary of Findings

Six major themes emerged from the data to represent the key elements of how generativity is manifested in young adults. Participants first expressed a sense of inner desire and motivation to be generative. Generative awareness was the second foundational factor that emerged within the model. When gaining this awareness, participants first acquired an awareness of generativity as a construct, then recognized generativity within themselves and connected with others. This inner element of generativity's manifestation also accounted for growth over time and in oneself and others. Those internal elements were then expressed through tangible opportunities to be generative. These outputs were generative relationships, which harnessed their abilities and established their connection in a generative community. Finding a generative community and having the chance to reflect were also shared as being influential to

generativity's manifestation. This process was not expressed as a linear model with a set beginning and end. Instead, the model (Figure 4.1) represented an ongoing cycle that continually influences itself. Motivation and awareness of generativity manifested themselves in young adults were sought opportunities to be generative and experienced generative growth. Those two concepts were then expressed as catalysts for young adults to develop generative relationships and join generativity communities with opportunities to reflect. Within these relationships and communities of generativity, young adults were able to reflect and grow their generativity, which sparked a resurged sense of awareness and motivation to be generative, which further encouraged young adults to find opportunities to be generative and experience growth while doing so.

4.4 Theoretical Coding

The final section of this chapter highlights the theoretical coding section of the data analysis process. During this process, the present study's theory themes were compared to the original conceptual model of generativity established by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992). There are commonalities between the two models regarding motivation, inner desire, and opportunities to be generative. However, some themes emerged from the present study that appears to be unique to young adulthood.

The original conceptual model of generativity (see Figure 2.2) by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) connects to the final model generated from the present study. This connection logically makes sense as the original conceptual model is a well-respected and accepted model of generativity. Before the study, it was anticipated that there would be some common themes throughout both models. The study's goal was not to overturn the

present model but to further explore generativity to develop a similar model that reflects generativity's manifestation in young adults more accurately.

The first overlap between the models is the notions of generative motivation and desire. Young adults recognized that they innately could be generative and that it was an essence of who they were and what they enjoyed doing. Even though this desire sometimes took more time to become apparent, all the individuals in the study recognized eventually attaining a sense of desire to be generative, which fueled their motivation to have those interactions. Participants also noted the instrumental role of having another individual be generative towards them to bring awareness to their abilities/desires. This aligns with the original model's notion of "inner desire" as a primary motivational source for generativity, as this also stems from the desire to have a long-term impact and create a sense of influence over the next generation to help guide and better them. There were elements of immortality expressed by young adults, specifically when Emily connected their role in selecting new mentors as a way to make a lasting impact on the organization after they graduate. The idea of immortality is also tied to the participants' desires to impact their mentees. This is similar to wanting to live on through the next generation, which is articulated by recognizing and striving to have that long-term impact. There were not as many instances of communion in the sense of "the general tendency to relate to others in loving, caring, and intimate ways" (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, p. 1005) in terms of outward expression with their mentees. However, this notion of communion was represented through generative communities with their peers. Participants articulated a strong sense of connection to and appreciation for those around them. They shared that

these strong relations with their peers and the opportunity to be a part of a large group for reflection enhanced their overall generativity.

Generative awareness is a new category unique to the conceptualized model of generativity in young adults. Through this cyclical process, participants recognized how their sense of awareness of generativity was influenced by their motivation to find opportunities to be generative. Then, they would cycle back and further deepen their desire and motivation to be generative. This sense of awareness was composed of becoming aware of generativity as a construct. Many participants were initially unaware of the term “generativity” before active engagement in generative roles. Additional concepts of their awareness include gaining an awareness of themselves through a generative lens, becoming more aware of how they relate to others with generativity, and becoming aware of a shift in their mindset to being more focused on others.

Awareness does have a slight connection to the narration piece of the original conceptual model. In this stage, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) indicate that “the generativity script is an inner narration of the adult’s own awareness of where efforts to be generative fit into his or her own personal history, into contemporary society, and the social world he or she inhabits” (p. 1006). In this sense, awareness is connected more to reflecting on their abilities and finding ways to incorporate generativity moving forward. Participants in this study verbalized awareness as a more fluid element of generativity’s manifestation. They recognized awareness as a critical piece of motivation to continue being generative and moving forward with seeking opportunities to be generative.

The ‘opportunities to be generative’ theme within the new model most closely relates to McAdams and de St. Aubin’s (1992) category of cultural demand. Both

categories connect to simply having the opportunity to be generative. The need/ability to be generative is available to the individual through various formats (e.g., societal opportunities, mentoring, organization involvements), allowing them to have those foundational experiences with being generative.

The element of developmental expectations is not present in the current model as this component relates most closely to starting a family at a certain age (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Young adults did not express this push to be generative in the traditional context established within the original model. Instead, they actively chose to seek opportunities to be generative through other methods, such as those listed above. Additionally, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) also share that the disconnect with developmental expectations happens “as adults move through their 30s and 40s.. [and] are unable or unwilling to contribute to and assume responsibility for the next generation” (p. 1004). Young adults in this study are not expressing a lack of willingness to invest in the next generation. The initial studies used for the secondary data analysis demonstrate the younger generation’s ability to play generative roles for future generations. The idea of contributing to the next generation in terms of having children was not applicable in the present study, but that does not automatically mean that this population is not generative. This study found that the developmental expectations factor from the original model was not a component of young adults’ manifestation of generativity. Participants shared that most of this notion derived from opportunities to be generative.

Growth is another construct of the new model unique to young adults. The idea of growth over time is specific to the present study. McAdams and de St. Aubin’s initial model of generativity (1992) expresses more of a linear development process of

generativity. The current study found generativity's manifestation to be a layered process that continues over time. Because of this, growth was a significant category that emerged from the data. Time, being challenged, recognizing a sense of growth in themselves, and identifying outcomes of their growth were all critical components of generativity's manifestation as expressed by the participants.

The generative relationships category has the closest connections to the original model's thoughts, plans, and behavior components. Through established relationships and the support of a community, participants were able to deepen the development of their generativity. This process somewhat resembles generative concern, commitment, and action. Participants seemed to have a similar process of developing generative concern into commitment, as showcased in the original model. The main difference was that for young adults, this concern and commitment for the next generation was manifested once they were in their generative relationships. Young adults did not share the sense of unconditional commitment to the next generation. I attribute this gap to the difference between having a mentee with whom you are establishing a relationship, like young adults' experience, and the traditional conceptualization of having a child. There would naturally be a more ingrained commitment to one's child than a member of a younger generation in which the relationship has to be intentionally built. The mentoring process incorporates a sense of obligation to and care for the mentee; it just needs time to strengthen into a deeper level of commitment. Participants were then able to act on those feelings by being active investors in their mentee's life.

However, belief was not entirely expressed in the present study as it is expressed in McAdams and de St. Aubin's (1992) original conceptual model. McAdams and de St.

Aubin (1992) identify this as "to place hope in the advancement and betterment of human life in succeeding generations" (p. 1006). The participants in the study did not consistently mention this idea. Participants seemed to feel most closely connected to their mentees and had a belief in their success but did not share many expressions of belief in the next generation. However, it was sometimes alluded to by participants. This idea was commonly expressed as the desire to see their mentee create change and impact their community for the better.

The final components of the newly conceptualized model, generative community and opportunities to reflect, are also unique elements of young adults' generativity development. Having a generative community was another opportunity where participants expressed that they were able to develop and critically think about their generativity. There is some brief overlap between generative community and generative concern, commitment, and action regarding having an environment to foster their care and concern for the next generation. However, the most prominent connection between generative community and the original model is through reflection. The original model addresses narration and sharing life stories as the meaning-making element of one's generativity. Though I would argue that at this point in their lives, young adults may not yet identify with having a life story to the same degree as someone in middle adulthood, they do appear to have these narrations on a smaller scale through reflecting. When they reflect, the participants could make meaning of their experiences and recognize their generativity.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the process of how generativity is manifested in young adults. Generativity has long been recognized as an impactful phenomenon at both the individual and societal levels. Generativity can be a pivotal contributor to answering the call to equip young adults to take over the leadership roles of the aging population, especially when linked to socially responsible leadership, (Hastings et al., 2015; Rossi, 2001). Generativity can also address Universities' desires to promote "more effective citizens" within higher education (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2022). Because of generativity's traditional placement as a midlife construct, generativity is likely to be explored through a similar lens of middle adulthood, which could inaccurately account for generativity in young adults. This study lent itself to a deeper exploration of how generativity is manifested, specifically through the lens of young adulthood. The findings from this study also promote further research within this age group.

To begin the study, the central question that framed the research was: How does generativity manifest itself in young adults? The sub-questions that accentuated this grounded theory study were:

1. How do young adults describe generativity?
2. In what ways do young adults recognize their generativity?
3. What experiences do young adults associate with generativity?
4. How do young adults experience generativity?

Data used for this study were secondary data from four unique studies that sought insight into young adults' levels of generativity through their time spent mentoring. When interviewed, all of the participants were college students involved in a leadership mentoring program. Individuals were asked to participate in the initial studies using a combination of purposive and criterion sampling. A total of 61 interviews were gathered and reanalyzed.

The initial interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format that allowed for a flexible structure during the interview process. The present study accounted for the differing interview protocols from the original studies by utilizing broad research sub-questions that promoted a more flexible format for the data analysis. Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory analytic approach also aided in the data analysis process with secondary data as it encourages a more fluid approach to the analysis process. For this study, access was given to all of the transcripts conducted from the four prior studies. Each study was re-coded in its entirety as each interview question provided valuable insight into generativity and its manifestation within this population.

Charmaz's (2014) approach to grounded theory was enlisted during the data analysis phase, meaning the study underwent initial, focused, and theoretical coding. Initial codes were coded using a sentence-by-sentence or groups of sentences that expressed the same idea approach, as utilized by respected researchers in the field of leadership (Komives et al., 2005). Doing so allowed me to stay close to the data but better manage lengthier participant responses. A total of 55 initial codes emerged from the data. From those initial codes, focused coding was conducted to develop themes based on the frequency, which best represented the process of generativity's

manifestation that participants were sharing. Six final themes remained after focused coding. These themes were then presented in a model to display the overall theory. The developed model extends on the traditional model of generativity and offers a new conceptual model that demonstrates generativity's manifestation through the context of young adulthood.

The final stage of the data analysis was theoretical coding. In this stage, the theory generated from the study and the original conceptual model of generativity developed by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) were compared. Underlying connections emerged between both models, mainly through how they presented generativity development, including an inner desire to be generative, opportunities to be generative, and elements of reflection. However, there were also factors of generativity's manifestation unique to young adults. These factors include gaining awareness of generativity, recognizing growth over time, generative relationships, and generative communities. Findings from the study provide a baseline of insight for future research on how young adults experience the process of generativity's manifestation.

5.2 Presentation of a Model

The theory that emerged from this study incorporates the six categories expressed by participants as being instrumental to the manifestation of their generativity. The model is depicted in Figure 4.1 on page 55. The model showcases the process of how generativity is developed in young adults. Ultimately, young adults expressed that generativity's manifestation begins with an innate desire and motivation to be generative. This inner desire stems from a compilation of the young adult's natural ability to be generative, their recognition of the impact they can have through generativity, having the

experience of another individual who invested in them when they were younger, and wanting to provide that experience for others, and shifting to an others-focused mindset.

This motivation is then paired with generative awareness and their potential to make an impact. Overall, generative awareness is composed of recognizing generativity as a concept, understanding young adults' ability to be generative, and recognizing their potential impact through generativity. Once this occurs, young adults can ultimately take meaningful ownership of their generativity. They also then begin to seek out opportunities to be generative intentionally.

These internal factors of motivation and awareness serve as a foundation of generativity's manifestation and encourage young adults to seek opportunities to be generative and recognize growth in their generativity. Motivation and awareness encourage young adults to search for ways to fulfill their generative abilities. These opportunities can take on various forms but traditionally begin in or grow into committed and long-term relationships. The second motivator for generativity development is growth. Growth occurs naturally over time but is also recognized when individuals face constructive challenges. Growth also occurs through identifying specific outcomes, such as increased confidence and active investment.

Through seeking out opportunities to be generative, young adults channel their generativity into generative relationships and join communities that allow for reflection. Generative relationships are an output of opportunities to be generative and focus on the connection between the investor and their investee. While in these relationships, young adults build a rapport with their investee, commit to these relationships, express particular

emotions (e.g., trust, empathy, compassion) that demonstrate the depth of the relationship, and witness their investee grow as a result of the relationship.

The final component of generativity's manifestation specific to a community is the ability to reflect. This sense of community fosters generative development by providing affirmation, learning opportunities, motivation from peers, and opportunities to reflect on their generativity. The process cycles back through, with generative relationships and communities fostering further motivation and awareness. This then transitions to an increased desire to seek out opportunities to be generative and experience additional growth.

5.3 Significance in the Literature

The findings from the current study support and connect with a multitude of previous studies. One of the most considerable contributions this study makes is affirming the presence of and providing a conceptual model for generativity's presence in young adulthood, a notion documented in previous studies (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011; Hastings et al., 2015; Hastings & Sunderman, 2019; Lawford et al., 2020; Lawford et al., 2005; Lawford & Ramey, 2015). The emergent conceptual model from this study connects to Peterson and Stewart's (1993) argument of generativity beyond traditional mid-life stages. It also responds to their call for further exploration of generativity specific to this life stage. The emergent model from the current study additionally supports Lawford and Ramey's (2015) study expressing the promotion of young adults' generativity through activity engagement. The participants highly vocalized mentoring as being instrumental to their generativity development and other involvements and connections such as family members and clubs. This grounded theory study also connects

to Leffel's (2008) belief in the fluidity of generativity across various life stages. This belief in fluidity is echoed through the generated model, expressing the shifting nature of generativity's development in young adults. As mentioned above, this study further supports that generativity is present earlier than traditionally considered. This updated model of generativity in young adulthood provides additional insight on this construct and encourages further exploration of generativity specific to this life stage.

The findings from the current study connect to the LID model (Komives et al., 2005, 2006), a model which addresses generativity in young adulthood. The LID model expresses many similar constructs to those developed in the current study's model. The LID model accounts for elements of awareness, confidence, and group influences to work towards generativity, which is expressed in the fifth stage of leadership identity. This notion is similar to the findings in the present study. Awareness was a significant contributor to developing young adults' generativity. Though the focus of awareness in the LID model is primarily channeled through self-awareness, there are connections to external awareness, like those found in the present study and the LID model's broadening view of leadership.

Similarly, the present study found confidence to be an outcome of when young adults were experiencing growth in their generativity, much like the confidence expressed in the LID model when young adults experience developing themselves. Lastly, group influences constitute a significant component of the LID model. The concept of group influences is similarly accounted for in the emergent model of generativity in the current study. Group influences particularly relate to generative relationships and generative community. During these experiences, participants were able to engage with and learn

from their investees and peers, fostering generative development. When looking specifically at the generativity component of the LID model, “students became actively committed to larger purposes and to the groups and individuals who sustained them” (Komives et al., 2005, p. 607). A similar idea was articulated in the present study when young adults channeled their motivation and awareness of generativity to find opportunities to be generative and actively grow their generativity.

Research conducted by McCain (2019) found building a community and the act of storytelling to be impactful on young adults’ identity. In McCain’s (2019) study, young adults expressed a “strong emphasis on relational connections and building trust and community with others” (2019, p. 117). In the present study, generative community and relationships served a similar role. Through communities and relationships, young adults can engage with generative peers and support one another in their generative development. McCain (2019) discovered that family storytelling influenced an individual’s overall leadership identity in terms of storytelling. Storytelling, in the frame of McCain’s (2019) study, “is the process of working to understand one’s experiences through the creation and organization of storytelling that occurs through both the content and the process of storytelling” (p. 118). Storytelling connects to young adults’ opportunity to reflect on the ‘generative community’ theme within the present study. Both concepts incorporate a meaning-making component that encourages young adults to think about their experiences and share them with others.

The present study's findings also link to initial mentoring research done by positive psychology pioneers William Hall and Don Clifton. Hall's initial research with Don Clifton as his graduate student explored critical elements of relationship-building

talent (ca. 1965). From this, they found that young adults identified having a "difference maker" in their life that created a long-term impact on them and ultimately gave them the desire to do the same for others. The responses in the current study echo these early findings. Participants from the four studies noted the pivotal role having a difference-maker played in their generative desire. Those who lacked a difference-maker recognized that gap and desired to have had someone in that role. They similarly used that desire as motivation to be a difference-maker for the next generation and establish that initial impact on others. The present study highlighted the value of awareness of the term "generativity" and its effects on young adults' being generative. Taking the time to be a difference-maker toward the next generation and showing other young adults how to be a difference-maker themselves can create a substantial and long-lasting impact on the community as a result of generativity. Taking charge of one's generative abilities and becoming intentional in the actions one is taking establishes a sense of ownership in generativity, particularly when there is also a difference-maker who modeled that ability.

5.4 Implications and Future Research Recommendations

5.41 Implications

Many theoretical and practical implications emerge from the current study. From a theoretical standpoint, the present study provides an updated and clarified model of generativity specific to young adults. Scholars can have a deepened understanding of how generativity is manifested relative to this life stage. The traditional model (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) has been established and trusted for many years. This new conceptual

model can serve as an additional piece of insight for scholars to continue exploring generativity in young adulthood.

The second theoretical implication is also a recommendation for future research. Future scholars and practitioners can utilize the model and findings from the present study to develop new psychometric measures of generativity for young adults. Current measures for generativity (e.g., The Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS), the Generativity Behavior Checklist (GBC) autobiographical episodes, and Emmon's (1986) Personal Strivings measure) are framed in a way that innately leans towards midlife adulthood experiences. For example, the GBC asks how often in the last month the participant "Gave money to a charity." This task could be arduous for young adults if they are not able to support their community financially. They could have a powerful desire and ability to be generative, but it wouldn't be accounted for from that question. Some of the traditional measures for generativity are in an "all or nothing" format, meaning participants receive no points for their generativity score if the specific and direct question does not apply to them. This format means that the traditional measures could misrepresent young adults' generativity levels. Instead, participants could express sentiments of generativity in similar ways, but due to the rigid structure of the question, their generativity would not be accounted for and marked as "0". Previous research has assumed that young adults' express lower levels of generativity than their counterparts in midlife adulthood because of these lower scores—however, the results of this study challenge that belief. The findings argue that rather than truly having lower levels in generativity, current measures may be inaccurately gauging young adults' level of generativity. For these reasons, the development of psychometric scales of generativity

that better represent young adulthood experiences, as expressed by the formulated model, is encouraged and serves as a theoretical implication.

Practical implications for this study include a better understanding of generativity's manifestation in young adults. Having a heightened knowledge of how generativity is developed in young adults can provide practitioners with further insight on how they can foster generativity in young adults. This study can also potentially offer student development professionals a more applicable framework to harness generativity at sooner rates in young adults, rather than accepting the belief that they need to wait to grow in their generativity.

Practitioners reviewing this study can examine the population and setting in which the present study took place and ascertain if the new model could be applied to their population of interest. Potential settings in which this new model of generativity could be applied include mentoring programs, campus organizations, and other settings in college environments to establish opportunities for young adults to manifest their generativity earlier. As found in this study, awareness and opportunities are significant factors in developing generativity in young adulthood. Recognizing generativity in student development practices could allow practitioners to incorporate these elements into their teaching and encourage active engagement. Doing so can additionally provide potential opportunities for young adults to channel their generativity, as represented in the model.

Practitioners could also implement this framework in a real-world setting for young adults. Practitioners can utilize the same judgement recommended above to conclude if the adapted model would be suited for the young adults in their settings. As

previously mentioned, young adults are poised to take over many leadership positions as the present workforce continues to age out. Understanding generativity and its connection to young adults could ensure that we are setting this population up for success as they take on these positions. Doing so can provide them with knowledge and an understanding of their generative potential. At the same time, these roles have the potential to establish a positive ripple effect on the community.

5.42 Future Research Recommendations

Two additional research recommendations are offered that differ from the above recommendation. These also stem from the present study and its findings. The first recommendation for future research is to test the developed model on current young adults and ensure its applicability to present generative experiences. Due to the nature of secondary data, there were no connections to the original participants and, thus, no opportunity to confirm the developed model directly with young adults. The experiences and developments expressed by participants would arguably be the same as current young adults who are in a generative mentoring relationship due to the short distance between the present day and when three of the four studies were initially conducted. Comparing the model to their experiences and confirming its applicability would strengthen the developed model by providing further insight and affirmation of the process of generativity's manifestation as represented in the present model. As mentioned in the reflexivity statement, I am a young adult, a former mentor, and someone aware of my generativity. My experiences and the methodological steps taken, including memo-ing, theoretical sampling, and connecting with an external auditor, provide elements of

validation to the present model, but confirming with young adults and allowing them to give feedback on the model would further enhance the validity of the model.

An additional recommendation for future research is establishing the generalizability of the theory and the model. Qualitative research is context-dependent, meaning it is not innately generalizable (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similarly, the theory developed is more accurately representative of college student leaders who mentor, who are referred to as young adults within the present study. While this is not a limitation to the study, it would enhance the use and applicability of the theory and model to test it amongst other contexts to examine its representation of young adults' manifestation of generativity on a larger scale. The population of college student leaders who mentor has been found in previous studies to have higher generativity levels than their peers, making them the ideal people to study while developing the new theory (Hastings et al., 2015). However, future research to further explore the model and its generalizability are encouraged.

Future research examining this newly adapted model should also seek to refine and clarify the generated model, particularly around the notions of potential moderating and mediating variables. The six themes that emerged within the current study presently stand as independent themes that formulate the process of how generativity is manifested within young adults. As future studies continue to expand the adapted model, scholars could additionally examine this process and affirm or alter the model to generate the most representative model of generativity's manifestation.

The final recommendation for future scholars is to explore this field of research and its potential connection to a critical theory paradigm. This worldview was not

initially considered a lens for this study, but reflecting on the methodological process, namely exploring and challenging traditional constraints of generativity, did pose potential links between the construct and framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study aimed to push the traditional boundaries of generativity, ultimately to generate a model for young adults that allows them to fully embrace and experience the outcomes of being generative. By recognizing this connection, future studies can further assess young adults' manifestation of generativity within the realm of critical theory.

5.5 Delimitations

The nature of secondary data analysis is considered both a delimitation and limitation for this study, depending on the focus of the investigation. Using secondary data created potential study limitations, most of which are rooted in the data collection process. Using secondary data means that the present study did not influence how the original studies were conducted. However, traditional grounded theory techniques, such as saturation, theoretical sampling, and the constant comparative method, were incorporated into the present study. These techniques affirm that a thorough analysis of the data was done regardless of when they were conducted. Because foundational and critical elements of grounded theory were utilized in the study, the use of secondary data within data analysis was not considered a limitation to the study.

The notion of retrospective interviews is another delimitation of the study. Morse and Clark (2019) discuss the frequent use of retrospective interviews within qualitative studies, noting the importance of interviewing “individuals who have experiences the phenomenon or who have observed those who have experienced it” (p. 6). However, retrospective interviews can come with the risk of asking participants to recall

experiences that have taken place in the past, risking inaccurate sharing. That could be a potential limitation to qualitative studies. Still, since this study was reexamining the experiences of young adults in college at the time of their interview, their ability to recall recent events was not a present concern. There were questions from the original studies that asked participants about experiences before college that were reanalyzed in the present study. Still, they did not look for a specific time in the answer. Because participants were not forced to come up with a response that would fit a narrow timeline that happened long ago, it is believed that the present study is not at risk of having inaccurate data.

The last delimitation is my previous understanding of present theories and constructs surrounding generativity, which is essential to be aware of while developing this theory. Having a general amount of initial knowledge and familiarity with the topic before conducting studies is common practice among today's researchers (Charmaz, 2014). Additionally, the elements of generativity with which I am most familiar revolve around the traditional framework of generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). For this study, the traditional model was used as a sensitizing concept. I intentionally aimed to incorporate my previous knowledge into the study to develop an updated model. My understanding of generativity as a concept, combined with my personal experiences, guided my understanding of the secondary data. I was able to have more profound insights into what the participants were sharing because I have experienced this concept through the same lens. I relied on these understandings to help sort the data but ultimately, I worked to ensure participant voices led the data analysis and the generation of the theory by accounting for my own experiences and biases. Validation methods also

accounted for this separation. These methods were applied throughout the study and include memo-ing, keeping a methodological journal, using thick and rich descriptions for my themes, enlisting the help of an external auditor, utilizing the constant comparative method, and theoretical sampling. These methods allowed me to account for my own experiences with generativity while sorting through and analyzing the data.

5.6 Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the population used. The theory aims to represent an entire population of young adults, but the population utilized in this study were all college students involved in a leadership mentoring program. Because these young adults were in college, there is potential that college-specific experiences influenced the constructs generated in this theory. Additionally, all the participants involved in the study were also involved in a leadership mentoring program. An initial investigation found individuals in this program to have higher generativity levels than their peers. This population allowed for greater insight into this phenomenon since they traditionally experience generativity at higher levels than their peers. Still, it does raise the risk of having the theory be relevant to this one specific population. This idea of generalizability within the theory is something that future studies should explore. Doing so could provide further insight into the manifestation of generativity within young adults from a general standpoint.

The second potential limitation is using secondary data concerning the interview protocols utilized within each of the studies. Because the studies were initially conducted as independent studies, the interview questions were not originally generated in a way to directly connect. However, the initial interviews were all semi-structured and flexible,

allowing for underlying connections between the studies. The interview protocols all focused on participant experiences with generativity and encouraged elaboration in their responses. This structure made it easier to weave the four studies together to generate a theory, but there was still some uniqueness to each of the studies and the questions asked.

5.7 Conclusion

The guiding force behind this research was to explore the manifestation of generativity in young adults. This representative visual model of generativity in young adults (see Figure 4.1) demonstrates the relationships between the themes that emerged from the data and their connection to the overall generated theory. Inner desire and motivation, experiencing a sense of awareness of generativity, having the opportunities to be generative, recognizing growth, developing generative relationships, generative community and reflection within that community were all found to be significant themes that describe generativity's manifestation in young adults.

Generativity is an invaluable component of human ability that has the potential to address many societal needs, especially when considering the long-term impacts generativity can have at both the individual and societal levels. Generativity allows us to foster the next generation, prepare them to take over significant roles, guide our society, and challenge them to become impactful individuals who care about and enhance our communities. Fostering generativity in young adults' lives has the power to create a powerful ripple effect for countless positive outcomes, such as higher senses of well-being and life satisfaction. However, this study highlighted the prominent role of awareness and opportunities in developing generativity in young adults. If not allowed to

be mindful of and actively work on their generative development, we cannot expect these results to occur for young adults at the same level naturally.

Utilizing the conceptualized model of generativity in young adults from the current study not only provides description of generativity's manifestation in young adults, but also provides guidance as to how generativity might be measured in young adults. This conceptual model offers a framework for young adults to fully experience and engage in the positive outcomes available to them through generativity and offers a pathway, societally, for the intentional development of generativity (and subsequently, social responsibility) in young adults.

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APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol**Interviewee:** _____**Junior Counselor/Project Partner:** _____**Project:** _____**Date, Time, and Location of Interview:** _____**Pseudonym:** _____

Introduction: I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those words will not be present.

Project Overview: As you may already know, this study is examining generativity in young adults.

Review of Consent Form: (Have them read and sign consent form if they agree to participate)

I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding your NHRI experience. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you'd like to stop the interview, please let me know. There are no right or wrong answers to these interview questions. Are you ready to begin?

1. Tell me about your NHRI experience. What dimensions, incidents, and people intimately connected with your NHRI experience stand out for you?
2. How do you feel about your work in NHRI? What feelings have been generated by the experience?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your junior counselor?
 - a. How did the relationship develop?
 - b. How would you describe the relationship when you started?
 - c. How would you describe the relationship now?
4. Tell me more about your relationship with your junior counselor.

- a. What kinds of things do you do with your junior counselor?
 - b. What are you trying to accomplish with your junior counselor?
 - c. How do you feel you've influenced his/her development?
5. How has your NHRI experience affected you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

Generativity Definition: In this interview, I am particularly interested in the impact of your NHRI experience on your generativity. If you are unfamiliar, generativity is defined as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.”

6. In particular, how has your NHRI experience impacted your generativity? What changes, if any, in your generativity do you associate with your NHRI experience?
7. The results from the first phase of this research revealed that NHRI students are more generative than the general student body in all areas of generative concern, generative action, and generative commitment. In comparison to other college student leaders, NHRI students are more generative in the area of generative concern as it relates to passing on knowledge to the next generation and in the area of generative commitment. What are your reactions to these findings?
- a. What explanation, if any, might your NHRI experience offer to these findings?

Conclusion: This concludes the formal portion of our interview. Is there anything else relevant to your NHRI experience that we have not discussed in this interview?

Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.

APPENDIX B: STUDY 2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol**Interviewee:** _____**Junior Counselor:** _____**Project:** _____**Date, Time, and Location of Interview:** _____**Pseudonym:** _____

Introduction: I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those words will not be present.

Project Overview: As you may already know, this study is examining the relationship between generativity and social responsibility.

Review of Consent Form: (Have them read and sign consent form if they agree to participate)

I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding your NHRI experience. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you'd like to stop the interview, please let me know. There are no right or wrong answers to these interview questions. Are you ready to begin?

1. Tell me about your NHRI experience. What dimensions, incidents, and people intimately connected with your NHRI experience stand out for you?
2. How do you feel about your work in NHRI? What feelings have been generated by the experience?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your junior counselor?
 - a. How did the relationship develop?
 - b. How would you describe the relationship when you started?
 - c. How would you describe the relationship now?

4. Tell me more about your relationship with your junior counselor.
 - a. What kinds of things do you do with your junior counselor?
 - b. What are you trying to accomplish with your junior counselor?
 - c. How do you feel you've influenced his/her development?
5. How has your NHRI experience affected you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

Generativity and Socially Responsible Leadership Definitions: In this interview, I am particularly interested in the relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership and the impact of your NHRI experience on that relationship. If you are unfamiliar, generativity is defined as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.” And leadership, in the social change model, is defined as “a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change.”

6. In particular, how has your NHRI experience impacted your generativity? What changes, if any, in your generativity do you associate with your NHRI experience?
7. In particular, how has your NHRI experience impacted your capacity as a socially responsible leader? What changes, if any, in your socially responsible leadership do you associate with your NHRI experience?
8. In your view what is the relationship between generativity and socially responsible leadership? What impact, if any, has your NHRI experience had on the relationship you draw between generativity and socially responsible leadership?
9. The results from the first phase of this research revealed generativity as a significant predictor of socially responsible leadership. What are your reactions to these findings?
 - a. What explanation, if any, might your NHRI experience offer to these findings?

Conclusion: This concludes the formal portion of our interview. Is there anything else relevant to your NHRI experience that we have not discussed in this interview?

Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.

APPENDIX C: STUDY 3 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol**Interviewee:** _____**Junior Counselor:** _____**Project:** _____**Date, Time, and Location of Interview:** _____**Pseudonym:** _____

Introduction: I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those words will not be present.

Project Overview: As you may already know, the purpose of this study is to examine generativity development among college student leaders who mentor.

Review of Consent Form: (Have them read and sign consent form if they agree to participate)

I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding your NHRI experience. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you'd like to stop the interview, please let me know. There are no right or wrong answers to these interview questions. Are you ready to begin?

1. How has your NHRI experience affected you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

Generativity Definition: In this interview, I am particularly interested in generativity development and the impact of your NHRI experience on that development. If you are unfamiliar, generativity is defined as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.”

2. Please draw the line graph of generativity and years spent mentoring that you would predict based on your experience. Generativity is the y-axis and years spent mentoring (time one, time two, time three) is the x-axis.

- a. Please explain your reasoning for the direction of the line graph.
 - b. Please describe your generativity level at the start of college. How, if at all, has your NHRI experience impacted your generativity? **How did you know you were growing?
 - i. What changes, if any, in your generativity do you associate with your NHRI experience?
 - c. Beyond being a mentor, what other college experiences, if any, might be related to your generativity development?
3. Please describe in detail a recent experience that illustrates the connection you draw between mentoring and generativity (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992).
 - a. What happened in the episode?
 - b. When did it happen?
 - c. Where did it happen?
 - d. Who was involved?
 - e. What were you thinking and feeling?
 - f. What might this experience say about who you are, who you were, who you might be, or how you have developed over time?
 4. The results from the first phase of this research revealed that years spent mentoring did not have a significant impact on generativity. What are your reactions to these findings?
 - a. What explanation might you offer to these findings?

Conclusion: This concludes the formal portion of our interview. Is there anything else relevant to your NHRI experience that we have not discussed in this interview?

Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.

Rejected Questions

1. How, if at all, has your NHRI experience influenced the connection you draw between mentoring and generativity development?
2. What does generativity look like in college students?
3. In particular, how has your college experience impacted your generativity? What changes, if any, in your generativity do you associate with your college experience?

APPENDIX D: STUDY 4 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol**Interviewee:** _____**Junior Counselor:** _____**Project:** _____**Date, Time, and Location of Interview:** _____**Pseudonym:** _____

Introduction: I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those words will not be present.

Project Overview: As you may already know, the purpose of this study is to examine generativity development among college student leaders who mentor.

Review of Consent Form: (Have them read and sign consent form if they agree to participate)

I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding your NHRI experience. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you'd like to stop the interview, please let me know. There are no right or wrong answers to these interview questions. Are you ready to begin?

1. How has your NHRI experience affected you? What changes do you associate with the experience?

Generativity Definition: In this interview, I am particularly interested in generativity development and the impact of your NHRI experience on that development. If you are unfamiliar, generativity is defined as “primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation.”

2. Please draw the line graph of generativity and years spent mentoring that you would predict based on your experience. Generativity is the y-axis and years spent mentoring (time one, time two, time three) is the x-axis.

- a. Please explain your reasoning for the direction of the line graph.
 - b. Please describe your generativity level at time point one before you began mentoring.
 - i. How did you know this was your generativity level?
 - ii. When was the first moment you began growing in generativity?
 - c. Please describe the line you drew between time point one and time point two. What was happening that influenced your generativity development?
 - i. What experiences influenced your generativity development (or lack thereof)?
 - ii. (If the participant indicated a positive trajectory), how did you know you were growing?
 - d. Please describe your generativity level at time point two.
 - e. Please describe the line you drew between time point one and time point two. What was happening that influenced your generativity development?
 - i. What experiences influenced your generativity development (or lack thereof)?
 - ii. (If the participant indicated a positive trajectory), how did you know you were growing?
 - f. Please describe your generativity level at time point three.
 - g. After your experience as a Senior Counselor with NHRI is over, what do you foresee as the trajectory of your generativity?
3. Please draw the line graph of what you think your generativity development would have been if you had not been a mentor with NHRI.
 - a. Why did you draw the line that you did?
 - b. How did you know that being a mentor was influencing you?

4. (If the participant has not already addressed this), did you take the NHRI class? If so, what year did you take it?
 - a. Please draw the line graph of what you think your generativity development would have been if you had not taken the NHRI class.
 - b. Why did you draw the line that you did?
 - c. How did you know that being in the NHRI class was influencing you?
5. Please draw the line graph of what you think your generativity development would have been without project meetings.
 - a. Why did you draw the line that you did?
 - b. How did you know that project meetings were influencing you?
6. Beyond being a mentor, taking the NHRI class, and participating in project meetings, what other college experiences, if any, might be related to your generativity development?
7. The results of a quantitative study revealed that years spent mentoring did have a significant impact on generative concern. What are your reactions to these findings?
 - a. What explanation might you offer to these findings?

Conclusion: This concludes the formal portion of our interview. Is there anything else relevant to your NHRI experience that we have not discussed in this interview?

Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.