

The role of race, ethnicity and culture in youth mentoring

Bernadette Sánchez, Ph.D.

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Agenda

- Why consider race, ethnicity and culture?
- Definitions - What is race, ethnicity, and culture?
- Racial/Ethnic Identity & Youth Mentoring
- Cultural Mistrust & Youth Mentoring
- Conclusion & Recommendations

Why consider race, ethnicity and culture?

- “I’m Mexican...But I actually feel that I would rather had a White mentor. Uh, I don’t know that’s just my internal racism (laughs). Uh, but that’s, I mean that’s just how I feel. Like I feel like I would have better been served by a White mentor...when I think of professional, I just automatically picture someone who’s White. Uh, I guess that’s what I see when I think of professional, someone who’s white, which I probably shouldn’t cause I’m Mexican” (Mexican adolescent male).

Why consider race, ethnicity & culture?

- Mentoring serves culturally diverse youth
 - In the U.S. – African American/Black, Asian American, Latino, Native American, Whites
 - In New Zealand –European, Māori, and Pasifika
- Some programs are designed to target specific cultural groups.
- Individual differences in mentoring relationships may be the result of racial and cultural processes

Why consider race, ethnicity & culture?

- Ethnic minority youth are less likely to report having a natural mentor compared to White youth (Munson & McMillen, 2006; Girl Scout Research Institute, 2009).

Definitions

- Race
 - A social construction.
- Ethnicity
 - Ethnicity refers to groups of people who share common cultural traits, such as language, history, religion, tribe, ancestry, traditions, and beliefs (Smedley & Smedley, 2005).
- Culture
 - beliefs, values and patterned ways of thinking, acting and feeling that are learned by individuals and transmitted to others (APA, 2003; Smedley & Smedley, 2005)

Racial/Ethnic Identity & Youth Mentoring

What is racial and ethnic identity?

- Racial Identity

- individuals' internalization of their racial socialization (e.g., discrimination, what it means to be Black; Helms, 2007; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, Chavous, 1998).

- Ethnic Identity

- sense of belonging to a cultural group and participation in its cultural practices, regardless of one's specific racial group (Helms, 2007).

Racial & Ethnic Identity

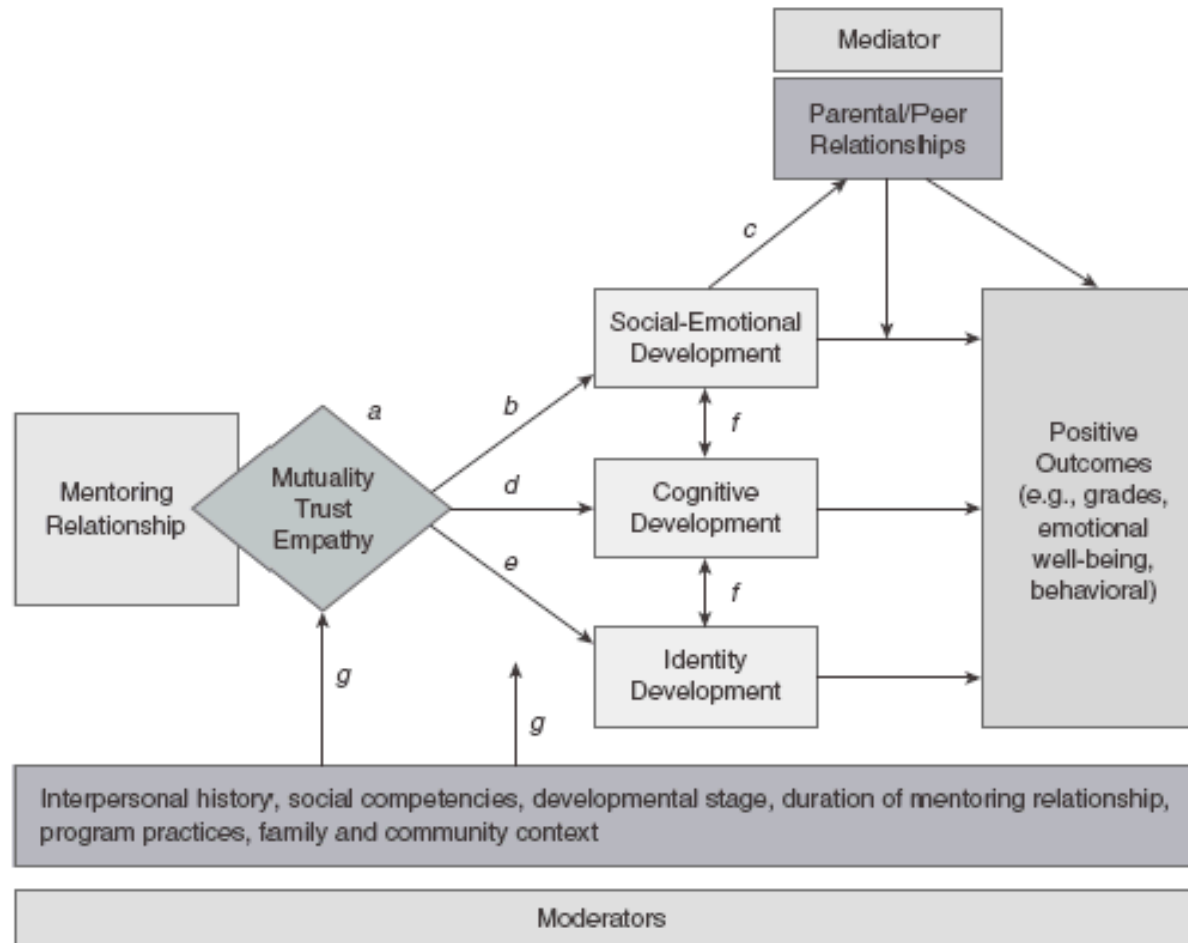
- Māori Identity (O'Reagan, 1987)
 - Knowing who you are.
 - Knowing who are related to, and
 - Knowing your descent.

Importance of racial/ethnic identity in youth development

- Ethnic identity is related to more positive academic, psychological, and social outcomes among ethnic minority youth in the U.S. (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007).
- A meta-analysis showed that across childhood & adolescence, a stronger ethnic identity is associated with more positive psychological functioning as well as less personal dysfunction (e.g., depression; Hewatt-Grant, 2009).

The role of mentoring in identity development

- Rhodes' (2005) model of youth mentoring



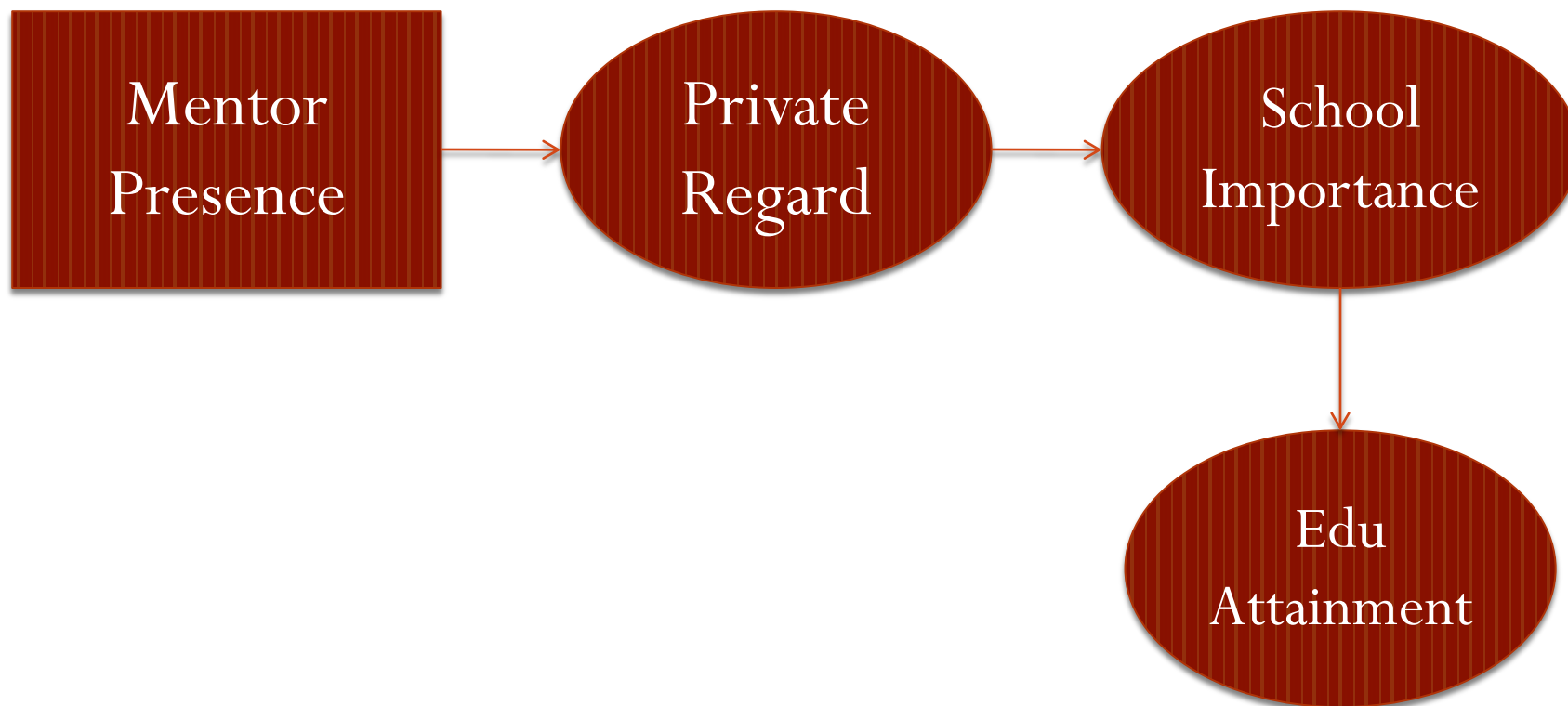
Natural mentoring & ethnic identity

- Having a role model is related to a stronger ethnic identity among 744 ethnically diverse 12- to 17-year-olds (Yancey, Siegel & McDaniel, 2002).
- African American adolescent males who have natural mentors active in the African American community predicts a stronger ethnic identity (Blash & Unger, 1995).
- The more natural mentors that Latino youth reported, the stronger their ethnic identity (Sanchez et al., 2011).

Role of natural mentoring in racial/ethnic identity

- Study of African American adolescents (Hurd, Sanchez, Zimmerman & Caldwell, 2011)
 - Having a natural mentor predicted a more positive racial identity, including...
 - Public regard – adolescents' positive perceptions of how others view their race
 - Private regard – how adolescents feel about their own race
 - Racial centrality – how central race is to adolescents' identity

Hurd et al. (2011) cont'd



The role of volunteer mentoring relationships in ethnic identity

- Increase in ethnic identity for 34 Latina adolescents matched with Latina college student mentors (Kaplan et al., 2009).
- Adolescent girls in a culturally responsive mentoring program (GirlPOWER!) had a stronger ethnic identity compared to girls in a traditional mentoring program (Pryce, DuBois, & Silverthorn, 2010).

The role of youth's ethnic identity in their mentoring relationships

- Experimental study of 94 African American adolescents (Linnehan et al., 2005).
 - Participants with weaker ethnic identities believed that a White adult mentor would be more competent and predictable than students with stronger identities.
 - Participants with stronger ethnic identities rated African American mentors as more competent than those with weaker identities.
- African American adolescents with strong ethnic identity are more likely to identify ethnically similar role models compared to those with a weak ethnic identity (Yancey et al., 2002).

Cultural Mistrust & Youth Mentoring

What is cultural mistrust?

- Cultural Mistrust (Cohen & Steele, 2002)
 - When members of oppressed groups fear that authority figures of dominant racial group will judge or treat them unfairly
 - Due to historical and personal oppression

Example of Cultural Mistrust in the U.S.

- 35-50% of a sample of 359 West Indian and Haitian adolescents reported moderate to high levels of cultural mistrust towards Whites (Albertini, 2004).

Role of cultural mistrust in the quality of mentoring relationships

- Study of 21 early adolescent girls (mostly African American and Latina) matched with White mentors (Sanchez, DuBois, Silverthorn, & Pryce, 2010).
 - More youth-reported cultural mistrust toward Whites predicted girls' perception that their mentors are less culturally competent as well as poorer quality relationships.
- Study of 20 ethnically diverse, urban, low-income adolescents and their mentors (Sanchez, Feuer, & Davis, 2010)
 - Cultural mistrust towards people outside one's race/ethnicity was related to poorer quality relationships.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Assess youths' ethnic or racial identity
 - Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992)
 - Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity – Teen (Scottham, Sellers, & Nguyen 2008).
- Match youth with weaker ethnic identities to mentors with stronger ethnic identities to foster a positive identity.
- Focus on fostering racial/ethnic identity among youth (e.g., encouraging mentors to provide opportunities to explore mentees' heritage).

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Consider assessing youth's level of cultural mistrust (e.g., Cultural Mistrust Inventory for Adolescents, Sanchez & DuBois, 2006).
 - Use data to provide extra support to relationships in which youth harbor cultural mistrust.