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Veronica Fruiht

Dominican University of California, veronica.fruiht@dominican.edu

Jordan Boeder

Claremont Graduate University

Thomas Chan

California State University, Northridge

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**Rising Stars and Underdogs:
The Role Race and Parental Education Play in Predicting Mentorship**

Veronica Fruiht, Ph.D. (corresponding author)¹

Jordan Boeder, M.A.²

Thomas Chan, Ph.D.³

¹Department of Psychology, Dominican University of California
50 Acacia Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
veronica.fruiht@dominican.edu

²School of Social Science, Policy, and Evaluation, Claremont Graduate University
1227 N. Dartmouth Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711
jordan.boeder@cgu.edu

³Health Equity Research Education Center, California State University, Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330
thomas.chan@csun.edu

Abstract

Research suggests that youth with more financial and social resources are more likely to have access to mentorship. Conversely, the rising star hypothesis posits that youth who show promise through their individual successes are more likely to be mentored. Utilizing a nationally representative sample ($N = 4882$), we tested whether demographic characteristics (e.g., race, SES) or personal resources (e.g., academic/social success) are better predictors of receiving mentorship. Regression analyses suggested that demographic, contextual, and individual characteristics all significantly predicted access to mentorship, specifically by non-familial mentors. However, conditional inference tree models that explored the interaction of mentorship predictors by race showed that individual characteristics mattered less for Black and Latino/a youth. Therefore, the rising star hypothesis may hold true for White youth, but the story of mentoring is more complicated for youth of color. Findings highlight the implications of Critical Race Theory for mentoring research and practice.

keywords: youth mentoring, Add Health, developmental assets, racial inequities, Critical Race Theory, machine learning

Rising Stars and Underdogs:

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Naturally occurring mentors step beyond their social roles to support younger people's personal and professional development (Dubois & Karcher, 2005). Unlike formal mentors who may be assigned or matched through a mentoring or extracurricular program, naturally occurring mentor relationships can develop in the context of the families, communities, and schools in which youth are already embedded. By sharing social capital (Chang et al., 2010), supporting identity and cognitive development, and providing an additional source of emotional support as young people individuate from their parents (Rhodes et al., 2006), natural mentors serve as both protective and compensatory factors during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Erickson et al., 2009; Hurd et al., 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2002).

Youth with natural mentors report better mental health and engage in less risky and delinquent behavior in adolescence and adulthood (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a; Hurd et al., 2014; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014; Miranda-Chan et al., 2016). Natural mentorship can also counteract the negative outcomes associated with risk factors, serving a compensatory role for higher risk youth, and promoting more positive educational outcomes (Chang et al., 2010; Erickson et al., 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2002). Natural mentorships in adolescence also foster a variety of positive downstream outcomes; for instance, mentored youth attain more education (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a, 2005b; Erickson et al., 2009) and have a greater likelihood of being employed (DuBois & Silverthorn 2005b; McDonald et al., 2007). Likewise, they grow into adults who are more satisfied with their lives and relationships (Miranda-Chan et al., 2016). Although being mentored during adolescence increases an individual's likelihood for beneficial

developmental outcomes, little is known about the demographic and contextual factors that determine which youth get mentored.

“Rising Stars” or Advantaged Youth?

The rising star hypothesis, developed by career mentoring researchers, suggests that flourishing individuals who show dedication and promise are more likely to be mentored (Singh, et al., 2009). That is, individual-level characteristics like academic and social success and less engagement with delinquent behavior may determine why some youth stand out as ripe for mentoring. Youth who are more academically successful or are better able to focus in the classroom may be favored by their teachers and therefore be more likely to be mentored. Similarly, self-confident and socially successful youth may be thought of as leaders and afforded extra attention as a result. The rising star hypothesis would also suggest that problem behaviors such as truancy, substance use, mental illness, and aggressive behavior may make a young person a less desirable mentee because they are perceived to be less likely to meet traditional definitions of success. Therefore, according to the rising star hypothesis, individual variability in these characteristics should predict an individual’s likelihood to be mentored.

Evidence supporting the rising star hypothesis exists in populations such as workplace mentors (Allen, 2004) and graduate school advisors (Robertson, 2010) as they seek out more academically and socially successful protégés. Additionally, Erickson et al. (2009) demonstrated that those with more comprehensive social and contextual resources were more likely to be mentored. However, contrary to the rising star hypothesis, it is also possible that youth with fewer resources are perceived as more in need of support and elicit help from their friends, family, and community. For example, a student who has trouble paying attention in school may be precocious but not challenged or disinterested in the subject matter, or a young person in an

unsafe neighborhood may not have access to the resources needed to succeed. An adult may notice this missed potential and step into the mentoring role to cultivate the best in this student.

Instead of accounting for the individual-level differences that may explain mentorship based on the rising star hypothesis, recent studies have begun to uncover more systemic inequalities that benefit wealthy, educated, and White youth (Albright et al., 2017; Erickson et al., 2009; Fruht & Chan, 2018; Raposa et al., 2018). In support, Critical Race Theory (CRT) posits that racism is woven tightly into the systems and structures of American society in a way that allows for imbalances of power and the marginalization of people of color to be continually reinforced and perpetuated inter-generationally (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Yosso, 2005). CRT illuminates the historical and cultural context that bore policies and structures that give White youth more access to resources, social capital, and therefore mentoring, and challenges meritocratic ideals that perpetuate inequitable access to these resources (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Sólorzano et al., 2005). CRT, then, can shift the lens on mentoring research to highlight that the characteristics associated with being a “rising star,” like academic promise and social success, are over-attributed to White youth and under-attributed to youth of color (Minor, 2014; Zimmerman & Kao, 2019), particularly by their White teachers (McGrady & Reynolds, 2012). Furthermore, because of prejudice and xenophobia built into social structures, Black and Latino/a children are perceived more negatively and face more harsh punishments for missteps in the classroom than their White peers (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019; Skiba et al., 2019) and may therefore be less likely to be perceived as deserving of mentorship. As a result, CRT may be a more pertinent framework for assessing who gets mentored than the rising star hypothesis.

Differences in Mentors’ Social Roles

Inequities also exist in the impact mentors have on youth with differing community and economic resources (Erickson et al., 2009; Raposa et al., 2018; Reynolds & Parish, 2018). White and economically advantaged young people have more access to mentoring relationships outside of their families (Raposa et al., 2018). Non-familial mentors, like teachers and community members, can share social capital with a protégé and connect them with resources outside of their immediate social sphere (Granovetter, 1973). While mentors' social capital can predict more positive transitions into adulthood for adolescent protégés regardless of a mentor's social role (Chang et al., 2010), differences in the social roles of naturally-occurring mentors provide evidence that youth of color are given fewer opportunities for mentorship from non-familial mentors due to structural inequalities.

Black and Latino/a youth, however, consistently report higher rates of being mentored by family members (Hurd & Sellers, 2013; Liao & Sanchez, 2019; Reed et al., 2019; Sánchez et al., 2008; Wittrup et al., 2019). The prevalence of familial mentors for Black and Latino/a youth may also result from the strong cultural values around family and interdependence in these cultures. For instance, Black Americans are more likely to report extended family and fictive-kin networks that support their development than their White peers (Taylor et al., 2013). While familial mentoring relationships are sometimes devalued because they are less consistently linked to academic outcomes (Erickson et al., 2009; Fruht & Wray-Lake, 2013; Hagler & Rhodes, 2018), this fails to account for the non-academic benefits of mentoring for young people striving to develop a sense of self. For example, research may undervalue mentors' impact on mental health (Chang et al., 2010; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014; Hope et al., 2019) and support for developing a sense of pride and understanding one's power among marginalized or disempowered youth (Albright et al., 2017). Mentors also provide a training ground for learning

mature interpersonal skills (Zand et al., 2009) and play a critical role in identity development, particularly for racial and sexual minority youth (Hurd et al., 2012; Reed et al., 2019). Therefore, differences in the demonstrated impact of various types of mentors may, in part, be an artifact of research that inadvertently undervalues familial relationships by focusing only on mentorships that developed in adolescence, not those that developed earlier in life and persisted through adolescence.

The Present Study

To evaluate the lack of empirical evidence for the rising star hypothesis and bridge this gap the literature, the present study aimed to test the rising star hypothesis by investigating the potential predictors of being mentored. Utilizing data from a nationally representative longitudinal dataset collected from 1994 through 2003, we included self-reported individual characteristics (i.e., academic and social success, psychological resources, social resources, substance use and aggression) alongside race and contextual factors in predicting a young person's likelihood to develop a natural mentoring relationship in adolescence.

To address the limitation of some prior research that undervalues familial mentors, we used an inclusive definition and timeframe for mentoring relationships that captured both familial and non-familial mentors in our analyses. In addition, we explored the impact of these individual, demographic, and contextual characteristics in predicting the mentor's social role. Given differences in the developmental experiences of youth from different racial and ethnic backgrounds in the US, we created separate models to predict the availability of mentorship for four different racial groups (White, Black, Latino/a, and Other Race) to understand better the unique factors that predict mentorship for individuals of different racial backgrounds.

Lastly, our study addresses a common critique of the mentoring literature, which argues that researchers rely too heavily on regression models of longitudinal data (Hagler & Rhodes, 2018, Gowdy et al., 2020). To test the rising star hypothesis that individual characteristics should be the strongest predictors of mentorship, we use two complementary analytical approaches, binary logistic regression (BLR) analysis and Conditional Inference Trees (C-trees) to examine varying combinations of individual, contextual, and demographic differences experienced by White, Black, and Latino/a youth.

Method

Participants

The current study used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health (Add Health). Add Health is a nationally representative longitudinal study tracking a cohort of adolescents from the 1994-1995 academic year into adulthood. Our analyses included participants with valid Wave I responses, occurring between the age range of 10-19, and Wave III, the age range of 18-28 ($M = 21.8$, $SD = 1.8$). Of the 4882 participants who responded at Wave I and III, 240 (4.9%) had missing data on any one of the included variables or covariates. Missing values were imputed using a two-stage imputation procedure that generated 10 datasets to obtain the fraction of missing information which was subsequently used to calculate the necessary number of imputations to have reliable estimates and standard errors (von Hippel, 2018). This resulted in 150 imputations of the dataset. The final sample of 4882 participants was 53.7% female with racial diversity largely reflective of the United States at the time of Wave I data collection (59.3% White/Caucasian, 23.1% Black, 7.5% Latino/a, 10.0% other). To account for sampling biases, cross-sectional sample weights from Wave III of the study were used throughout analyses to make data nationally representative at the time of data collection, but not

at present day. Data were retrieved through The Institute for Social, Cultural, and Policy Research (ISCPR; Harris & Udry, 1994-2008).

Measures

Demographics

Demographic variables from Wave III data collection were included in the models to investigate differences between demographic groups in their likelihood to be mentored. These variables included gender (*male=0, female=1*), age, and race/ethnicity (coded into four categories with White as the reference group to Latino/a, Black, and Other). The Other Race/Ethnicity category included individuals who identified as Native American, Asian, or multi-racial. Each of these comprised < 5% of the sample.

Family and Community Level Resources

To capture the impact of socioeconomic factors on propensity to be mentored, Wave I variables captured family and neighborhood resources in adolescence. Participants reported the educational attainment of their biological and residential non-biological parents (e.g., step-parents). Responses were recoded dichotomously such that a participant either had at least one parent who had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (0), or did not (1). Parental eligibility for government assistance programs was captured using adolescent report of whether one or both biological parents received any type of financial government assistance (0=*no*, 1=*yes, at least one parent*). Finally, neighborhood and school safety were assessed using single items of feeling safe in one's neighborhood (0=*no*, 1=*yes*), and safe in one's school (1=*strongly agree* through 5=*strongly disagree*).

Individual Characteristics

Individual characteristics that would be expected to signal a “rising star” such as academic achievement, self-worth, and perceived social resources as well as deviant behaviors including social/behavioral issues at school, substance use, and aggression were measured at Wave I of data collection. Composite measures were created by the researchers and were not psychometrically validated.

Academic performance and school behavior. Academic grades were calculated using student self-reports of their most recent grades in English/Language Arts, Math, History, and Science. Scores ranged from 4 (*A in the course*) to 1 (*D or worse in the course*), and a mean composite score was created from grades across courses to serve as a proxy for Grade Point Average (GPA) in our analyses. Behavioral issues at school were captured with a 4-item aggregate score of dichotomous measures of school suspension, truancy, expulsion, and grade retention ($\alpha=.34$). Most participants reported one (56.2%) or two (24.2%) school behavioral issues with the most common being truancy/skipping class. Mean composite scores were created from two items measuring school social issues (“*trouble getting along with teachers*” and “*trouble getting along with other students*”; $\alpha=.49$) and academic issues (“*trouble paying attention*” and “*trouble getting homework done*”; $\alpha=.71$). Responses were scaled from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*everyday*).

Psychological resources. Self-worth was measured using a 6-item scale measuring a positive view of the self, including physical, social, and intellectual worth scaled from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Prevalence of depressive symptoms was assessed via mean response to three items about feeling depressed, sad, and unable to shake off the blues in the past seven days ($\alpha=.81$). Responses ranged from 0 (*never or rarely*) to 3 (*most of the time or all of the time*).

Social resources. Perceived social resources were captured using a series of single item indicators of how much adults, parents, teachers, and friends cared about them on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The scale had adequate internal reliability ($\alpha=.65$).

Deviant behaviors. Substance abuse was captured using an aggregate score created from seven dichotomous indicators of substance use (binge drinking, cigarette, chewing tobacco marijuana, cocaine, inhalant, and other drug use; $\alpha=.68$). While 38.1% of respondents reported no use, 42.6% reported using one or two substances, and just 7.7% reported using four or more. A similar aggregate was created to measure violence and aggression from five dichotomous measures regarding getting into fights and using weapons in fights ($\alpha=.67$). The majority of participants had a score of 0 or 1 (63.9% and 25.4% respectively).

Mentoring Relationship

The question, “*Other than your parents or step-parents, has an adult made an important positive difference in your life at any time since you were 14 years old?*” was posed to respondents in the Wave III interview (0=*no*, 1=*yes*) to capture whether or not a young person had been mentored in adolescence.

Social Role of Mentor

To investigate differences in the availability of familial vs. non-familial mentors, the closed-ended item “*How is this person related to you? If there has been more than one person, describe the most influential*” asked respondents to identify their mentors’ social role (e.g., teacher, aunt) from a list of 20 possible relations. Mentor types were then grouped into two categories. In line with past research (e.g., Hagler & Rhodes, 2018; Raposa et al., 2018) mentors were split into two groups. Familial mentors included relatives (e.g., brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle), friends, and spouses/partners, to capture both kin and fictive-kin mentors. Non-

familial mentors were more distal relationships including academic mentors (e.g., teachers, coaches, and guidance counselors) as well as other community members (e.g., religious leaders, neighbors, friend's parents, and social workers). Of 3716 youth with mentors in our sample, 54.7% reported having a familial mentor, whereas 45.3% reported having a non-familial mentor.

Results

Binary Logistic Regressions (BLR)

BLR models tested the factors in early/middle adolescence (Wave I) that predict mentoring reported in emerging adulthood (Wave III). Models included demographic control variables, family and community level factors, and individual-level factors. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics. Identical models were tested to predict the likelihood of being mentored, and among those who had a mentor, the likelihood of having a familial mentor. Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Variance inflation factors (VIF) were less than 1.5 and tolerances ranged from .68 to .93, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue and it was appropriate to use all the predictors in the model.

Predictors of Mentorship

Results demonstrated that most variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model in predicting the likelihood of being mentored (see Table 2). White youth were significantly more likely to be mentored than Latino/a youth ($OR=.61$, $CI[.60, .62]$), Black youth ($OR=.85$, $CI[.83, .88]$), and youth of other races ($OR=.82$, $CI[.80, .84]$). Furthermore, replicating past research, those with a college-educated parent ($OR=.71$, $CI[.69, .72]$) and those from safer schools ($OR=.98$, $CI[.97, .99]$) were more likely to be mentored.

Many individual characteristics were also predictive of mentoring. Youth who perceived that teachers ($OR=1.02$, $CI[1.01, 1.04]$), friends ($OR=1.03$, $CI[1.02, 1.04]$), and adults in general

($OR=1.04$, $CI[1.03, 1.06]$) care were more likely to be mentored. Those with higher grades ($OR=1.28$, $CI[1.25, 1.32]$) and a stronger sense of self worth ($OR=.86$, $CI[.84, .87]$) were also more likely to be mentored. Conversely, youth from more safe neighborhoods ($OR=.80$, $CI[.77, .83]$) were actually less likely to be mentored. Counter to some prior findings, academic issues ($OR=1.14$, $CI[1.13, 1.16]$) and depression ($OR=1.15$, $CI[1.14, 1.17]$) were positively predictive of mentoring. Furthermore, those with more reports of substance abuse ($OR=1.06$, $CI[1.06, 1.07]$) and aggression ($OR=1.01$, $CI[1.01, 1.02]$) were also more likely to have a mentor. All significant effects were at $p < .001$ thresholds.

Predictors of the Social Role of the Mentor

In predicting the social role of the mentor among those youth with mentors (familial vs. non-familial) results from 3714 mentored youth demonstrated similar trends using a binary logistic regression in which 0 = *non-familial* and 1 = *familial*. Again, most variables significantly predicted mentor type. Females ($OR=1.30$, $CI[1.28, 1.30]$) and older participants ($OR=1.01$, $CI[1.01, 1.01]$) were more likely to have a familial mentor. In support of prior research (Fruith & Wray-Lake, 2013), Black ($OR=1.38$, $CI[1.37, 1.39]$) and Latino/a ($OR=1.17$, $CI[1.16, 1.18]$) participants were more likely to have a familial mentor than White participants, but participants of other races ($OR=1.03$, $CI[1.03, 1.04]$) were more likely to have a non-familial mentor than White participants. Across the board, youth with more family and community resources including not receiving public assistance ($OR=1.15$, $CI[1.15, 1.16]$), living in a safe neighborhood ($OR=.78$, $CI [.76, .79]$), and having a college-educated parent ($OR=1.28$, $CI[1.27, 1.29]$) predicted non-familial mentorship over familial. Perceived school safety was the only community resource indicator that did not significantly predict mentor type.

Youth with substance abuse ($OR=1.03$, $CI[1.03, 1.03]$), behavioral (i.e., suspension, truancy, expulsion, retention; $OR=1.16$, $CI[1.15, 1.17]$), and social (i.e., trouble getting along with teachers/peers; $OR=1.05$, $CI[1.04, 1.07]$) issues were more likely to have a familial mentor. However, those with better grades ($OR=.83$, $CI[.82, .85]$) and stronger perceptions of care from friends ($OR=.99$, $CI[.99, 1.00]$) and parents ($OR=.93$, $CI[.92, .94]$) were more likely to have a non-familial mentor. Conversely, those with stronger perceptions that teachers ($OR=1.07$, $CI[1.06, 1.07]$) and other adults care ($OR=1.03$, $CI[1.02, 1.04]$) were more likely to have a familial mentor. Those with more academic issues ($OR=.89$, $CI[.88, .90]$), more depressive symptoms ($OR=.96$, $CI[.96, .97]$), and poorer self-worth ($OR=.98$, $CI[.97, .99]$) were also more likely to have a familial mentor. All significant effects predicting mentor type were demonstrated at $p < .001$ thresholds.

C-tree Analyses

C-trees are a form of non-parametric modeling that compute complex interactions between a large set of predictor variables. Using recursive partitioning based on a permutation test framework, the C-tree algorithm tests the global null hypothesis of independence between all predictors and the outcome variable. The tree is ultimately created by recursively testing models until the null hypothesis is rejected. The final model displays a tree with several splits, called branches, which display the variables that are significantly contributing to different categorizations of the dependent variable. Each split has an associated p -value, representing sample-specific permutation distributions of the test statistics.

C-tree analyses complement BLR as they allow all of the variables in the model to compete for variance, while concurrently accounting for every possible partition between independent variables in the model. C-trees in particular are believed to be a powerful data

mining tool compared to other decision trees as they are less prone to overfitting the data (see Strobl et al., 2009). While other decision trees rely on model pruning to correct for overfitting the data and biases in selecting variables, C-trees use p -values as stopping and selection criteria, producing model fit based on statistical significance (Hothorn et al., 2006). Therefore, this technique allowed demographic and individual characteristics to compete statistically for variance in predicting mentorship.

A series of C-tree analyses were used to elucidate complex combinations of independent variables that predict who is mentored during adolescence and the social role of the mentor. The *party* package (Hothorn et al., 2020) within the statistical software R (4.0.2) was used to conduct the C-tree analyses. The first set of C-tree analyses tested the best set of predictors that classify who receives mentoring. Within this set, the first C-tree used the entire population—subsequent C-trees were created for each race to determine if there are different pathways of mentorship that are dependent on race. Therefore, the race of the individual was used as a predictor in the first model but was excluded in each of the following models.

Predictors of Mentorship

The first C-tree analysis using the entire sample revealed several significant predictors of mentorship (see Figure 1a), allowing demographic and individual characteristics to compete for variance and moderate one another's effects. The first node in the C-tree, found that academic grades (GPA; $p < .001$) were the most influential variable to predict group membership. Those with a GPA ≤ 2.67 were predicted to have a 71% chance of being mentored. The effect of having a GPA > 2.67 on mentorship was influenced by parent education ($p < .001$), but this effect was found to be further moderated by race ($p = .022$) and school behavior ($p = .007$). This split-point for GPA, like all split-points for continuous variables in the C-tree, was determined by the model

after accounting for all potential points to split the sample. Individuals with a college-educated parent and no more than one category of behavioral issues were predicted to be mentored 84% of the time. However, those who had more than one behavioral issue experienced a 6% reduction in their probability of being mentored (78%). Race was found to moderate the association of not having at least one parent receive a Bachelor's degree, such that Latino/a youth had a 61% probability of being mentored, compared to the 77% probability experienced by all other races.

The data was then subset by race to look at unique predictors of mentorship by race. GPA was the only statistically significant predictor of mentorship for White youth ($p < .001$); those who had a $GPA \leq 2.75$ had a 75% probability of being mentored, compared to 82% for those who had a $GPA > 2.75$ (see Figure 2a).

Similarly, for Black youth, GPA was the most influential predictor ($p < .001$), with those having a $GPA > 2.75$ experiencing an 80% likelihood of being mentored (see Figure 2b). However, the probability of being mentored for those who had a $GPA \leq 2.75$ was affected by their perception of how safe their neighborhood ($p = .043$) was and their perceived self-worth ($p = .023$). Those who perceived their neighborhood as not being safe had an 82% likelihood of being mentored. The effect of perceiving one's neighborhood as safe was moderated by feelings of self-worth, with those having self-worth scores equal to or less than 1.5 having a 78% chance of being mentored. Those with higher perceptions of self-worth had a 60% chance of being mentored.

For Latino/a youth, the only significant predictor of mentorship was parent educational attainment ($p < .001$; see Figure 2c). Those who had at least one parent with a Bachelor's degree were predicted to have a 79% chance of being mentored. In contrast, the likelihood of being mentored dropped 19% for those who did not have a parent graduate college (60%).

Lastly, the data was subset to look at predictors of mentorship for all other ethnicities in the sample. The most influential predictor was number of behavioral issues ($p=.016$) followed by perceived adult care ($p=.042$; see Figure 2d). Those who had more than one behavioral issue were predicted to be mentored 65% of the time. The effect of having one or no behavioral issues was moderated by perceived adult care. For those that believed adults cared about them a great majority were predicted to have a mentor 85% of the time. In contrast, those who did not feel strongly that adults cared about them had a 74% likelihood of being mentored.

C-tree Analyses: Predictors of the Social Role of the Mentor

A final C-tree analysis was carried out to determine the conditions that predict whether a mentor was a familial or non-familial mentor. The most influential predictor of whether a mentor was familial versus non-familial was whether the youth had at least one parent with a Bachelor's degree ($p<.001$; see Figure 1b). For those who did not have a parent graduate from college, their gender became the next leading predictor of whether they had a familial versus non-familial mentor ($p=.006$). Males were significantly more likely to have a non-familial mentor (45%) compared to females (36%). However, for those who had at least one parent graduate from college, their GPA was the main predictor of the type of mentor they had, not gender ($p=.001$). Youth with a GPA ≤ 3.25 were less likely to have a non-familial mentor (46%) compared to those with a GPA > 3.25 (56%).

Discussion

Being mentored in youth is a well-demonstrated asset that promotes short- and long-term benefits for adolescents and emerging adults. However, mentorship, and particularly mentorship from a non-family member, may be more accessible to more resource-rich youth (Erickson et al., 2009; Raposa et al., 2018). In the present study, we proposed that, contrary to the rising star

hypothesis (Singh et al., 2009), which argues that youth who seem “destined for greatness” are more likely to be mentored, race and other demographic factors may be the best predictors of a young person’s likelihood for mentorship. While we find mixed support for the rising star hypothesis in our BLR analyses, findings from C-tree analyses suggest that parental education and race were among the most consistent predictors of mentoring. In considering the interactions between these two opposing explanations of mentoring, it appears that the rising star hypothesis may hold for White youth, but not for youth of color.

Availability of Mentoring

We comprehensively examined the downstream likelihood of being mentored using various demographic, contextual, and individual factors in early adolescence and found that nearly every variable we examined was significantly related to mentorship. General trends demonstrate that White youth and youth with college-educated parents are more likely to report having a mentor in emerging adulthood. Results from BLRs also showed that both youth with more academic and social success and youth who face more challenges (e.g., depression, substance use, aggression) may elicit more support from adults in their lives. However, when C-tree analyses allowed individual characteristics to compete with parental resources and demographic characteristics for variance in predicting mentoring, the results instead clearly show that academic grades, parental education, and race, outweighed any effect of other individual attributes. In line with the rising star hypothesis, other demographic factors did not play a significant role in predicting mentorship among those with high enough academic grades. However, among youth who struggled more academically, parental education and race became factors in predicting their likelihood to be mentored. These findings speak to the magnitude of the contribution of socio-demographic factors in predicting mentoring and the way that

mentoring can play a complementary role for these young people, advantaging resourced youth (Erickson et al., 2009).

Better grades and fewer behavioral issues predicted mentorship in BLR and C-tree analyses, however BLRs showed youth with more indicators of struggling were more likely to report a mentor—specifically, youth who struggled with depression, substance abuse, academic and social issues. This finding offers some support for a third potential explanation for how youth are selected to be mentored; mentors may seek out “underdogs” or young people who seem to be struggling and in need of support. That is, caring adults may intervene in the lives of youth who do not seem to be meeting their full potential to provide an additional point of support and guidance.

Unlike these challenges that seemed to signal a need for support from a mentor, behavioral issues in school (e.g., truancy, suspension, grade retention) were inversely related to mentorship. Schools in the U.S. tend to be White spaces (Anderson, 2015) where White teachers bring their own biases to the classroom which leads Black and Latino/a children to be punished more harshly and suspended more frequently than similarly behaved White students (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019; Skiba et al., 2019). Therefore, like any academic measure based on the perceptions of primarily White teachers, this behavioral measure might be conflated with race and speak to the structural inequalities that youth of color face in the classroom and the consequences of this for their relationships and trust in potential non-familial mentors (Okonofua et al., 2016).

Race, Class, and Parental Education

When separate C-tree models were created to assess the predictors of being mentored for individuals of different races, it became clear that while academic performance alone predicts

mentoring for White youth, the story is more complicated for youth of color. Thus, the rising star hypothesis may hold among White youth, but systemic racism and inequitable distribution of opportunities blur that picture for youth of color. For instance, grades were a significant predictor of mentoring for Black youth. However, in order for those with worse grades to have the same chance to receive mentoring as low-achieving White youth, they also needed to perceive their neighborhood as less safe, potentially signaling to adults in their lives that they need extra protection.

For Latino/a youth, no individual characteristics were significant in predicting mentoring. Those with college-educated parents were mentored more than those without, and no other variables made a significant contribution to the C-tree model. The finding that Latino/a youth without a college-educated parent may be among the least likely to experience a mentoring relationship in adolescence supports the argument, rooted in CRT, that imbalances of power are perpetuated inter-generationally in part through imbalances in opportunity and shared social capital (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Yosso, 2005). While past studies demonstrated significant differences in the availability of mentors for youth of different economic backgrounds (Erickson et al., 2009; Raposa et al., 2018; Reynolds & Parish, 2018), our analyses suggest that differences in the availability of mentorship may be driven by systems of power that give people of color and those with less-educated parents fewer opportunities for mentorship. Findings highlight the need to use an intersectional lens that looks at race, social class, and how these demographics are interwoven due to structural racism when studying youth mentoring.

Differences in Mentors Social Roles

Although mentorship is an asset regardless of a mentor's social role, given the finding that non-familial mentors may have a more positive impact on educational and vocational

development (Erickson et al., 2009; Hagler & Rhodes, 2018; Hurd et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2007), another aim of the current study was to identify differences in the social roles of mentors to youth with different developmental experiences and resources. Again, among youth with mentors in this sample, most demographic characteristics and indicators of community resources and individual characteristics predicted mentors' social role in our BLRs to some degree. White males with college-educated parents and more financial and community resources were more likely than female, Black, or Latino/a youth with fewer resources to have a non-familial mentor. This finding supports Raposa et al. (2018), who found similar results in looking at the subset of mentors who moved into their roles after a protégé was over 12 years old in the more extensive, restricted access Add Health sample.

Although prior studies have shown that Black and Latino/a youth are more likely to have family members serve as mentors than White youth (Hurd & Sellers, 2013; Liao & Sanchez, 2019; Reed et al., 2019; Wittrup et al., 2019), and this was supported in our BLR analyses, C-trees instead demonstrated that the key predictor of a mentor's social role is parental education. Individuals with college-educated parents appear to be more likely to have mentoring relationships with teachers and community members. In contrast, those without college-educated parents seem more likely to be mentored by family members or friends. These findings speak to structural inequalities such as access to education that likely disadvantage Black and Latino/a individuals and how the intersection of race and parental education impact mentoring experiences. Furthermore, they highlight the sometimes overlooked asset of familial mentorship afforded to less-resourced young people. In fact, a mentor's social capital and relational closeness to the protégé and may be more important for reaping the benefits of mentoring than the mentor's social role (Chang et al., 2010; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2014). Therefore, familial

mentors may compensate for ways in which these youth have less access to other resources and support, as the nature of a mentoring relationship is likely dependent on context and the developmental needs of a protégé.

In line with the past findings that individuals who attend college are more likely to be mentored by a teacher or other educator during emerging adulthood (Fruith & Wray-Lake, 2013), academic grades moderate the relationship between parental education and mentorship such that very high grades (mostly A's and B's) increase the likelihood of having a non-familial mentor. This is likely because youth with higher grades and college-educated parents are far more likely to go to college (Cataldi et al., 2018) and have the chance to make meaningful connections with educators in middle to late adolescence.

Interestingly, our C-trees show that gender, not race, was the primary moderator of this relationship for participants without college-educated parents. Even without a college-educated parent's assets, males are about as likely to be mentored by a non-relative as lower-achieving youth with college-educated parents overall (45%). While some studies have demonstrated that females are somewhat more likely to have natural mentors than males (Erickson et al., 2009, Hurd et al., 2014), gender has not been associated with mentors' social roles (e.g., Hagler & Rhodes, 2018). Our results suggest that despite steps towards equity, especially among individuals with more familial resources, girls with less-educated parents are less likely to have access to non-familial mentors. This may speak to opportunity-limiting gender norms and expectations about the social roles of women and girls that remain more strongly embedded in lower SES and immigrant communities (Samari & Coleman-Minahan, 2018). Conversely, this finding may demonstrate that girls are simply more successful in accessing mentoring from family members than their male peers.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research, Policy, and Practice

Methodical limitations associated with the use of secondary data should be considered in interpreting these results. Individual characteristics such as self-worth, depression, social support, and deviant behaviors, were captured using brief, unvalidated indicators that are not as robust as standard psychometric measures. Furthermore, like many mentoring studies, our results are drawn from retrospective self-reports and assess experiences during or after a relationship, rather than before it. Because we included youth who reported mentoring relationships that began at any age, some participants whose mentors became important before the first wave of data collection responded to questions about individual-level resources after establishing a relationship with their mentor. However, this limitation only lends support to our finding using C-trees that race, parental education, and academic success, not other individual characteristics predict a mentor's accessibility. Additionally, given that about 30% of all mentors in the Add Health sample were introduced before age 12, and about 65% of family members are included in this category, excluding mentors from before high school would have systematically excluded a large number of familial mentors. Excluding many familial mentors by looking only at adults who stepped into youths' lives later in adolescence may minimize the full impact of familial mentors.

Complicating this issue, our measure of mentoring asked the youth to nominate a single, non-parental adult mentor. As a result, we could not parse the impact of a single mentor from the broader networks of support that a young person is embedded in. Given the value of developmental networks (Higgins & Kram, 2001) in supporting young people through adolescence and emerging adulthood (Hurd et al., 2016, Sánchez et al., 2011), it becomes increasingly problematic to assess the impact of just one mentoring relationship on development.

Likewise, future research should investigate the characteristics that predict the size and breath of a young person's developmental network. Reporting on a single mentor may be more telling of the relationship that a respondent most values, rather than the relationship with the most significant impact. Therefore, findings around the social role of the mentor may be, in part, an artifact of the substantial value placed on familial relationships in Black and Latino/a culture.

Given the centrality of race and parental education to our findings, we use caution in generalizing these results. The Add Health data represents a snapshot of youth development in the US, and this may no longer reflect the current demography. Since the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s, when these data were collected, college has become increasingly accessible, and people of color and first-generation college-goers are entering higher education at higher rates than ever before (Cataldi et al., 2018; Espinosa et al., 2019). Strides in representation and support for women and people of color in higher education made in the last two decades would not be reflected in these findings. Therefore, some of the effects we see in these analyses may indicate a cohort effect, and results would look somewhat different in surveying today's adolescents about their mentoring experiences. There is a need for additional research to understand the predictors and impact of mentorship on modern young people of diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion

This study tested the common assumption that "rising stars" with more individual and contextual resources are more likely to develop supportive relationships with non-parental adults in their communities. Findings suggested that while academic success is a strong predictor of mentorship for White youth, this pattern did not clearly hold for youth of color. The sizable contributions of both race and parental education in these models speak to the social inequalities faced by young people of color in their communities and the compounding benefits of having a

parent with social and economic resources. This also highlights the unfortunate reality that mentorship is more likely to be accessible to those who already have the most resources, despite its well-demonstrated compensatory and protective effect for less resourced youth (Erickson et al., 2009; Zimmerman et al., 2002). Furthermore, results demonstrate a need for mentoring research that uses a more intersectional approach and considers the cultural biases that shape research methods and interpretations. Future research must strive to understand mentorship that values the developmental assets of racial minority youth while recognizing the role of systemic racism that create inequitable social structures that place additional assets out of reach for communities of color.

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Figure 1 a-b

C-tree diagrams predicting (a) mentorship for entire sample and (b) predicting familial mentorship among participants with a mentor.

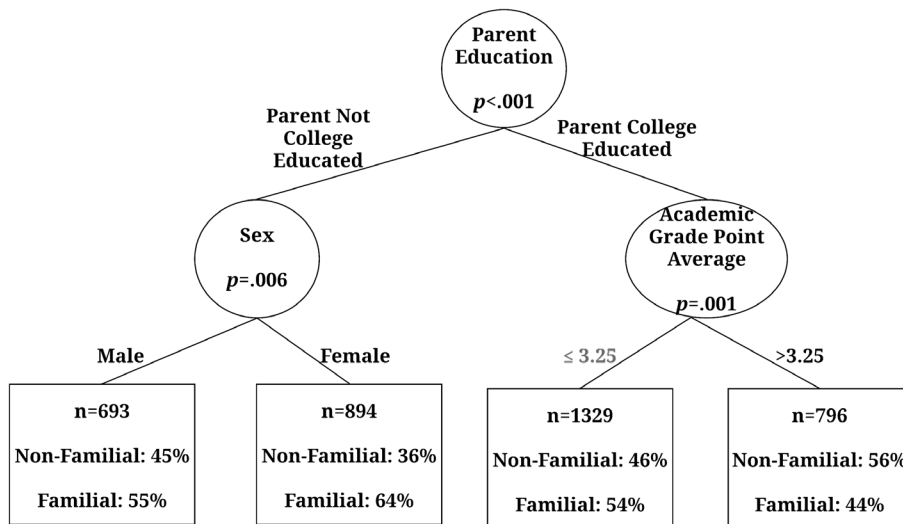
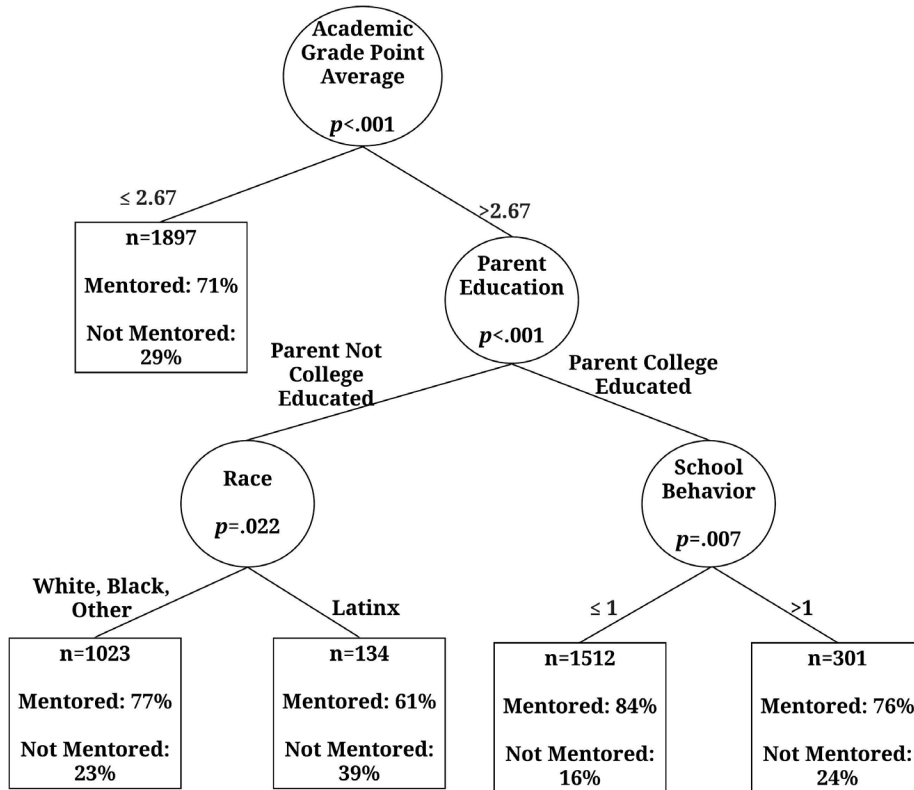
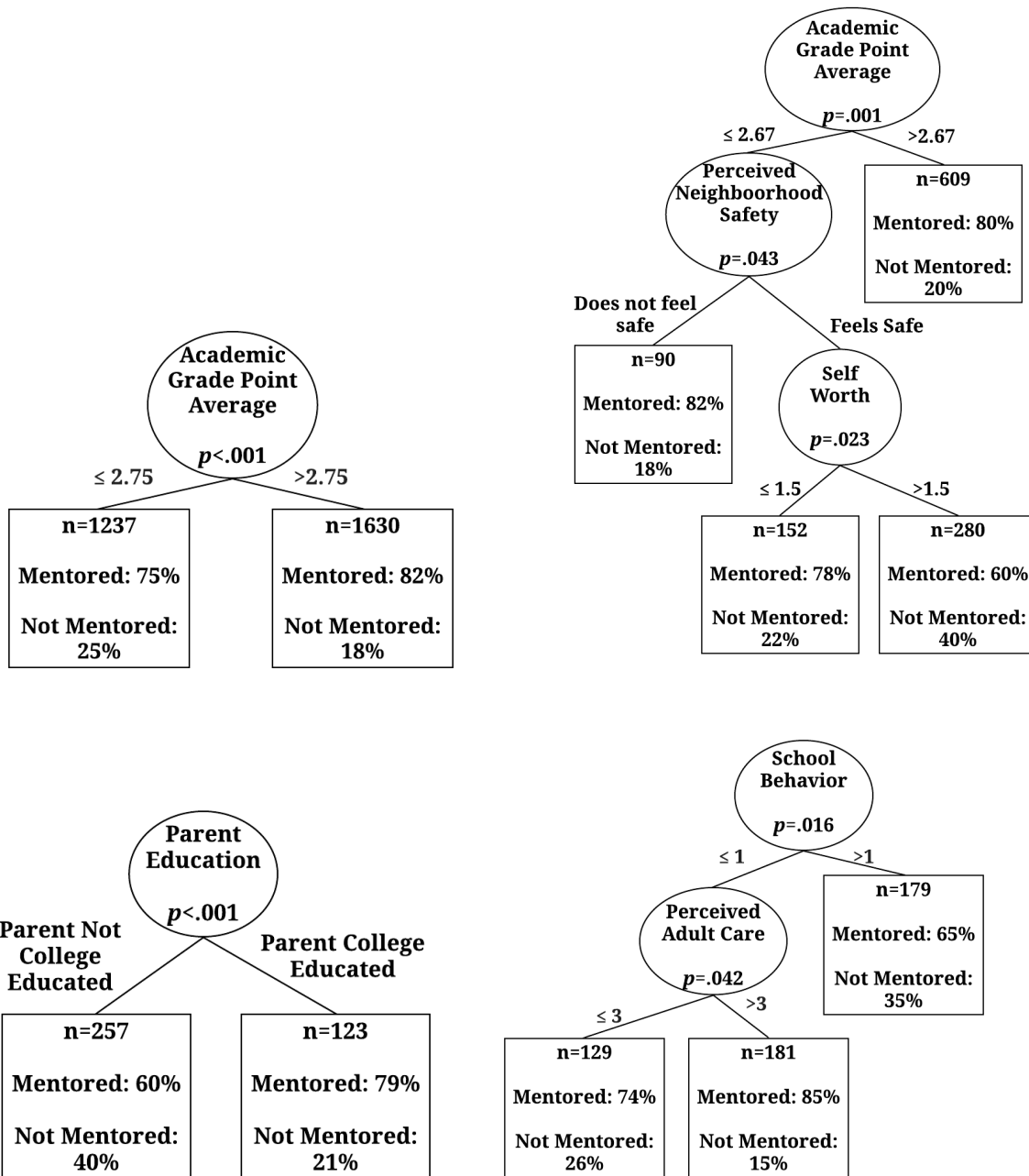


Figure 2 a-d

Panel of C-tree diagrams for each ethnicity; a) White; b) Black; c) Latino/a; d) Other Ethnicities.



(c)

(d)

Table 1

Means (and SDs) for variables in model by race.

	White	Latino/a	Black	Other Race	Total
Race	59.32%	7.52%	23.14%	10.02%	100%
% Male	46.61%	48.86%	43.85%	47.88%	46.27%
Age	21.76 (1.76)	21.86 (1.81)	21.77 (1.80)	21.74 (1.88)	21.76 (1.78)
% Receive Public Assistance	5.81%	14.61%	13.59%	12.90%	8.98%
% Feel Safe in Neighborhood	93.68%	86.24%	85.00%	86.88%	90.43%
School Safety	2.09 (.98)	2.30 (1.05)	2.35 (1.09)	2.21 (.96)	2.18 (1.02)
% Parent with college degree	57.63%	33.82%	57.64%	51.62%	55.23%
Adults Care	4.40 (.78)	4.32 (.94)	4.45 (.85)	4.35 (.89)	4.40 (.82)
Teachers Care	3.58 (.95)	3.56 (1.03)	3.57 (1.04)	3.55 (1.03)	3.57 (.98)
Parents Care	4.81 (.51)	4.79 (.59)	4.82 (.55)	4.75 (.64)	4.81 (.54)
Friends Care	4.35 (.72)	4.19 (.85)	4.09 (.89)	4.15 (.84)	4.25 (.79)
Grades	2.92 (.77)	2.69 (.75)	2.69 (.71)	2.82 (.77)	2.84 (.76)
Self Worth	1.91 (.56)	1.97 (.60)	1.79 (.54)	2.00 (.58)	1.90 (.56)
Depression	.43 (.56)	.50 (.58)	.52 (.62)	.58 (.65)	.47 (.59)
Substance Abuse	1.36 (1.42)	1.31 (1.47)	.86 (1.07)	1.32 (1.48)	1.24 (1.37)
Aggression	.42 (.78)	.66 (1.04)	.65 (.95)	.64 (.99)	.51 (.87)
Behavioral Issues	1.29 (.71)	1.47 (.85)	1.60 (.94)	1.41 (.86)	1.39 (.80)
Social Issues	.87 (.75)	.82 (.86)	.98 (.86)	.83 (.71)	.89 (.78)
Academic Issues	1.23 (.90)	1.23 (.99)	1.03 (.88)	1.27 (.94)	1.19 (.91)
% Mentored	79.19%	67.05%	75.04%	74.84%	76.88%
% Mentored with Familial Mentor	51.46%	57.94%	60.96%	53.30%	54.11%

Note. $N = 4642$ for all variables except familial/non-familial where $N = 3563$.

Table 2

Binary Logistic Regressions analyses considering predictors of availability of mentoring and mentoring relationship type (familial vs. non-familial).

	<u>Mentoring Relationship</u>		<u>Familial Mentorship</u>	
	B(SE)	OR[95% CI]	B(SE)	OR[95% CI]
Intercept	1.87(.07)***	6.49[5.68, 7.42]	.20(.05)*	1.20[1.00, 1.22]
<u>Demographics</u>				
Sex	.18(.01)	1.20[1.17, 1.22]	.26(.00)***	1.30[1.28, 1.30]
Age	-.06(.00)***	.94[.94, .94]	.01(.00)***	1.01[1.01, 1.01]
Latino/a	-.49(.01)***	.61[.60, .62]	.16(.00)***	1.17[1.16, 1.18]
Black	-.16(.01)***	.85[.83, .88]	.32(.00)***	1.38[1.37, 1.39]
Other Race	-.20(.01)***	.82[.80, .84]	.03(.00)***	.96[.96, .97]
<u>Family and Community Resources</u>				
Public Assistance	.01(.03)	1.01[.95, 1.07]	.14(.00)***	1.15[1.15, 1.16]
Neighborhood Safety	-.22(.02)***	.80[.77, .83]	-.25(.01)***	.78[.76, .79]
Unsafe School	-.02(.01)***	.98[.97, .99]	.00(.01)	1.00[.99, 1.01]
Parent Education (-)	-.35(.01)***	.71[.69, .72]	.25(.01)***	1.28[1.27, 1.29]
<u>Individual Characteristics</u>				
Adults Care	.04(.01)***	1.04[1.03, 1.06]	.03(.00)***	1.03[1.02, 1.04]
Teachers Care	.02(.01)***	1.02[1.01, 1.04]	.06(.00)***	1.07[1.06, 1.07]
Parents Care	-.00(.01)	1.00[.98, 1.02]	-.07(.00)***	.93[.92, .94]
Friends Care	.03(.01)***	1.03[1.02, 1.04]	-.01(.00)***	.99[.99, 1.00]
Grades	.25(.01)***	1.28[1.25, 1.32]	-.18(.01)***	.83[.82, .85]
Self-Worth (-)	-.15(.01)***	.86[.84, .87]	-.02(.00)***	.98[.97, .99]
Depression	.14(.01)***	1.15[1.14, 1.17]	-.04(.00)***	.96[.96, .97]
Substance Abuse	.06(.00)***	1.06[1.06, 1.07]	.03(.00)***	1.03[1.03, 1.03]
Aggression	.01(.00)***	1.01[1.01, 1.02]	-.00(.00)	1.00[1.00, 1.00]
Behavioral Issues	-.14(.01)***	.87[.86, .88]	.15(.00)***	1.16[1.15, 1.17]
Social Issues	.02(.01)	1.02[1.00, 1.03]	.05(.01)***	1.05[1.05, 1.07]
Academic Issues	.14(.01)***	1.14[1.13, 1.12]	-.17(.00)***	.84[.84, .84]

Note. $N = 4482$ for mentored/unmentored model and $N = 3716$ for mentoring function models. Coefficients are pooled from 150 imputed datasets; *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.