

# Ethnic Diversity and Gender Dynamics in Project Arrive

*Do These Characteristics Contribute to Positive Group Relationships with Mentors in School-Based Group Mentoring Programs?*



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## Introduction

Research on group mentoring is beginning to show positive effects on a range of youth development outcomes (Kuperminc, 2016), however, little is known about program practices or group dynamics that contribute to these effects.

Studies of 1:1 programs have found few associations of race and gender matching between mentors and mentees to positive outcomes in mentees. Matching mentor and mentees by race/ethnicity were unrelated to higher levels of confidence, competence, and caring (Park, Yoon, & Crosby, 2016).

Similarly, matching mentor and mentees by gender was unrelated to relationship satisfaction with mentors (Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield, & Walsh-Samp 2007).

This study extends research on ethnic and gender diversity to investigating characteristics of mentees in a group mentoring context.

### Research Question

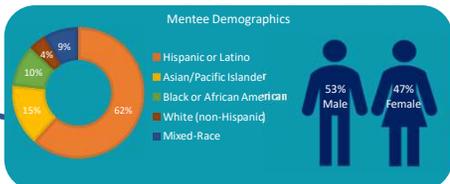
Are characteristics such as race or gender related to quality of relationships with mentors?

### Project Arrive

is a school based group mentoring program that provides resources and support for high school freshmen at risk for dropping out of school.

## Sample

- 114 youth
- 32 groups
- Ages ranged from 12.8 to 15.9 (median age-14)
- 2 to 9 members per group (M=6.28)
- Mentor to Mentee ratio was between 3:1 and 4:1



## Method

Two aspects of diversity were examined. Ethnic diversity of groups was measured using the Inverse Simpson Index (<http://countrysideinfo.co.uk/simpsons.htm>) and gender composition of groups was derived from mentor reports.

Project Arrive participants completed survey items assessing perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their mentors at mid-year and post-test (Kuperminc, Chan, & Hale, 2018)

### Diversity

- The value of the index represents the probability that any two members drawn from the group would represent a different ethnic group
- Group Ethnic Diversity (M=.63, SD=.28)
- 10 all male groups, 10 all female groups
- 12 mixed gender groups

i.e. 0=no diversity; 1=maximum diversity

### Relationship Quality

- Participants completed four items
- Statements about how mentees feel about their mentor/group leader rated on a Likert type scale from (1) *Not at all true* to (4) *Very much true*
- Mid-year (M=3.53, SD=.76) & end of year (M=3.41, SD=.71) surveys were used

e.g. "My mentor(s) care about me"  
"My mentor(s) help me do better in school"

## Results

*Multilevel regression of relationship quality with mentors on gender composition and ethnic diversity (N = 114; K = 32)*

Gender Composition of Group	Relationship Quality with Mentor	
	$\beta$	SE
Female Only	<b>-0.57</b>	(0.43)
Mixed (Male & Female)	<b>0.23</b>	(0.38)
Male Only (Reference Group)	N/A	
Group Ethnic Diversity	<b>-0.09</b>	(0.35)

Note:  $\beta$  and SE from separate multilevel regression models. Group characteristics measured at level 2. Each model examines post-test scores on the dv controlling for mid-year scores. Models that reached significance ( $p < .05$ ) are bolded.

## Conclusion

Multilevel regression analysis was used to test if gender composition and/or ethnic make-up significantly predicted youths' perceptions of the quality of the relationship with mentors. The results of the regression indicated that neither gender, female only ( $\beta=-.57, p>.05$ ) and mixed gender ( $\beta=.23, p>.05$ ), nor group ethnic diversity ( $\beta=-.09, p>.05$ ) predicted relationship quality.

### Implications

The lack of findings for gender composition and ethnic diversity suggest that it may not be important to structure groups around these particular characteristics. Mentees may be able to perceive positive relationships with the mentor within a wide variety of group demographics.

### Future Directions

Further research could focus on expanding the population and activities that encourage youth to initiate relationships with mentors.

## References

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