

Mentoring a Diverse Workforce Knowledge Synthesis Grant Final Report

Joanne D. Leck
Catherine Elliott
Elliott Bourgeois
Kathleen Kemp

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MENTORING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS GRANT FINAL REPORT

Joanne D. Leck, Ph.D.

Catherine Elliott, Ph.D.

Elliott Bourgeois, M.Sc. candidate

Kathleen Kemp, B.Com candidate

Telfer School of Management

University of Ottawa

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MAIN MESSAGES

- The advancement of women, visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people is impeded due to negative biases, such as stereotypes and discrimination.
- Separate E-mentoring networks are required for women, visible minorities, immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people as their needs differ. The creation of national E-mentoring networks to develop leadership skills and provide career-related support should be spearheaded by government agencies.
- Mentorships to promote the development of leadership skills and to provide career-related support should start in elementary and secondary school. Currently many of the mentoring programs at this age level focus on retention. While these objectives are important, they send the message that societal expectations of disadvantaged group members are only that they graduate from high school and not aspire to becoming future leaders. Leadership skill development should be a mandatory component of the secondary school curriculum.
- Universities and colleges should also adopt mentoring programs that focus on leadership development, instead of just student retention and counselling. University and college career centres should provide mentoring in the form of career support.
- Municipal mentoring programs that help new immigrants integrate into Canadian society should also include leadership skill development.
- Resources are needed to develop internet infrastructure, provide computer access, develop E-mentoring platforms and develop computer skills to address the digital divide. A national strategy should be developed to address this issue.
- Effective mentoring of disadvantaged group members should be tied to senior management compensation and performance appraisal.
- Legislative measures, such as the Employment Equity Act, should be expanded and strengthened as human resource practices, such as mentoring, are not impacting the advancement of disadvantaged group members quickly enough. Other measures, such as the 'comply or explain' disclosure rule by the Ontario Securities and Exchange Commission, are also highly recommended as they would require companies to report on their progress in getting more women on their boards and in senior management.
- Time and money needs to be invested in developing and training mentors with the skills required to successfully guide, coach, and advise mentees. Mentors need to be sensitive to the cultural heritage and unique needs/challenges of disadvantaged group members. Special attention should be made to recruit mentors from each of the underrepresented groups.
- Patience is required! Effective mentorships which lead to the development of diverse leaders require an ongoing commitment of two to five years in order to develop trust and the appropriate level of leadership skills.
- The "sponsorship" component of mentoring is critical for advancement, to truly break through glass ceilings. Diverse individuals will not be invited to sit at the table of executive decision making unless they are appropriately sponsored.
- Mentoring is not a "let's have coffee" once in a while experience; it is a deliberate and focused learning process. Mentors need to develop the skills to be effective - it is time to invest in developing a professional development "certification" process for mentors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women, visible minorities and immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people remain underrepresented and underused in upper management and in positions of power. As a consequence, Canada is failing to exploit its full leadership potential. As reported by the expert panel reviewing Federal support to R&D, “Canada’s future as an innovation-based economy depends on ensuring there are a sufficient number of talented, educated, and entrepreneurial people” (Innovation Canada: A Call to Action, p. 2:14).

The competition for knowledge workers and the shortage of leadership talent is putting pressure on Canadian organizations to invest in training and professional development of their staff. One method used in the development and retention of human resources is the creation and implementation of *mentoring programs*. A proven organizational strategy to promote employee learning and advancement, mentoring programs provide the targeted support necessary for talent development.

Mentoring is typically described as a relationship between a younger, less experienced individual (i.e. the mentee) and an older, more experienced individual (i.e. the mentor), where the more experienced person advises and guides the younger individual. Mentors provide two forms of support. The first is career-related support to help the mentee advance in the organization. The second is psychosocial support and is intended to provide the emotional support needed to help increase the mentee's confidence, identity and effectiveness in a professional role. There are numerous benefits associated with being mentored including higher salaries, more promotions, improved work performance, increased preparedness to handle new career roles, greater career mobility and enhanced new skill development. Mentoring succeeds in helping employees develop the leadership skills necessary to climb the corporate ladder.

Because of these many benefits, mentoring programs have flourished. But are these programs working for women, visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people? The slow growth in the representation of these groups in leadership and professional roles suggests that the answer is “not fast enough.” This knowledge synthesis research attempts to better understand how to leverage mentoring, as an intervention, to develop leadership skills and promote advancement for these groups. The first objective of the synthesis report is to review the reported challenges faced by each group with respect to mentoring - in other words, why is mentoring not succeeding in advancing their careers? The second objective of the report is to document the various approaches to mentoring and how they may help to overcome these challenges.

The research team collaborated with the University of Ottawa’s Telfer School of Management’s librarian to conduct the literature review for the knowledge synthesis report. After discussing the project objectives, it was decided that five online databases were most relevant to the review and would provide a comprehensive search across multiple sectors and disciplines: Academic Search Complete (Multi-disciplinary), Medline (Health Sciences, Allied Health), ERIC (Education), ABI/Inform Global (Business) and INSPEC (Engineering, Information technology). Two searches were conducted: the first sought articles discussing the challenges and difficulties that disadvantaged group members face in being mentored for

leadership roles (resulting in 138 key articles); the second sought articles identifying and analyzing different approaches to mentoring these target groups (resulting in 29 key articles).

The first component of this literature review revealed that women, visible minorities and immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people face considerable challenges with respect to mentoring. Although we find differences among the groups, three common challenges emerged. First, much research has been conducted that finds mentees not only prefer, but benefit from, being mentored by someone who is similar to themselves (e.g., same sex, race, etc.); however, the paucity of non-white men and women in senior roles makes this difficult to achieve. Second, mentees receive sub-optimal mentoring due to either conscious or sub-conscious biases such as negative stereotypes or discrimination. For instance, women's successes are often attributed to luck rather than hard work; mentors perceive that members of visible minorities have little chance of climbing the corporate ladder and so there is no 'point' in mentoring them; and missionary attitudes towards Aboriginal people lead mentors to try to 'fix' rather than mentor Aboriginal mentees. Negative biases towards these groups further exacerbate the difficulty in finding a mentor. In fact three groups (visible minorities, immigrants and disabled persons), cited having to turn to family members for mentorship and support. Third, in order to develop leadership skills and advance in their careers, more career-related support is needed, yet it is psychosocial support that is often sought and provided. This last point may explain why mentoring programs work less well for women than for men.

The second component of this literature review looked at different approaches to mentoring these disadvantaged groups. *Informal Mentoring*, where mentees and mentors enter a relationship voluntarily, provides a very rich mentoring experience. Unfortunately, there is an inherent limitation to this approach - mentors tend to choose mentees who are similar to themselves - and since the large majority of mentors are currently white men, informal mentoring results in a disproportional mentoring of junior white men. This drawback has led to *Formal Mentoring Programs* where mentees and mentors are trained by the sponsoring organization, provided direction and matched based on various criteria (e.g., expertise, personality, location, etc.). Unfortunately, these programs have had limited success in advancing traditionally disadvantaged group members, primarily for the reasons cited previously. Some new and emerging developments in mentoring address these challenges.

Peer Mentoring involves pairing an individual with an experienced and knowledgeable individual who is working at the *same* organizational level (instead of a higher organizational level). The main goal of peer mentorship is to provide job-related knowledge that will help a fellow peer integrate better into a workplace. Peer-to-peer mentorships facilitate interpersonal comfort and knowledge sharing; and peers can better 'relate' to one another. Therefore, it may be a promising option for women and minority groups: firstly, it broadens the pool of potential participants; and secondly, it offers the possibility of a relationship which provides psychosocial support as well as possible career advantages (through increased access to information and personal network development).

Recognizing that one mentor may not have all the answers and expertise has led to the concept and development of *Group Mentoring* (also referred to as 'Mentoring Circles'). Group mentoring involves multiple experts, considered mentors, matched up with multiple learners, considered mentees. Participants choose topics of relevance, assemble either face-to-face or

through electronic conferencing, and discuss the topics, often with the help of a group facilitator. Mentors can be peers, or individuals at any level of the organization who are experts with respect to the topic of discussion. Multiple mentors minimize and blur the effects of biases such as negative stereotypes and discrimination. They enhance participants' personal networks. Finally, the collective nature of group mentoring may be better suited for members of collective and inclusive cultures than more traditional mentoring approaches. For instance, since Aboriginal cultures tend to be more collective in nature, group mentoring may be a more desirable approach.

The shift in demographic landscape and the ageing of the workforce has led to the development of *Reciprocal Mentoring*. With reciprocal mentoring, a younger, more junior level employee is paired with an older, more senior level employee, so that the senior level employee can gain new insights about various topics, such as the marketplace, younger generational attitudes and values, and technology. Reciprocal mentorship may be an excellent mechanism with which to raise the cultural awareness of senior management. Increased understanding of other groups decreases biases such as negative stereotypes. Pairing immigrants with senior level managers would also allow upper management to gain a better understanding of how to conduct business in different countries, thereby increasing their firm's global competitive advantage.

Finally, *E-Mentoring*, a new and burgeoning approach to mentoring, provides learning opportunities, as well as career-related and psychosocial support, primarily through e-mail and other digital means (e.g., instant messaging, chat rooms, social networking spaces, etc.). E-mentoring addresses many of the challenges inherent in face-to-face mentoring by providing unlimited access to a greater number of mentors, offering greater flexibility in establishing and sustaining relationships and removing geographical barriers. E-mentoring blurs demographic and personal differences making gender and race invisible as the communication is 'faceless.' E-mentoring supports a variety of different approaches to mentoring (e.g., group mentoring, peer mentoring, reciprocal mentoring). It allows mentees from remote areas (e.g., Aboriginal people) or with problems of mobility (e.g., disabled persons) to access mentors with the expertise they seek (provided they have internet access). Third, because it is 'faceless' it reduces potential negative stereotyping and discrimination. Finally, cross-gender mentoring relationships are less likely to be misconstrued due to the physical separation of mentor and mentee.

This systematic literature review revealed a surprising lack of literature, particularly with respect to members of visible minorities, immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people. Further research is needed to gain a greater appreciation of their unique needs and challenges and to determine how mentoring programs can best be tailored to their circumstances. Also, e-mentoring programs may overcome many of the obstacles faced by traditionally disadvantaged members. Little is known, however, about the effectiveness of e-mentoring, if it succeeds in developing leadership skills needed for advancement, and how to best design e-mentoring programs to meet the unique needs of each group. This knowledge synthesis report also has implications for policy and practice. First, human resource practitioners need to develop and invest in e-mentoring program platforms. Second the value of mentoring culturally diverse mentees needs to be demonstrated to senior management. Third policy makers must invest in the electronic infrastructure to make e-mentoring accessible to all.

CONTEXT

Women, visible minorities and immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people remain underrepresented and underused in upper management and in positions of power (Burke, 2002; Hsieh & Winslow, 2006; Jacobs, 1999; Leck, 2002; MacRae, 2005; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy & Liu, 1996). For instance, among organizations subject to the Employment Equity Act in 2011, about 70% of all senior management positions were occupied by white men. Immigrants, representing 65.1% of visible minorities in 2011 (Statistics Canada), are further disadvantaged in terms of resources and know-how and as a consequence often find themselves in jobs that do not match their skill-sets or aspirations (Zhou, 2004). It is clear that Canada is failing at exploiting its full leadership development potential, resulting in missed opportunities, competitive advantage, and economic growth.

As reported by the expert panel reviewing Federal support to R&D, “Canada’s future as an innovation-based economy depends on ensuring there are a sufficient number of talented, educated, and entrepreneurial people” (Innovation Canada: A Call to Action, p. 2:14). The competition for knowledge workers and the shortage of leadership talent is putting pressure on Canadian organizations to invest in training and professional development of their staff. One method used in the development and retention of human resources is the creation and implementation of mentoring programs. A proven organizational strategy to promote employee learning and advancement, mentoring programs provide the targeted support necessary for talent development.

An Overview of Mentoring

Mentoring is typically described as a relationship between a younger, less experienced individual (i.e. the mentee) and an older, more experienced individual (i.e. the mentor), where the more experienced person advises and guides the younger individual. Kram's (1983, 1985) seminal research on mentoring identified that mentors provide two forms of support. The first is career-related support to help the mentee advance in the organization. This includes functions such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and providing challenging assignments. The mentor helps the mentee learn the ropes of the organization and secure promotions. The second is psychosocial support and is intended to "enhance an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role" (Kram, 1985, p. 32). Psychosocial support functions include role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship.

Kram (1983, 1985) describes mentoring as a four phase process. She describes the first phase, *initiation*, as one in which the future mentee develops a 'strong positive fantasy' about the future mentor's competence and ability to provide support and guidance. The future mentor imagines the future mentee as someone with potential, transformable, and enjoyable to work with. Initial interactions create and support positive outcomes and the relationship moves from a 'fantasy' into a mentorship whereby the mentee looks up to the mentor for guidance and the mentor provides developmental opportunities. This phase, which lasts from 6 months to a year, creates the foundation for the next phase. The *cultivation* phase lasts from two to five years and it is in this phase that the range of career-related and psychosocial supports peaks. According to Kram (1993), career functions, such as providing challenging work, coaching, sponsoring,

increasing visibility and protecting, emerge first. As trust grows between the mentor and mentee, psychosocial support increases, starting with acceptance and leading to more intimate support such as friendship and counselling. Mentees develop a growing sense of competence enabling them to better navigate their organizations. Mentors enjoy the satisfaction of influencing a junior's development. The next phase, *separation*, is one where mentees become more autonomous. This stage is critical to development as it demonstrates that the essential skills have been learned and that the mentee can navigate the organization independently from the mentor. Kram (1983) describes this phase as one which is filled with turmoil, anxiety and feelings of loss, as both mentee and mentor re-evaluate the relationship. Separation can occur both physically and structurally. This period of adjustment eventually leads to the *redefinition* phase of the relationship where, if a relationship is maintained, the nature of the relationship becomes one of friendship.

Many studies have demonstrated the benefits associated with mentoring for mentees, mentors and their employers. For instance, mentees benefit from numerous career-related outcomes such as higher salaries, more promotions, improved work performance, increased preparedness to handle new career roles, greater career mobility and enhanced new skill development (Burke, Mckeen & Mckenna, 1994; Day & Allen, 2004; Douglas, 1997; Dreher & Cox, 1996; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Emmerik, Baugh & Euwema, 2005; Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Fagenson, 1989; Wood & Leck, 2008). Barker, Monks and Buckley (1999) report that mentoring results in enhanced organizational commitment and job satisfaction as well. In fact, recent meta-analyses examining the career benefits resulting from mentoring found that workers who have been mentored advance more quickly than workers who have not been mentored (Allen, Poteet, Eby, Lentz & Lima, 2004; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008). Therefore, it is clear that mentoring succeeds in helping employees develop the leadership skills necessary to climb the corporate ladder.

Mentors also report numerous benefits from being involved in a mentoring relationship, including a sense of fulfilment in assisting and sharing their experiences, increased self-confidence, performance improvement and increased visibility and recognition from others (Amelink, 2008; Burke et al., 1994; Clutterbuck, Devine & Beech, 1991; Douglas, 1997; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Emmerik et al., 2005; Ensher & Murphy, 2011). Mentoring also results in beneficial organizational level outcomes such as elevated productivity, greater dedication and loyalty, increased retention, enhanced internal communication and stronger organizational culture (Douglas, 1997; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Fagenson-Eland, Marks & Amendola, 1997; Hale, 1995; Murray & Owen, 1991; Perrone, 2003).

Because of these and many more benefits, mentoring programs have flourished (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Emelo, 2011; Headlam-Wes, Goslan, & Craig, 2005, 2006; Kram & Isabella, 1985). But are these programs working for women, visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal peoples? The slow growth in the representation of these groups in leadership and professional roles suggests that the answer is "no," (or certainly, "not fast enough").

Purpose of the Knowledge Synthesis

The purpose of this knowledge synthesis is to better understand how mentoring can be leveraged to maximize the benefits for women, visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people. In order to design better, more inclusive mentoring programs, it is important to first understand the specific challenges faced by each group of mentees. Therefore, the **first objective** of the synthesis report is to review the reported challenges faced by each group with respect to mentoring. The **second objective** of the report is to document the various approaches used to mentor members of these target groups and the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. More inclusive mentoring programs will result in providing all workers the skills to advance in their careers and assume leadership roles in Canada's future.

APPROACH

Methods

The research team collaborated with the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management's librarian to conduct the systematic literature review. After discussion of the project objectives, it was decided that five online databases were most relevant to the review and would provide a comprehensive search across multiple sectors and disciplines: Academic Search Complete (Multi-disciplinary), Medline (Health Sciences, Allied Health), ERIC (Education), ABI/Inform Global (Business) and INSPEC (Engineering, Information technology).

Two searches were conducted: the first sought articles discussing the challenges and difficulties that disadvantaged group members face in being mentored for leadership roles; the second sought articles identifying and analyzing different approaches to mentoring these groups.

Search 1 - Challenges Faced

Using several key words in our search (e.g., mentor, women, visible minority, disabled, Aboriginal, immigrant, etc.), a total of 2375 articles were identified. Note that only the abstracts and titles were searched.

Two research assistants reviewed the abstract of every article to determine if it was relevant to the synthesis report. Only articles examining mentoring in a workplace leadership skill development context were retained (note that many articles dealt with mentoring in other contexts, such as high school retention, workforce integration, promoting interest in non-traditional careers, etc.). The research assistants first conducted an independent review, in which they identified 423 relevant articles overall. Subsequently, they co-reviewed the articles, reducing the sample size to 138. Finally, after reviewing and filtering the articles a third time independently, the result was a convergent final sample of 58 articles. These 58 articles were then carefully reviewed, analysed, and grouped into categories by both research assistants independently. Final categorizations were compared and discrepancies discussed until consensus was reached. This resulted in four categories: women, visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people. Refer to Table 1 for a tabulation of the final sample of research articles.

Search 2 - Mentoring Approaches

Next, we conducted a structured literature search for different approaches that can be used to mentor individuals from the underrepresented populations (women, Aboriginal people, disabled persons, visible minorities and immigrants). For the four specialized databases (Academic Search Complete, Medline, ERIC, and INSPEC), the search terms included both 'population' keywords as well as 'mentoring program' keywords (e.g., formal, informal, peer, group, etc.) in order to focus the search on the topic of interest. However, in the prime subject database, (ABI/Inform Global (Business)), the population keywords were not used, to avoid unnecessarily limiting the findings for the initial search. In all, a total of 816 published articles were identified (note that only the abstracts and titles were searched).

Two research assistants reviewed the abstract of every article to determine if the article was relevant to the synthesis report. Only articles discussing mentoring in a management context were retained. In total, they identified 121 articles independently, and then co-reviewed the articles to determine which should be retained or discarded. This resulted in a final sample size of 29. The articles were then carefully reviewed, analysed, and grouped into similar categories by both research assistants. Final categorizations were compared and discrepancies reviewed until consensus was reached. This resulted in six categories: informal, formal, peer, group, reciprocal and electronic mentoring. Due to the low number of relevant research articles identified, no sub-themes were identified (see Table 2 for a summary of the final set of categorized research articles). Also note that most of the articles could have been categorized as 'formal' (given that they address mentorship *programs*); however, we were more interested in the more detailed characteristics of the program (e.g., 'peer' or 'group' or 'e-mentoring') and therefore selected these categories as being primary.

RESULTS

Part 1: Challenges Faced

A review of the extant literature reveals that women, visible minorities and immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people face considerable challenges with respect to mentoring. A discussion of these challenges and how they apply to each diversity member group follows. A summary of the findings can be found in Table 3.

Women

Mentoring is argued to be indispensable for women to develop their leadership skills (Orser, 2000; Schein et al., 1996) and mentoring programs are the most frequently cited organizational practice offered to address gender differences in advancement (Catalyst, 2011a, 2011b, Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007; MacRae, 2005; Orser, 2000). So why is mentoring failing to achieve these desired results? What are the challenges that face women and the organizations in which they work?

First, women face challenges in finding a mentor. Research has consistently demonstrated that mentoring is most effective for women when they are mentored by women; however, the paucity of women in senior roles makes this difficult to achieve. (Allen, Day &

Lentz, 2005; Cooper & Hingley, 1983; Fowler, Gudmundsson & O'Gorman, 2007; Maccoby, 1990; Okurame, 2007; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Williams, 2001; Tharenou, 2005; Thomas, 1990). Further, some research suggests that once women climb the organizational ranks and achieve positions of power, they may be less likely to serve as mentors to junior employees, preferring instead to mentor colleagues in similar positions of the organizational hierarchy (O'Brien, Biga, Kessler, & Allen, 2008; Thomas, Hu, Gewin, Bingham, & Yanchus, 2005). This further shrinks the pool of potential female mentors for aspiring young women. If a female mentor is unavailable, finding a male mentor may be difficult because women have fewer informal and formal opportunities (e.g., having a drink after work, networking on the golf course) to access and interact with potential male mentors (Kram, 1985; Lunding, Clements & Perkins, 1978; O'Brien et al., 2008; Ragins, 1996; Wanberg, Welsch & Heslett, 2003). Further, men are sometimes reluctant to mentor young women in case it is misconstrued as a sexual advance or involvement, to avoid office gossip or to appease jealous spouses (Bowen, 1985; Fitt & Newton, 1981; Harden, Clark, Johnson & Larson, 2009; Hurley, 1996; Morgan & Davidson, 2008; Ragins, 1996; Young, Cady & Foxon, 2006).

Given the difficulties outlined above, one could conclude that women are less motivated to find a mentor. However, a meta-analysis conducted by O'Brien et al. (2010) revealed that both men and women are equally motivated to find a mentor. While their motivation *levels* for seeking a mentor appear to be similar, their *rationale* differs: both men and women desire career-related support from a mentoring relationship (Hu, 2008; Okurame, 2008), however, women are more likely than men to also seek a mentor for psychosocial support, especially acceptance and confirmation (Leck, Orser & Riding, 2009; Levesque, O'Neill, Nelson & Dumas, 2005).

While the motivational reasons for seeking a mentor may differ between men and women, the real question is whether or not the mentoring they subsequently receive is equally beneficial to their leadership skill development and subsequent career advancement. Although both men and women report receiving the same amount of career-related support, Tharenou (2005) discovered that this form of support is more effective at advancing a woman's career than that of her male counterpart. Further, mentors who provide more psychosocial support than career-related support impede career advancement for women more so than for men (Tharenou, 2005). In other words, women need much more career-related support and much less psychosocial support.

Some research has identified specific mentoring behaviours that differ in importance for men and women. For instance, a common mentoring function is introducing the mentee to the mentor's close network of contacts (known as the 'advice network'). The size of the advice network is more strongly related to career success for women, while the strength of the relationship with the advice network is more strongly related to career success for men (van Emmerick, 2004)¹. The relative importance of obtaining protection, receiving support from others, accessing resources, and mentor commitment are more important to women, while working towards increased autonomy is more significant for men (Allen & Eby, 2008; Leck et

¹Network size refers to the number of mentors. Network strength refers to a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the closeness, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services which characterize the relationship.

al., 2009). Women are also more likely than men to disclose personal problems with their mentor (Hu, 2008).

While women often favour psychosocial support (e.g., receiving support from others, mentor commitment, discussion of personal problems), it is the career-related support that advances their careers. This is unfortunate as female mentors provide more psychosocial support and less career-related support than their male counterparts (O'Brien et al., 2010). For instance, when choosing their mentees, women are more likely to rely on 'chemistry,' while male mentors rely more on evidence and past successes of the potential mentees (Leck & Orser, 2013). On the positive side, female mentors trust their female mentees more so than their male mentees (Leck & Orser, 2013) and women are also more likely than men to consider the mentoring relationship to be a two-way exchange of information (Leck & Orser, 2013). Interestingly, female mentors appear to have the strongest effect on their mentees, either helping or hindering their career advancement (Tharenou, 2005). In summary, the research suggests that female mentors provide more psychosocial support when it is typically more career-related support that junior women ultimately need.

So what if the mentor is male? A factor that may explain differences between male and female mentee experiences is the mentor's perceptions of the mentee's ability and potential. Results examining the perceptions of male mentors with respect to their female mentees are mixed. Some research suggests that mentee gender differences do not lead to differing perceptions by male mentors, and the perceptions are based solely on past successes (Linehan & Scullion, 2008) and the mentee's proactivity (Thomas et al., 2005). Many others argue that women may experience sub-optimal mentoring because gender-role stereotypes can either consciously or unconsciously cause male mentors to assume that their female mentees lack the skills to grasp complex problems, to attribute their female mentee's success to luck rather than ability, and to trust their female mentees less to succeed than their male counterparts (Deaux & Emswiller, 1974; Elliott, Leck, Orser & Mossop, 2007; Horgan & Simeon, 1990, 1991; Noe, 1988; Leck & Orser, 2013; Ragins, 1997).

In summary, there is evidence from previous research to support three main conclusions: 1) there is a shortage of female mentors; 2) much more career-related support is needed to develop the careers of aspiring young women; and 3) there are obstacles to overcome when women are mentored by men resulting from the fear of misconstrued relationships as well as conscious and subconscious discrimination and stereotypes.

Visible Minorities and Immigrants

The following sub-section outlines the challenges of both visible minorities and immigrants with respect to mentoring. Important to note is that both groups are not all encompassing or mutually exclusive. That is to say, an immigrant may not be a visible minority, and a visible minority may not be an immigrant. On the other hand, they may be both. For the purposes of this analysis, however, we believe that combining the groups is merited, for three major reasons: research on the two groups often overlaps, the challenges faced are usually applicable to both groups, and there is a lack of research on either (see Table 1 - only 14

articles). By combining this slim body of research, more insights can be gained to help inform future research, programming, and policy for either of these groups.

Mentoring has been proven to be a significant predictor of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment for members of visible minorities (Robinson & Reio, 2011). Organizations benefit from mentoring immigrant and members of visible minorities by better understanding cultural differences and values thereby increasing the organization's competitiveness in a global economy (Allan, 2010). Unfortunately, mentoring opportunities for members of visible minorities are limited.

Research shows that members of visible minorities indicate a preference to be mentored by mentors of their own race or someone who has lived through similar experiences, such as immigration (Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005; Haynes & Ghosh, 2012; Morales, 2010; Thomas, 1990; Hu, Thomas & Lance, 2008; Willems & Smet, 2007). Like women, visible minorities are faced with a dearth of same-race mentors in senior positions. Potential mentors outside of their race are reluctant to enter into a mentoring relationship due to the perception that visible minorities have little chance to move forward and as such there is no point in mentoring them (Anyaso, 2008; Blancero & DelCampo, 2005; Bova, 2000). Reciprocal trust, an important foundation for any mentoring relationship, is particularly difficult to form in cross-cultural mentoring, resulting in mentoring failure (Cervero & Johnson-Bailey, 2004). Other barriers include mentors' underestimation of mentee potential (Anyaso, 2008), downright discrimination, and the insensitivity to cultural and learning differences of non-white groups (Mata & Pendakur, 1999; Mora & Davila, 2005). As a consequence, immigrants and members of visible minorities frequently are limited to informal mentoring from close relatives (Schlosser, 2012).

Theories and paradigms drawn from the social psychology literature help further explain why white men and women may be reluctant to mentor non-white mentees. *Social identity theory* explains how individuals classify themselves into a number of categories and social groups, and as they interact, their identities evolve (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Applied to an organizational setting, in-groups and out-groups are created and perpetuated, and the identity of the individual can be assumed by group membership (Haynes & Ghosh, 2012). Religious worship groups, colleagues who grab a drink together after work, or workers who speak a foreign language amongst each other are examples of created in-groups where individual identity is assumed through group membership. The *similarity-attraction paradigm* posits that people are more attracted to other people who are similar to themselves, or in other words, to people belonging to their own in-group (Byrne, 1971). Applied to a mentoring context, research has found that people are more willing to engage in a mentoring relationship with people to whom they are 'attracted' or who are similar to themselves (Hu et al., 2008; Ortiz-Walters, 2009). Note that the 'in-group' with which a person identifies is not immediately obvious. For example, in a study examining mentoring Latina women (in this case, the mentees were both members of visible minorities and women), mentor ethnic similarity was identified as more relevant than gender (Gonzalez-Figueroa & Young, 2005).

Feelings of *fraternal relative deprivation* suggest that an individual's reaction to members of other demographics is explained by how fairly they perceive the social group has been treated by society (Crosby, 1982). For instance, if a white man believes that employment

equity measures are a form of reverse discrimination against other white men, he would be more inclined to aide a white man over others. One study found this to be a significant moderating factor in the willingness to engage in mentoring, where people with high feelings of fraternal relative deprivation were far more likely to participate in same-race or same-gender mentoring relationships (Hu et al., 2008).

In summary, there is evidence from previous research to support three main conclusions: 1) there is a shortage of immigrant and visible minority mentors; 2) there is an unwillingness among white senior management to mentor members of visible minorities due to conscious and subconscious discrimination and stereotypes; and 3) the knowledge and appreciation of other cultures that could be acquired by mentoring visible minority and immigrant mentees is undervalued by potential mentors.

Aboriginal People

As noted in Table 1, there were only three articles which specifically addressed mentoring challenges for developing leadership potential in Aboriginal populations. Nonetheless, several interesting insights were gained. First, members of the Aboriginal community face unique barriers. These are rooted in two main issues: mentors from the dominant culture exhibit a lack of appreciation for the need to have a bidirectional learning experience and tend to adopt a didactic teaching method and missionary attitude of trying to 'save ' or 'fix' their Aboriginal mentees (Salzman, 2000). Second, non-Aboriginal mentors have difficulties understanding the First Nation's way of life and the hardships that Aboriginal people face (Burgess & Dyer, 2009; Dwyer, 2003; Shotton, Oosahwe & Cintron, 2007).

In summary, this limited body of research on Aboriginal mentoring suggests that: 1) mentors need to understand and be sensitive to Aboriginal culture, values and needs; and 2) conscious and subconscious discrimination and stereotypes negatively impacts the mentoring experience.

Disabled Persons

Only one study was found that examined the difficulties that disabled persons face in mentoring relationships. In an interview study of seventeen highly achieving disabled women Noonan, Galler, Hensler-McGinnis, Fassinger, Wang and Goodman (2004) report that all subjects recognized the importance of having role models and mentors, although most of the encouragement and emotional support they found was from their families. This result parallels that of members of visible minorities in that the shortage of suitable mentors (and perhaps the reluctance of mentors to engage) limits the pool of mentors to friends and family.

Part 2: Mentoring Approaches

A review of the literature identified six main approaches to mentoring: Informal Mentoring, Formal Mentoring, Peer Mentoring, Group Mentoring, Reciprocal Mentoring and e-mentoring. A discussion of each including their advantages and disadvantage follows. Note that all these approaches can be *formalized* - by 'formal mentoring,' we are referring to mentoring

programs that are initiated and managed by a sponsoring organization. See Table 4 for a summary of the findings.

Informal Mentoring

Informal mentorship, the oldest form of mentoring dating back to ancient Greece, is a form of mentorship that is developed based on mutual attraction between two individuals. Informal mentoring takes place when a senior manager chooses to establish a relationship with a young manager who has particular talents and skills (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Ehrich, 2008; Scandura & Williams, 2001) or when two individuals who are working in the same field decide to establish a mentoring relationship (Ehrich, 2008). With informal mentoring, mentor and mentee make a consensual decision to work together instead of being matched by a third party (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ehrich, 2008; Landy, Schultz & Siegel, 2011; Lankau & Weinberg, 2011). These relationships are not planned or anticipated, but develop voluntarily and naturally with no structure or direction from the organization. Discussions revolve around topics that are important to the individuals involved. Relationships formed through informal mentorship often last years, averaging approximately three to six years (Allen et al., 2005) and set end dates are not predetermined (Landy et al., 2011). Informal mentorship is argued to be more effective than other approaches to mentoring, as mentees receive more career-related and psychosocial support (Allen et al., 2005; Eby & Lockwood, 2004).

Although informal mentoring has its merits, it also has its drawbacks. Relying on the formation of a 'mutual attraction' limits the probability that all aspiring young workers will find a mentor. Further, as discussed previously, the *similarity-attraction paradigm* would suggest that white men would be more likely to find mentors, given the preponderance of white men in senior roles. This would lead to a disproportionate number of mentored women, members of visible minorities, disabled persons, and Aboriginal people. Given these drawbacks, it is not surprising that organizations have been motivated to design more formalized programs to ensure that mentoring opportunities are more inclusive.

Formal Mentoring

Many organizations are implementing formal mentorship programs in order to reap the positive benefits of informal mentoring relationships. Formal mentoring is a more recent form of mentoring where the organization initiates and structures a relationship between mentors and mentees (Allen, Eby & Lentz, 2006; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Ehrich, 2008; Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura & Williams, 2001). While some firms allow all employees to participate as a mentor or a mentee, other firms require specific criteria before approving the mentoring relationship based on the individual's type of work, performance, or being elected by others (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eddy, Alliger, D'Abate, Givens & Tannenbaum, 2001). Formal mentoring programs also typically have specific objectives such as enhancing staff members' knowledge and/or aptitudes, decreasing employee turnover, and further developing specific abilities such as leadership skills required by the organization (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eddy et al., 2001). Furthermore, formal mentoring programs emphasize the frequency and the nature of the relationship and offer training opportunities to help mentors and mentees to comprehend their respective roles and the goals of the relationship (Allen et al., 2006; Eby & Lockwood, 2005;

Eddy et al., 2001). The content and issues to be discussed (based on the program objectives) during these meetings is also pre-determined (Landy et al., 2011). Formal mentoring programs typically contain more structure (provide terms of relationship, anticipated goals, expectation of frequency of meetings, a reporting mechanism, etc.) compared to informal programs which are usually more fluid and driven by the participants rather than processes (Ehrich, 2008; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

The 'matching process' for forming mentor-mentee dyads is critical, as it often determines the outcome and success of the program. Relationships are often established artificially, as pairings are typically assigned by the organization (Lyons & Oppler, 2004). When a mentor and mentee are well matched, participants report a greater satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (Allen et al., 2006; Eby, Butts, Lockwood & Simon, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005). Mentors and mentees can be matched based on many demographic and contextual factors, such as personal profiles, learning and development goals, experience, educational backgrounds, professional experience, maturity and geographical location (Poulsen, 2013). Although research on what constitutes a 'best match' is in its infancy, one study found that matches from similar areas of the organization are more effective than cross-departmental matches (Allen & Eby, 2007).

There are several benefits that arise from formal mentorships. Empirical research indicates that formal mentoring is effective in promoting the learning of both mentees and mentors, including understanding different elements of the organization and developing fresh insights into situations that arise in the context of work (Eby & Lockwood, 2005). Mentees are fortunate to learn, be coached by, and receive psychosocial development as well as career planning advice from their mentor (Eby & Lockwood, 2004).

In summary, formal mentoring differs from informal mentoring in two very important ways. First, in formal mentoring, dyads are created and do not emerge naturally; this takes the onus of finding a mentor out of the hands of the prospective mentee. Disadvantaged group members who had difficulties finding a mentor because of their group status are simply assigned one. In one study, Lyons and Oppler (2004) found that satisfaction with the formal mentoring program did not differ by race or sex, suggesting that formalizing the mentoring function may dampen biases such as stereotypes and discrimination. The matching process also serves to reduce the perceptions of misconstrued relationships between men and women as their relationship was created by the mentoring program administrator, and not themselves. Note that while stereotypes may be dampened and the perceptions of misconstrued relationships may be reduced, they are not eliminated altogether, due to the face-to-face nature of the mentor/mentee interactions. Second, in formal mentoring, the mentoring process is structured to last a set period of time and specific objectives are set and agreed upon. This results in a planned and rapid mechanism with which to develop employees. As a consequence, skill development, which may take several years to develop in an informal mentoring setting, can take as little as one to three years.

Peer Mentoring

So far, we have discussed mentoring as a relationship between an experienced senior individual (the mentor) and a more junior individual (the mentee) where the mentor occupies a position higher up the hierarchy than the mentee. A variant form of mentoring occurs when the mentor and the mentee are at the same hierarchical level (Atterton, Carroll & Thompson, 2009). This is called *Peer Mentoring* and it involves pairing an individual with an experienced and knowledgeable individual who is working at the *same* organizational level (Level & Mach, 2004). The main goal of peer mentorship is to provide job-related knowledge that will help a fellow peer integrate successfully into the workplace (Byrant, 2005; Eby, 1997; Kram, 1985). Peer mentorship offers a unique opportunity as even junior level members can promote information sharing, career planning as well as job related feedback (Level & Mach, 2004; Quinlan, 1999).

Peer mentors often assist with orienting new employees to the organization by providing positive encouragement and socialization. This helps newcomers adapt to the organization more quickly and thereby perform their jobs more effectively (Byrant, 2005; Eby, 1997). As peers are often more comfortable communicating with someone at the same level, this type of relationship can foster a richer and different type of knowledge exchange than one between individuals from different organizational levels (Byrant, 2005). According to Byrant, (2005), peer mentors are able to provide the same kind of psychosocial and career-related support as traditional mentors (i.e., hierarchically superior) (Byrant, 2005; Eby, 1997; Ensher et al., 2001; Kram & Isabella, 1985).

Although relatively new, peer mentoring has shown early signs of success. For instance, in the government sector, peer mentoring has resulted in increasing the engagement of rural municipal councillors and the implementation of various programs and activities (Atterton et al., 2009). In the high-tech sector, peer mentoring has resulted in increased knowledge sharing and creation (Byrant, 2005). In academia, peer mentoring has resulted in increased research productivity, a greater number of promotions, improved skill acquisition, and increased enthusiasm and job motivation (Blair, Files, Ko & Mayer, 2008).

In summary, while peer-to-peer mentoring is becoming more popular as an organizational practice, there is a dearth of research investigating the nature of the relationship. Further research needs to be conducted to better understand its effects on both participants – the benefits, challenges, and programmatic features which maximize leadership development. Based on these preliminary findings however, it can be concluded that peer-to-peer mentorships are primarily used for organizational orientation and socialization; they can facilitate interpersonal comfort and knowledge sharing; and peers can often 'relate' better to one another than to their older, more senior colleagues. Therefore, peer mentoring may be a promising option for women and minority groups: firstly, it broadens the pool of potential participants; and secondly, it offers the possibility of a relationship which provides psychosocial support as well as possible career advantages (through increased access to information and personal network development). However, some limitations need to be further investigated. For example, it would appear that the peer mentor cannot provide the same level of career sponsorship, protection, and advice that a more senior mentor can provide. As a result, peer mentorships may not be as effective in

promoting leadership development and career advancement, and consequently, this is a critical question to address.

Group Mentoring

As organizations become more complex, expertise from many knowledgeable others may be necessary to successfully navigate the corporation. Recognizing that one mentor may not have all the answers and expertise has led to the concept and development of *Group Mentoring* (also referred to as 'Mentoring Circles'). Group mentoring involves multiple experts, considered mentors, matched up with multiple learners, considered mentees (Carvin, 2011). Participants choose topics of relevance, assemble either face-to-face or through electronic conferencing, and discuss the topics, often with the help of a group facilitator (Emelo, 2011). Mentors can be peers, or individuals at any level of the organization who are experts with respect to the topic of discussion (including junior workers - see reciprocal mentoring).

Group mentorship is often misconstrued to be classroom learning. This is not the case as participants of group mentoring reap the same benefits as those associated with traditional one-to-one mentoring. For example, mentees have their own personal learning objectives, group discussions are held in safe and confidential environments, mentors act as guides rather than teachers or trainers, topics of discussion fall outside of regular classroom training and both mentors and mentees benefit from participating in group mentoring (Carvin, 2011). Similar to formal mentoring, groups benefit from both career-related and psychosocial support (Carvin, 2011).

Group mentoring has three unique advantages. First, group mentoring programs are easy to set up (e.g., no careful matching of mentor to mentee is required) and consequently less expensive to administer, especially if conducted via electronic means (Emelo, 2011). Second, group mentoring provides mentees with multiple mentors, and therefore multiple points of view and a vast array of knowledge and expertise. Multiple mentors reduce the likelihood that the mentoring relationship will become dysfunctional, which can occur in traditional one-on-one mentoring. Multiple mentors also minimize the effects of negative biases such as stereotypes and discrimination. Finally, the collective nature of group mentoring may be better suited for members of collective and inclusive cultures than more traditional mentoring approaches. For instance, since Aboriginal cultures tend to be more collective in nature (Shotton et al., 2007), group mentoring may be a more desirable approach to develop leadership skills. More research on the benefits of group mentoring is needed as it holds promise to deliver a relatively quick, inexpensive and effective mentoring experience to members of different backgrounds, genders, ethnicities, and collective cultures.

Reciprocal Mentoring

The shift in demographic landscape and the ageing workforce has led to the development of *Reciprocal Mentoring* (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). With reciprocal mentoring, a younger, more junior level employee is paired with an older, more senior level employee so that the senior level employee can gain new insights about various topics, such as the marketplace, younger generational attitudes and values, and technology (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). A variant of

reciprocal mentoring occurs when any new employee (irrespective of age) is paired with a senior level employee to share their knowledge and past experience (e.g., their previous employer's best practices) with the senior level employee (Harvey, Heames, McIntyre & Moeller, 2009).

Reciprocal mentorship may be an excellent mechanism with which to raise the cultural awareness of senior management. Increased understanding of other groups decreases biases such as negative stereotypes. Pairing immigrants with senior level managers also allows upper management to gain a better understanding of how to conduct business in different countries, thereby increasing their firm's global competitive advantage. Research in this area is in its infancy however, as most mentoring research examines mentoring from a junior level mentee's perspective.

E-mentoring

E-mentoring, a new and burgeoning approach to mentoring, provides learning opportunities, as well as career-related and psychosocial support, primarily through e-mail and other digital means (e.g., instant messaging, chat rooms, social networking spaces, etc.). E-mentoring addresses many of the challenges inherent to face-to-face mentoring by providing unlimited access to a greater number of mentors, offering greater flexibility in establishing and sustaining relationships, removing geographical barriers and blurring demographic and personal differences.

Benefits resulting from e-mentoring fall in two categories. First, e-mentoring enhances the 'egalitarian nature of the interaction.' E-mentoring provides a safe context for building relationships between people from different cultures as the virtual medium often conceals these characteristics (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). That is, e-mentoring makes gender and race invisible as the communication is faceless (Ensher & Murphy, 2007; Headlam-Wells, Gosland & Craig, 2006). For instance, the technology in an e-mentoring environment provides women with increased access to mentors as mentoring relationships with men can be established without the fear of having their professional relationship misinterpreted (Bierema & Merriam, 2002; Bierema & Hill, 2005; Hamilton & Scandura, 2003; Headlam-Wells et al., 2006).

Second, e-mentoring provides a 'boundaryless structure.' In other words, e-mentoring offers the opportunity for mentors and mentees to cross time boundaries and geography given that the relationship is not based on where the person lives (An & Lipscomb, 2010; Bierema & Merriam, 2002; Bierema & Hill, 2005). Although it is difficult to pair mentors and mentees in face-to-face mentoring programs as the resource pool may be limited, (it must be intra-organizational or locally attained), finding individuals in e-mentoring environment can be maximized as mentors and mentees can be matched from a larger external resource pool. E-mentoring allows for multiple mentors as well (see Group Mentoring). Other benefits include supporting mentoring opportunities for individuals of all ages and fields of work and increased accessibility, as only internet access and an email account is required (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Further, e-mentoring provides more flexibility between mentors and mentees in that they can email each other at any time, are not required to provide immediate responses, and can review the communication exchange at any time (Bierema & Hill, 2005; Headlam-Wells, 2004; Headlam-Wells, Gosland & Craig, 2005; Headlam-Wells et al., 2006; Homitz & Berge, 2008).

While e-mentoring holds promise, it is not without its challenges (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). The first challenge is 'how to choose a suitable mentor/mentee?' In traditional mentoring, mentees usually know a great deal about their prospective mentors, and vice-versa, because they typically work in the same organization or geographic area. However, in a virtual environment, information may be limited to biographical profiles and resumes.

The second major challenge is developing a relationship in a virtual environment. Several research studies have shed light on the importance of trust in mentoring relationships (Bouquillon, Sosik & Lee, 2005; Buche, 2008; Chun, Litzky, Sosik, Bechtold & Godshalk, 2010; Elliott et al., 2007; Hezlett & Gibson, 2007; Kram, 1985; Leck & Orser, 2013; Leck & Robitaille, 2011; Palmer & Schoorman, 2011). In e-mentoring however, the development of trust can be more difficult to engender and cultivate due to the lack of interpersonal contact and 'digital distance.' Levels of trust can also be diminished because of a fear of personal information being disclosed due to a lack of privacy that the internet is said to provide (Bierema & Hill, 2005). Trust is compromised as the fear of online communication is recorded and captured, which could later resurface (Bierema & Hill, 2005).

The third major challenge is the issue of access to technology (Bierema & Hill, 2005). This access includes the physical devices and networks required to access e-mentoring, as well as the user's familiarity and comfort with technology (Bierema & Hill, 2005). Those with access and those without are separated by what has been coined 'the digital divide.' Recent data from a Statistics Canada study of internet use show that the 'divide' continues to prevail and is strongly linked to household income (Geist, 2013). For instance, while there is growth in internet usage among those aged 65 and older in 2012, only 26.4% of lower-income Canadians use internet wireless services. How does this translate into internet accessibility by Aboriginal Canadians, disabled Canadians, new immigrants and ethnic minorities? E-mentoring can only be a viable alternative if the target audience can fully participate.

In summary, e-mentoring appears to hold much promise for the development of leadership skills in underrepresented groups. First, it supports a variety of different approaches to mentoring (e.g., group mentoring, peer mentoring, reciprocal mentoring). Second, it allows mentees from remote areas (e.g., Aboriginal people) or with problems of mobility (e.g., disabled persons) to access mentors with the expertise they seek (i.e., provided they have internet access). Third, because it is 'faceless' it reduces potential stereotyping and discrimination. Finally, cross-gender mentoring relationships are less likely to be misconstrued due to the physical separation of mentor and mentee. Nonetheless, e-mentoring is not a panacea. Some of these same benefits can pose challenges for both mentor and mentee. Mentoring via the internet, for example, relies upon internet access and computer literacy; it also necessitates the development of trust across the time and space. Without physical cues, it is sometimes more difficult to communicate clearly and gauge individuals' responses. All of these can lead to potential misinterpretations which must be therefore managed.

SUMMARY

Traditionally disadvantaged group members face three major challenges (see Table 5). First, mentees prefer to be mentored by individuals who have shared similar experiences and have similar backgrounds; unfortunately there is a shortage of mentors who fill these profiles. Second, mentees receive sub-optimal mentoring due to either conscious or sub-conscious biases such as negative stereotypes or discrimination. Third, in order to develop leadership skills and advance in their careers, more career-related support is needed (note that although this third challenge was not identified for groups other than women, it is reasonable to assume that when friends and family need to be relied on for mentoring, psychosocial is the more likely form of support that is provided). In addition, two other observations can be added: first, the opportunity for upper management to learn about other cultures through mentoring diverse mentees appears to be underidentified and undervalued; and second, more research examining mentorships for visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people is clearly needed.

While informal and formal mentoring programs have been around for quite some time, they are not succeeding in quickly advancing women and other traditionally disadvantaged group members. This may be due to the face-to-face nature of the interactions between mentor and mentee. Mentors, who are still primarily white men, may still either consciously or subconsciously treat these groups differently, due to biases such as stereotypes and discrimination. A promising new approach is e-mentoring. Not only does e-mentoring blur the demographic differences between mentor and mentee, it also provides mentees with a much larger pool of potential mentors. Further, e-mentoring can support peer, group and reciprocal mentoring as well as more traditional mentoring (i.e., a senior level mentor and a junior level mentee). Fear of losing the cultural value brought to organizations by immigrant and minority employees should encourage reciprocal mentoring and programs sensitive to cultural and learning differences (Allan, 2010). This provides mentees with the ability to reap the benefits associated with numerous approaches to mentoring.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of this review have implications for practitioners, policy makers, educators, senior managers and researchers. Mentoring program administrators, for example, should train mentors to be aware of the challenges faced by each group and the importance of providing much more career-related support and less psychosocial support. Program designers can make better matches by selecting mentors who share similar demographic characteristics and can introduce e-mentoring programs to increase the number of these potential matches. E-mentoring can also be introduced to counteract negative biases that white male mentors may hold towards other groups. Policy makers can develop national level e-mentoring networks and invest in the creation of a technology infrastructure that ensures universal access to the internet. Policy makers should also consider other initiatives, such as legislation, to quicken the advancement of underrepresented groups into upper management. Educators should provide leadership skill development at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational levels. Senior management must understand the importance of promoting inclusive organizational cultures and workplaces, not only for the benefit of the underrepresented groups, but also for themselves as

reciprocal mentoring provides a learning opportunity to learn about other cultures. The implications for researchers are outlined in the next section.

FURTHER RESEARCH

By conducting this systematic literature review, we have gained insight into the challenges associated with mentoring women, visible minorities and immigrants, disabled persons and Aboriginal people. We have also discovered a surprising lack of academic literature, particularly with respect to these last two groups – individuals with disabilities and those with Aboriginal heritage (one article and three articles respectively). Further research is needed to gain a greater appreciation of their unique needs and challenges and to determine how mentoring programs can best be tailored to their circumstances. First of all, for these target groups, it might be beneficial to broaden the scope of the literature search, to explore the employment and leadership 'pipeline' further downstream. That is, how is mentoring currently being used in secondary schools to prepare Aboriginal and disabled youth to become leaders in the workforce? Similarly, for visible minorities and new immigrants – what mentoring programs are being conducted to develop skills for employment readiness and leadership?

While this systematic literature review has been focused primarily on the academic body of literature related to mentoring, it might also be useful to broaden the scope to uncover more applied (or unpublished) materials written for a practitioner-oriented audience (e.g., the popular press, magazines, the internet, etc.). This may unearth additional information about programs offered, special needs, and other challenges that these groups face. An inventory of mentoring programs and special interest groups could be developed to better understand the current landscape. Then, these organizations could be contacted, experts identified and subsequently interviewed for their input into special needs and challenges as well as recommended program considerations for mentoring.

One approach to conducting applied research on mentoring would be to partner with an organization such as the Aboriginal Human Resources Council to introduce a pilot program and track the outcomes over time (e.g., career advancement; skill development, job satisfaction). Similarly, working with another diversity-friendly employer (e.g., RBC, the federal government) would be an excellent way to conduct longitudinal research. Multiple measures could be taken before, during and after the mentoring program, to determine the impact on career outcomes, leadership skills, and preferred programmatic features which contribute to positive career success and skill development for disadvantaged employee groups. Certainly, the results of this literature review highlight the need for this type of research. The vast majority of current scholarly articles utilize retrospective measures of mentee experiences using perceptual (survey) methodologies. Few studies of objective outcomes are provided (e.g., advancement in the way of promotions, salary increases, etc.); and few studies take a longer term perspective, where participants are tracked before, during, and after mentoring interventions.

It would also be beneficial to gain a deeper understanding of the set of values that are held by each of these targeted groups. It is critical that mentoring programs are 'culturally sensitive' - based upon essential values that are held towards learning, communication, leadership and trust. For Aboriginal Canadians, for example, the research indicated that

collective, two-way learning is critical and should be factored into the design of a mentoring program. Group mentoring, (mentoring ‘circles’), peer mentoring, or a combination of approaches therefore might work well. Similarly, for new Canadians and visible minorities, the importance of independence, respect, and self-reliance is key, and must be emphasized in the program (e.g., in the selection and training of mentors, matching, program content, etc.). Among different visible minority groups, there will no doubt be other cultural variations as well. Research which contributes to a heightened understanding of these shared values would therefore be fruitful - for both mentees and mentors. Qualitative approaches are best suited to investigating these types of research questions.

In the area of visible minorities and immigrant populations, we decided to combine the results of the systematic literature review due to potential overlaps as well as synergies. However, there are some important differences which should be examined. Newcomers to Canada, by virtue of their status, for example, are primarily focused on bridging to employment. Many cannot be immediately employed in their own field of work and need basic (but critical) information on citizenship, language and employment tools before they can consider leadership development or advancement. Visible minorities, in comparison, are typically more integrated into Canadian society and better able to meet employment standards. While either group may benefit from mentoring, the programs may require a significantly different focus. In addition, many immigrants become ‘necessity entrepreneurs,’ particularly when they find themselves unemployed or lacking the credentials required to practice in their chosen field. Entrepreneurial mentoring was not included in this literature review but may add some important insights. Certainly the benefits of entrepreneurial mentoring have been well documented. For instance, Wikholm, Henningson, & Hultman (2008) found that 74% of mentees believed that their entrepreneurial ability had developed due to a mentor. Mentoring has also been shown to increase entrepreneurs’ self-confidence, management skills, and objective outcomes such as sales and profitability (Barratt, 2006; Deakins, Graham, Sullivan & Whittam, 1998). It is also beneficial in terms of learning key skills (St-Jean & Audet, 2012), receiving invaluable business advice (Deakins et al., 1998) and gaining access to the mentor’s network (Duff, 2010; Husain, 2009). How this translates into benefits for disadvantaged groups remains to be seen; however, it offers a fruitful place for research.

We have also identified research propositions which relate to the challenges identified in Table 4. These were identified across all disadvantaged groups and therefore can be considered to be salient. First, the literature search noted that mentees prefer to be mentored by individuals who have shared similar experiences and have similar backgrounds. Unfortunately there is a shortage of mentors who fill these profiles. Mentees also receive sub-optimal mentoring due to either conscious or sub-conscious biases such as negative stereotypes or discrimination. To address both of these challenges, we believe that e-mentoring holds much promise. By reducing the reliance on face-to-face communication, there is more social ‘distance’ and therefore less chance of perceptual biases and stereotypes, discrimination and misconstrued relationships. There is also access to a greater pool of potential mentors; and it can be applied across all types of mentoring – peer, group, and reciprocal. Nonetheless, e-mentoring relies on accessibility as well as computer literacy; and research data needs to be examined to determine whether these disadvantaged groups meet these ‘prerequisites.’ For example, recent (2012) Statistics Canada data points to a ‘growing digital divide,’ a gap that confirms the strong link between household

income and internet use (Geist, 2013). How does this impact Aboriginal and/or disabled Canadians? While these groups potentially have the most to gain by internet-enabled mentoring, they may also be the most disadvantaged in terms of digital resources. More research is certainly required in this area, to determine whether these groups are using the internet and if so, how (e.g., wireless or non-wireless, in their home or in public spaces such as the library, via e-mail, facebook, twitter, or other social media applications). Furthermore, within these groups, how does usage differ by age? Older Canadians are rapidly getting 'wired,' but remain the lowest group of users; in contrast, younger Canadians are the highest users and this same group is proportionally growing much more rapidly among native Canadian populations². This type of demographic data will inform any type of e-mentoring programming.

Another research question related to e-mentoring is the development of trust within an 'electronic' relationship. How does the development of trust differ within E-mentoring relationships from face-to-face relationships, and how can it best be cultivated? Perhaps new electronic video media can be used to enhance trust development, for instance. Or perhaps other on-line tools such as Facebook can facilitate trust. These questions could potentially be addressed within a controlled type of experimental design in a social network 'lab' environment.

A third finding from the knowledge synthesis is that mentees require more career-related support to develop leadership skills and advance in their careers. Research in this area could best focus on the types of career-related supports that are most useful for advancement. A survey of senior (successful) leaders from each of these groups could validate this finding as well as help to clarify the types of behaviours that are most useful.

A final finding is the degree to which the importance of diversity in upper management appears to be under-identified and undervalued. While a growing body of research demonstrates the benefits of diversity on Boards of Directors as well as in upper management, this has not played out in terms of actual numbers. A useful line of research would be to survey those organizations that are leaders in this area to identify practices that help to instill a culture of diversity. Within these same organizations, it would be interesting to determine which ones have mentoring programs and how these are structured.

² The 16-24 demographic are the heaviest users of wireless Internet services (Geist, 2013); and the Aboriginal Canadian population is much younger than the average (Statistics Canada, 2013), Almost half are under the age of 24; and 28 is the median age versus 41 among non-Aboriginal Canadians overall.

Table 1 - Results of the Literature Review for Challenges Faced: Number of Research Articles

Disadvantaged Group	Mentoring Theme	Number of Articles
Women	Gender Differences in Challenges Faced	19
	Gender Similarities in Challenges Faced	8
	Challenges for Women in Non-Traditional Careers	8
	Group Specific Challenges - Women	5
Visible Minorities	Gender Differences in Challenges Faced	4
	Group Specific Challenges - Visible Minorities	7
	Group Specific Challenges - Female Visible Minorities	1
	Group Specific Challenges - Immigrants	2
Disabled Persons	Group Specific Challenges - Disabled Persons	1
Aboriginal People	Group Specific Challenges - Aboriginal people	3
Total		58

Table 2 – Results of the Literature Review for Approaches to Mentoring Special Populations: Number of Research Articles

Categories	Number of Articles
Informal Mentoring	6
Traditional Face-to-Face Formal Mentoring	10
Peer Mentoring	4
Group Mentoring	2
Reciprocal Mentoring	2
E-mentoring	7
Total	29

Table 3 - Summary of Findings of Challenges Faced (page 1 of 2)

Group	Main Challenges Identified
Women	Mentoring is indispensable for women to develop their leadership skills.
	Mentoring is most effective when women are mentored by women.
	Paucity of women in senior roles makes it difficult to find female mentors.
	Propensity for senior women to mentor peers - further shrinking availability of mentors to aspiring young women.
	Lack of opportunities to identify and attract potential male mentors.
	Reluctance to enter in cross-gender mentoring dyads due to misconstrued relationships.
	Gender role stereotypes negatively affect mentoring effectiveness.
	Women are as motivated as men to find a mentor.
	Both men and women are motivated to seek a mentor to obtain career-related support.
	Women are more likely than men to seek a mentor for psychosocial support, especially that of acceptance and confirmation.
	Career-related support is more effective at advancing women's careers than men's careers.
	Mentors who provide more psychosocial support than career-related support impede career advancement for women more so than for men.
	The size of the advice network is more strongly related to career success for women, while the strength of the relationship with the advice network is more strongly related to career success for men.
	The relative importance of obtaining protection, receiving support from others, accessing resources, and mentor commitment are more important to women, while working towards increased autonomy is more significant for men.
	Women are more likely to disclose personal problems in mentoring relationships.
	Female mentors provide more psychosocial support than career-related support.
	Female mentors trust their female mentees more so than their male mentees.
	Women are also more likely to consider the mentoring relationship to be a two-way exchange of information, than men who mostly consider it a one-way exchange.
	Male mentor perceptions of a female mentee's ability and potential are based solely on past successes and the mentee's proactivity.
Gender-role stereotypes can either consciously or unconsciously cause male mentors to assume that their female mentees lack the skills to grasp complex problems, to attribute their female mentee's success to luck rather than ability, and to trust their female mentees less to succeed than their male counterparts.	

Table 3 - Summary of Findings of Challenges Faced (page 2 of 2)

Visible Minorities and Immigrants	Mentoring has been proven to be a significant predictor of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment for members of visible minorities.
	Organizations benefit from mentoring immigrant and members of visible minorities by better understanding cultural differences and values thereby increasing the organization's competitiveness in a global economy.
	Mentoring opportunities for members of visible minorities are limited.
	Preference to be mentored by same-race mentors, and/or mentors who have shared similar experiences (e.g., immigration) leads to an insufficient number of ideal mentors.
	Stereotypes lead to reluctance in mentoring visible minorities as they are seen as having little chance at success and their potential is underestimated.
	Reciprocal trust is particularly difficult to form in cross-cultural mentoring.
	Insensitivity to cultural and learning differences of non-white groups impedes mentoring success.
	Immigrants and members of visible minorities frequently are limited to informal mentoring from close relatives.
	People are more willing to engage in a mentoring relationship with people they are 'attracted' to or who are similar to themselves.
	Mentors with high feelings of fraternal relative deprivation (i.e., perceptions of how fairly their social group has been treated by society) are far more likely to participate in same-race or same-gender mentoring relationships.
Aboriginal people	Mentors from the dominant culture exhibit a lack of appreciation for the need to have a bidirectional learning experience and tend to adopt a didactic teaching method.
	Mentors form a missionary attitude of trying to 'save ' or 'fix' their Aboriginal mentees;
	Lack of empathy and understanding from non-Aboriginal mentors on Aboriginal culture.
Disabled Persons	Mentors limited to families for primarily emotional support and encouragement (psychosocial support).

Table 4 - Summary of Findings of Mentoring Approaches

Mentoring Approach	Brief Description	Primary Benefit	Challenges
Informal	Mentorships form naturally due to similar interests between the mentor and the mentee. There is no structure within the relationship, nor are there set discussion topics. They typically last several years and the end point is determined by the mentor and the mentee.	Highest level of career-related and psychosocial support is provided.	Lower probability of finding a mentor. More likely that white men would find a mentor (similarity - attraction paradigm).
Formal	Structured mentorship program where mentors and mentees are 'matched.' Mentors and mentees follow strict guidelines in terms of frequency of meetings as well as topics to be addressed.	Provides access to mentors for all employees. Rapid learning and skill development.	Potential for stereotyping, discrimination and misconstrued relationships due to the face-to-face interactions.
Peer	Pairing an individual with a more experienced colleague who is at the same organizational level.	Quicker integration into the workplace. Greater interpersonal comfort and psychosocial support.	Less career-related support.
Group	Groups within the workplace get together to discuss topics that are relevant for them.	Provides mentees with multiple experts. Well-suited for collective cultures. Easy to set up.	Unknown if group mentoring results in leadership skill development.
Reciprocal	Junior employee (mentor) provides mentorship to a more senior level employee (mentee).	Senior employee gains new knowledge, including better awareness of gender and cultural values and attitudes.	Limited skill development for junior employee.
E-mentoring	Provides mentoring opportunities through email and other online platforms. Can be used in combination with any of the four methods above, as it is primarily a mode of communication/interaction.	Less chance for stereotypes, discrimination and misconstrued relationships. Access to a larger pool of mentors.	Requires digital fluency. Requires access to internet and computers. May be difficult to cultivate the same level of trust as a face-to-face relationship

Table 5 - Summary of Major Conclusions for Challenges Faced for all Disadvantaged Groups

1. Mentees prefer and benefit from being mentored by individuals who have shared similar experiences and have similar backgrounds. Unfortunately there is a shortage of mentors who fill these profiles.
2. Mentees receive sub-optimal mentoring due to either conscious or sub-conscious biases such as negative stereotypes or discrimination.
3. To develop leadership skills and advance in their careers, much more career-related support is needed.
4. The importance of diversity in upper management appears to be underidentified and undervalued.
5. More research examining mentoring members of visible minorities, disabled persons and Aboriginal people is clearly needed.

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