

Mentoring, Ability, Passion, and Pay, (MAPP), A strategy of a reduction of unemployment among inner-city youths

Rukia Y. Malipula

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This article examines a new strategy of redefining mentoring with a purpose. The author of this article introduces MAPP (Mentoring, Ability, Passion, and Pay). The author wishes to examine the significance of older mentors in career planning and selection of inner-city youths who ordinarily do not have career mentors to look up to. The author introduces MAPP as a strategy to assist mentors in guiding the inner-city youths by utilizing Mentoring in identifying the mentee's Ability and Passion to create a Well-Paying career. The author posits that when a mentor identifies the ability and the passion of the mentee, this provides a path to career planning which leads to career selection of a better career for the inner-city youth.

Problem Statement

The problem is unemployment rates among inner-city youths of Washington, DC especially blacks remains disproportionately higher in comparison to other populations. "Today's ghetto neighborhoods are populated almost exclusively by the most disadvantaged segments of the urban black community, that heterogeneous grouping of families and individuals who are outside the mainstream of the American occupational system." (Wilson, 2012, p.7-8). The higher unemployment rates of inner-city youths continue to be a major challenge in the Human Resources Management field. "African-Americans continue to suffer from lower rates of employment relative to Whites, but there is tremendous disagreement over the source of these disparities." (Pager, 2003, p. 987). Many policies have been put in place by the different administrations at both the local level and federal level, but the problem continues to be persistent. "Among men, employment and labor force participation among blacks consistently lag behind those of whites and even Hispanics." (Holzer, &Offner, 2006, p,13). The underlying problem is bigger than the inability to finding jobs. Most inner city youths find it difficult to find well-paying jobs that support their families due to poor career planning and selection, as a result of lack of role models. "The tight labor market appears to have put the 18-19 years old, disadvantaged black males in the sample up to even footing with the national average for black males of the similar age. In contrast, the 20-24 years old black males are much more likely to be unemployed and idle than the national sample." (Case & Katz, 1991, p.11). This study will investigate the gap in the research on the role of formalized mentoring in career planning and selection beginning as early as in elementary schools. In their study, Case & Katz (1991) recommended mentoring as one of the solutions; "Affluent adult neighbors may act as positive role models indicating that success follows from hard work and may help maintain neighborhood order. Second, neighborhoods provide youths with close proximity to others in their age group. Interaction with peers who exhibit certain behaviors may influence youths directly." (p.13). There is a plenty of evidence in the literature that shows that mentoring plays a significant role in the outcomes of the inner-city youths. Social Learning Theory is one of the common theories that can be used to address the application of the mentoring as a solution to improve the employability of the inner-city youths

The significance of the study

A common theme in Human Resources Management field is employment rate being an indicator of the state of the economy. The lower unemployment rate below 5% indicates the healthy state of the economy and the higher unemployment rates over 10% indicate the state of the poor economy. The economy of United States has enjoyed many periods of the strong economy for many generations except for few recessions here and there. However, the economy of United States represents a tale of two economies. The inner-city youths remain behind in enjoying the benefits of the good economy even in the times of the economics' boom.

The significance of this study is the opportunity for mentoring in reducing unemployment rates among inner-city youths by offering guidance on career planning and career selection for inner-city youths. Reducing unemployment rates among inner-city youths of Washington, DC will result in the reduction of ailments that are associated with unemployment such as crime and drugs activity. There is an abundance of literature on higher unemployment rates, higher school dropouts, higher teen pregnancy, higher rates of incarcerations and crime rates among inner-city youths. Several federal policies such as affirmative action are intended to address higher unemployment rates among inner-city youths. Nevertheless, there is a gap in research that address the role of mentoring on career planning and selection for inner-city youths to secure better-paying jobs that may contribute to lowering unemployment among inner-city youths.

This study is significant to positive change because it investigates the solutions to reducing unemployment rates for inner-city youths. Many prior studies have shown that lowering unemployment rates among inner-city youths have a positive correlation with a reduction in poverty and crime. Therefore, this study surrounds itself entirely in positive change. A real positive change in Human Resources Management field will only happen if all the citizens have equal employment opportunities despite the color of their skins or which neighborhood they live.

Background information

The past 40 years has seen a major decline in the employment for inner-city youths. Many factors have been attributed to this decline, such as decrease in the factory jobs and increase in technological skills required to perform even simple tasks. For the sake of this study, I will define inner-city youths as youths between the ages of 16-24 who live in the concentrated areas of higher poverty and sometimes higher crimes rates of the large metropolitan cities of United States such as Washington, DC. The majority of these residents are blacks, although a smaller percentage of Whites and Hispanics may populate these neighborhoods. This study will refer inner-city youths as Black Americans living in the ghettos of Washington, DC. The other term that is coined around the inner-city youths is "disconnected youths" as youths who are not enrolled in school or employed anywhere.

The following table displays the disparity of unemployment rates between Whites, Blacks, Latinos, Asians and others. Despite the fact that the economy has shown a great improvement in the past four years, the unemployment rates among blacks remains disproportionately very high in comparison to Whites and Asians. The Blacks' unemployment rate has improved since the economic recession of 2008. The table shows the employment status of the civilian non-institutional population of the ages 16 to 24 years from 2012 to 2015. The tables show the unemployment rates from year 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively as follows; Blacks: 28.6, 28.6, 24.8 and 20.7; Asians: 14.4, 15.0, 10.9, and 10.7; Whites: 14.9; 13.9, 12.2 and 10.3. Although the table represents the unemployment rates of the United States, it is a true representative of unemployment rates of Blacks in Washington, DC. The unemployment rates of Blacks are twice as much that of Whites and Asians.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2012-2015

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2012-2015

[Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	July 2012	July 2013	July 2014	July 2015
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population	38,799	38,861	38,735	38,589
Civilian labor force	23,472	23,506	23,437	23,162
Participation rate	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.0
Employed	19,461	19,684	20,085	20,333
Employment-population ratio	50.2	50.7	51.9	52.7
Unemployed	4,011	3,821	3,353	2,829
Looking for full-time work	3,074	2,819	2,460	2,134
Looking for part-time work	937	1,002	893	695
Unemployment rate	17.1	16.3	14.3	12.2
Not in labor force	15,327	15,355	15,298	15,426
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population	19,554	19,587	19,527	19,442
Civilian labor force	12,355	12,283	12,335	12,011
Participation rate	63.2	62.7	63.2	61.8
Employed	10,140	10,127	10,470	10,488
Employment-population ratio	51.9	51.7	53.6	53.9
Unemployed	2,215	2,156	1,865	1,523
Looking for full-time work	1,785	1,665	1,437	1,195
Looking for part-time work	430	491	428	328
Unemployment rate	17.9	17.6	15.1	12.7
Not in labor force	7,199	7,303	7,191	7,431
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population	19,245	19,274	19,208	19,147
Civilian labor force	11,117	11,223	11,102	11,151
Participation rate	57.8	58.2	57.8	58.2
Employed	9,321	9,557	9,614	9,846
Employment-population ratio	48.4	49.6	50.1	51.4

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2012-2015

[Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	July 2012	July 2013	July 2014	July 2015
Unemployed	1,796	1,665	1,488	1,306
Looking for full-time work	1,289	1,154	1,023	939
Looking for part-time work	507	511	465	367
Unemployment rate	16.2	14.8	13.4	11.7
Not in labor force	8,128	8,052	8,106	7,996
White				
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,956	28,866	28,718	28,488
Civilian labor force	18,213	18,205	18,137	17,735
Participation rate	62.9	63.1	63.2	62.3
Employed	15,498	15,679	15,917	15,903
Employment-population ratio	53.5	54.3	55.4	55.8
Unemployed	2,715	2,525	2,220	1,832
Looking for full-time work	2,019	1,814	1,612	1,308
Looking for part-time work	696	711	607	524
Unemployment rate	14.9	13.9	12.2	10.3
Not in labor force	10,743	10,661	10,581	10,754
Black or African American				
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,971	5,997	5,973	5,916
Civilian labor force	3,256	3,225	3,160	3,337
Participation rate	54.5	53.8	52.9	56.4
Employed	2,323	2,315	2,376	2,645
Employment-population ratio	38.9	38.6	39.8	44.7
Unemployed	933	910	784	691
Looking for full-time work	783	771	591	604
Looking for part-time work	150	139	192	87
Unemployment rate	28.6	28.2	24.8	20.7
Not in labor force	2,715	2,772	2,813	2,580
Asian				
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,922	2,028	2,044	2,148

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2012-2015
 [Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	July 2012	July 2013	July 2014	July 2015
Civilian labor force	839	934	936	957
Participation rate	43.7	46.1	45.8	44.6
Employed	718	794	834	855
Employment-population ratio	37.4	39.2	40.8	39.8
Unemployed	121	140	102	102
Looking for full-time work	83	81	70	68
Looking for part-time work	38	59	32	34
Unemployment rate	14.4	15.0	10.9	10.7
Not in labor force	1,083	1,094	1,109	1,191
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population	8,164	8,229	8,313	8,406
Civilian labor force	4,658	4,756	4,675	4,728
Participation rate	57.1	57.8	56.2	56.2
Employed	3,799	3,897	3,903	4,127
Employment-population ratio	46.5	47.4	47.0	49.1
Unemployed	860	859	772	601
Looking for full-time work	698	622	560	458
Looking for part-time work	162	238	212	143
Unemployment rate	18.5	18.1	16.5	12.7
Not in labor force	3,506	3,473	3,637	3,679

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Source: www.bls.gov.

This study examines a solution that can address the issue of higher unemployment rates among the inner-city youths. The research introduces MAPP as a strategy that can address the unemployment and underemployment rates of inner-city youths at an individual level.

MAPP

There are several studies that have shown that mentoring has been proven to improve the outcomes of inner-city youths. For example, increase high school graduation rates, the decrease in teen

pregnancy, decrease in gang participation, and increase in college enrollment. There is no question that mentoring works. Rhodes (1994) suggested, "Given their apparent benefits, efforts have been made to replicate these natural helping relationships through volunteer mentoring programs for at-risk youth. Hundreds of mentoring programs essentially modeled after Big Brothers Big Sisters prototype, have emerged in the past few years." (p.188). However, there is a very limited research on utilizing mentoring for career planning and selection for inner-city youths. This study introduces MAPP as a strategy to address higher unemployment rates among inner-city youths by utilizing mentoring to prepare for career planning and selection. MAPP is defined as Mentoring, Ability, Pay, and Passion.

As a Program Coordinator of a mentoring organization in Washington, DC, I work directly with the inner-city youths. Part of my job is to identify, recruit, and match the compatible mentees and mentors. The mentors do an outstanding job in guiding the mentees in their lives. I have seen the lives of the children change from getting all F's to becoming an honor roll student within a year or a couple of months. My favorite story is John (not real name) at the age of 13; he had joined the gang, and using drugs, and was carrying a gun. John is the oldest child of five from a different relationship. Mom lives in a tiny two-bedroom apartment with a boyfriend and five younger kids. John felt out of place; John did not feel the love from mom. Mom did not have a one to one attention with him. He felt mom's boyfriend did not like him. So he found attention somewhere else in a gang. To make the matters worse John is very introverted, he is unable to express his frustrations. John's mother is not a type to win a mother of the year award. For the most of the day, she does not know where John is. Nevertheless, she realized John needs additional support from the mentoring organization. Along came Mr. Jones (not real name), a retired 73 years old affluent White man from the wealthy suburb of Chevy Chase in Washington, DC. In the beginning, John did not want to go out with Mr. Jones. A year later little John shared with Mr. Jones that the reason he did not want to go out with him at the beginning of the mentoring relationship because he was in a gang, and he had a gun. Mr. Jones is very faithful, he spends every Saturday morning with him, and sometimes he goes to John's school to work with his teachers about his studies. A year later John is an honor roll student; he does not use drugs, not in the gang. He recently asked Mr. Jones; would you drive me to college? When I turn 18 will you still be my big brother? In answering the two questions yes, if Mr. Jones is still able he can drive John to college, and he will still be his big unofficial big brother. Here is the problem MAPP is trying to address, according to the organization's policies. The mentoring relationship must come to an end when the child graduates from high school or when they reach the age of 18, whichever comes first. A lot of time the mentees have not fully transitioned to the work place or college and, therefore, are left in a limbo. Some mentors continue the relationship without the agency's supervision, but most mentors continue to do other things, and some mentors will take on new children. MAPP strategy can be used to fill the gap by providing the smooth transitioning to adulthood. In traditional mentoring, mentors guide younger people. According to Rhodes (1994), "The term mentoring has generally been used to describe a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and an unrelated, younger protégée. The mentor typically provides ongoing guidance, instruction, and encouragement." (P.188). There is no argument that mentoring has many benefits with positive outcomes on the mentees. MAPP will go one step further by providing a focused mentoring that is focused on preparing the young mentees in entering the workforce.

MAPP is the process of mentoring with a focus in career development and selection by utilizing **Mentoring** to identify the **Ability** and the **Passion** of the **Mentee** to plan for a **Paying** career. This is how MAPP process will work. In addition to their roles as traditional mentors in guiding the mentee in a right path, the mentors will be trained to work with the mentees at a very early age in identifying their abilities and passions in life. After identifying the abilities and passion, the mentors explore different careers that will fit in the abilities and the passion of the mentees. Then, together the mentor and

mentee select at least three possible career paths that will result into a career. After identifying these careers the mentor's responsibility is to participate in weekly activities that will culminate to the chosen career paths at the end of the match. MAPP will be an essential link for inner-city youths because there are not enough resources in the inner-city neighborhoods that can facilitate the youth's transition to the workforce.

Rankin & Quane (2000) suggested,

Several forms of social capital defined as social network resources that support individuals in their efforts to realize their goals, are thought to be lacking in high poverty socially disorganized neighborhoods. First, weakly organized neighborhoods often suffer from a defeat of effective community norms. Such that residents are exposed to cultural socialization and role modelling that reinforces non-normative attitudes and behavior. In this climate, not only are youth and adults alike less likely to internalize conventional attitudes towards education, steady employment, and family stability. (p.142).

In conclusion, this study finds that the issues of unemployment and underemployment of inner-city youths cannot easily be solved by federal or local policies. The changes must be started at an individual level. It is difficult to remove the inner-city youths from the neighborhoods they grew up. Unfortunately, most of these neighborhoods do not provide the environment that facilitates better career planning and selection for the inner-city youths. Therefore, MAPP strategy can be one of the long-term solutions as the career planning and selections start at a very young age before the effects of neighborhood are fully embedded in inner-city youths.

References

- Case, A. C., & Katz, L. F. (1991). The company you keep: The effects of family and neighborhood on disadvantaged youths
- Holzer, H. J., & Offner, P. (2006). Trends in the employment outcomes of young black men, 1979–2000. Black males left behind, 11-38.
- Pager, D. (2003). The Mark of a Criminal Record. *American journal of sociology*, 108(5), 937-975.
- Rankin, B. H., & Quane, J. M. (2000). Neighborhood poverty and the social isolation of inner-city African American families. *Social Forces*, 79(1), 139-164.
- Rhodes, J. E. (1994). Older and wiser: Mentoring relationships in childhood and adolescence. *Journal of primary prevention*, 14(3), 187-196.
- Wilson, W. J. (2012). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. University of Chicago Press.