



Influence of Educational Leaders on Graduate Students' Perspectives and the Academic Advisement Process at a University

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Abstract

University leaders can support academic advising as an interactive process in which the adviser helps students set and achieve academic goals, acquire relevant information and services, and make responsible decisions consistent with their interests, goals, abilities, and degree requirements. The study adopted qualitative narrative inquiry research design. The data were collected via a semi-structured questionnaire administered to six faculty member on one-on-one basis and their students were also sent interview questions electronically for completion from January 25, 2019 February 25, 2019. The results revealed that Doctoral programs generally attract such students who are highly motivated to attain advanced degrees and who are willing to participate fully in the advisement process. Graduate students re-enhanced when they received appropriate academic advising at all stages of a doctoral degree program. Students were need of effective advising process at all times from being recruited, to career planning after graduation.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduce the problem

University leaders must know and address students' advising needs with conversations with student advisors which may vary as students move through the doctorate program and students' advising needs may vary depending on the type of program students are pursuing. Advising needs can be met either by one advisor or by several advisors (Glennen, 2003). University leaders should ensure that there is a current handbook that is standards-driven with consistent policy and procedures on hand for advisement at the university for all advisees. A review of the handbook and expectations should be shared with advisee during student development activities (Cooperrider, Whitneyb& Stavros, 2003).

Problem Statement. University Leaders should be aware of dropout signs on campus and should work collaboratively with faculty to decrease these possibilities. Some students consider dropping out of graduate school, because they realize that a doctoral degree does not support their long-term goals. If advisees feel that the graduate degree is not in alignment with their professional aspirations, then it is worth considering changing paths according to some student advisees. The demands of doctorate graduate studies are higher than those of master's studies in college. Many students probably have some all-nighters, and will work long hours for extended periods of time, and student's do not get well-deserved breaks at the end of each semester (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2004).

Nearly 40-60 percent of doctoral students do not finish programs of study at many universities across the United States. Bright students, who do well in college, are sometimes overwhelmed by the scope of their projects in graduate school based on the views of students. Therefore, after years of frustration, tens of thousands of doctoral students consider dropping out of graduate school annually (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2004). The question that some students asked should 'I stay or should I go? (Gold, 2000) University leaders must know that students do not drop out of graduate school because they are not smart enough to finish, so what are some causes why students drop-out of graduate programs? Research suggests that some reasons for dropping out of college are related to time management problems, conflicts with dissertation advisor/committee members and director of the graduate program. There are views by some students that the dissertation does not have a relevant story to interest, individual exhaustion or burnout, encounter a big problem writing up the dissertation, lost of interest in the research topic, not able to secure data or secure data timely, and sometimes having a feeling of isolation between work and college work (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2004).

This study focused its purpose on the essence of "great advisement" in which the advisor can let students know that they can talk about anything. Advisors must create

inclusive, trustworthy, non-judgmental, safe spaces and be confidential. Further, the advisor needs to disrupt negative narratives about ability and identity and reframe these by helping students to see and acknowledge previously unrecognized strengths. Students will come away with a new sense of agency, confidence and ability to self-advocate (Anderson & Swazey, 1998).

University leaders could encourage advisors to employ “compassionate candor” should be a practice executed by all advisors. Being honest, authentic, and transparent in one's care for the student, while still asking the tough questions or challenging other matters on the student's perceptions is a practice that will enhance the advisement process. Being part of great advising teams where individual strengths and creative talents are leveraged to make one better than what could be on our own is a second great practice. Toward a theory of doctoral persistence suggests that advisors are stronger by working together for students are a third practice. The effective advisor should be able to connect students with small, unique, out of the way opportunities that are the perfect fit for each student. The advisor can expand choices and options for students once advisors learn about the needs and interests of student advisees. By creating spaces where students can be themselves and view students as capable and being resilient, advisors can show students of how strong they are and this will help students to build their self- confidence (Johnson & Pasquini, 2014).

Each student and every advising interaction is unique. A great advisor responds by adapting their style, technique and strategies to meet individual needs and situations of the advisee. The advisor sees every interaction as an opportunity to get better. Great advisors know how to ask the right questions, in the right way, and at the right time. Again, it is important to recognize the uniqueness of each student in terms of background, interests, pressures and goals and deliver resources that would suit the student advisee's needs. It is important that the advisor advisee relationship is reciprocal and that one can teach and learn new things from each other (Lowe & Toney, 2000).

This study was established to look at the perspectives that advisors and advisees have and how advisees' express narrative information based on preceded services rendered by their advisors. The researchers in this study used one-on-one, open-ended qualitative interviews designed to explore advisors' perspectives. Students were sent interview questions electronically for their responses. Once data in the form of transcripts, field notes, or artifacts were collected, the researchers uncovered the meaning of data using a thematic approach that would be an outgrowth of answering questions that would contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of interest for this specific research.

There is a long history about developmental advising. By using the developmental theory framework, the advisor considers the student as a whole person by learning about his or her skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, emotional needs, self-esteem, and coping

mechanisms. These advising interactions characterize a process experienced through multiple perspectives (i.e., by the advisor and by the student) within complex systems (Raushi, 1993). To meet the needs of a student, educational leaders believe that an advisor must readily assume various roles and, therefore, knowing one's own personal strengths, weaknesses, and values (Creamer, 2000). Under the developmental framework, the advising relationship involves advisor learning about and understanding the needs of the student advisee. Educational leaders believe that the developmental advising model holds that the academic advisor and the advisee are partners in educational discoveries in which responsibility is shared between the participants. Developmental advising is and has continued to be one of the most fundamental and comprehensive approaches to academic advising (Grites & Gordon, 2000). Developmental theory also embodies advisor self-awareness. Also, under the developmental framework, the advising relationship involves advisor learning about and understanding the advisee (Thomas, 2012).

As stated previously, too many doctoral students do not finish programs of study at a number of universities across the United States and this is a problem. When doctoral students do not finish the doctoral program, it results in loss of time, talent, self-esteem, finances for the university, and the faculty and doctoral students themselves. By observing this problem, university leaders can see from assessment data on graduation rates trendily that there are too many doctoral students who have failed to earn a degree after entering doctoral degree programs and these students are considered non-completers (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2004). There are five research questions for this study; however, the overarching research question leading this qualitative narrative study was: Do graduate student advisees have the same perspective on advisement as faculty members? This study was limited to one comprehensive university, one department, one semester collection of data, graduate students in the doctoral degree program, and dissertation advisors. It was assumed that all of the participants answered all questions objectively and honestly.

The quality of education that graduate students receive is greatly enhanced if students receive appropriate academic advising at all stages of students' experiences in the doctorate program based on research findings in literature review data. Students need effective advising at all times: when being recruited, starting first when registering, support at all stages in the program, and when students are graduating and looking for a job (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). University leadership must know and address students advising needs with conversations with student advisors which may vary as students move through the doctorate program and students' advising needs may vary depending on the type of program students are pursuing. Advising needs can be met either by one advisor or by several advisors (Glennen, 2003).

According to Grites (2013), developmental advising is and should continue to be one of the most fundamental and comprehensive approaches to academic advising for the following reasons: 1) . Developmental academic advising is not a theory, but instead it is a method put into practice, an advising strategy (i.e., a way of doing advising), 2). It is holistic. This advising model includes the education and development of students, acknowledging that areas such as future career goals, personal aspects, education, and so on, cannot be treated independently but indeed impacts all aspects of students' academic experiences, 3). Developmental academic advising is based on a students' growth (success). Growth takes place among all students and that growth needs to be positive. This is true of all students, even among those regarded as not being well prepared for college as others, 4). This practice is a shared activity, because both student and advisor can contribute to this effort to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to take advantage of all advisement services.

Another type and well known method of prescriptive advising which is mainly a narrowly focused on a student's academic degree plan (Jeschke, Johnson, & Williams, 2001). "Prescriptive advising is generally initiated by the student because the goal of this approach is to address immediate questions to facilitate the student's progress through his/her academic program; it is often referred to as the doctor-patient relationship model" (Crookston, 2009, p. 80). Prescriptive advising sessions are more structured than a developmental advising session and the intention is to provide accurate academic support. In essence, student advisees are given the same set of questions such as a closed end type and that limits students' ability to personalize their needs during advisement sessions (Yarbrough, 2012).

Educational leaders set the tone at the University for Others to follow to ensure student success. The advisor plays a virtual role to ensure the success of students academically, socially and professionally by rendering effective and needed advisement (Daring, 2015. The advisor should: 1). Provide guidance throughout the duration of the academic program and assist with career growth opportunities for students who have graduated from the doctoral degree program; 2). Be sensitive to cultural, medical, legal, housing, visa, language, financial, or other personal problems experienced by advisees and to be aware, sensitive, and provide appropriate support to advisees (Pearson, Evans & Macauley, 2004). 3). Serve as intellectual and professional mentor to graduate student advisees. 4). Provide knowledgeable support concerning the academic and non-academic policies that pertain to graduate students. 5). Help to prepare students advisee to be competitive for employment in the area of study in which student advisees qualify. 6). Assist in determining the advisee's educational goals and needs upon starting the doctoral degree program of study. 7). Serve as an educational advisor and/or professional mentor for student advisees. 8). Determine the needs of student advisees with the support and input of advisees. Maintain awareness and sensitivity to the level of compatibility between the student advisees in terms of academic, professional, and

personal interests and needs. 9). Facilitate a change of advisor or program, if deemed appropriate for student advisees.10). Monitor the advisee's overall academic program progress and be sensitive to signs of academic difficulty and provide an intervention to assist the advisee (Maki, 2004).

The relationship between doctoral degree students and their advisor has far reaching implications and consequences for the advisee (Minor 2003). An advisor, generally speaking, is thought to be one of the most important people with whom doctoral students will interact with during the degree program experience. The advisor helps advisees' socialization skills and mind set at the doctoral level i.e. present at conferences, participates in research projects and publish research articles. All advising expectations should be clearly defined from what the faculty members' responsibilities and the expectations of students are for student success (Lowe & Toney, 2000). However, what is more important in the realm of expectations, individual student specific needs must always be addressed during the rendering of advisement services. Given the diversity of students' needs, each university and indeed each individual program must determine the best ways to provide effective advising services to all students (Barnes, 2005). Each program should prepare a document available to students and faculty that describes the program's view on good advising practices. Each program should have a clear policy and procedures in place on how effective graduate school advising is assessed and rewarded (Pasquini, 2013). At the graduate doctorate level, a commitment by advisors involve attention to several activities: (1) assessing advisees' needs, (2) helping students progress, (3) helping students find researchable dissertation topics, (4) helping advisees to cope with failure, and (5) helping student advisees select committee members and being successful completing the doctoral degree program by earning the Ed.D from the university (Barnes, 2005).

Role of the Advisee. It is important that all student advisees to know what are the responsibilities for advisees who are participating in the doctoral degree program as given below:1). Expect to devote an appropriate amount of time and energy toward achieving academic excellence and earning the advanced degree; 2). Read and become familiar with the regulations and policies concerning graduate studies as described in school bulletins, departmental and program brochures; 3). Be aware of time constraints and other demands imposed on faculty members and program staff; 4). Be prepared to take the initiative in finding answers to questions and in planning one's research 5). Communicate regularly with faculty advisors, including the period after completion of coursework, and be available for regular meetings; and 6). Alert the advisor about uncertainties that may have been about program requirements, normal progress, and performance expectations by the advisee (Smith & Allen, 2014).

Types of Domains in Advisement. In the service and support of advisement, advisors usually at various times use a combination of domains for advisement as listed: 1)

Integration - addresses student's academic interests, career and life goals. 2). Referral - inform students about campus resources to assist with academic and non-academic concerns. 3). Information - share in written form degree requirements based on policy and procedures. 4). Individualization - look at the specific needs of students and try to assist students individually. 5). Shared Responsibility - encourage faculty advisors and student advisees to assume responsibility of educational advisement services being rendered through collaborative problem solving and decision-making skills for academic improvement for all student advisees. These domains are useful, because students have different needs at various times (Smith & Allen, 2014).

What is Great Advisement? There are many ways to cite great advisement. However, the greatest implementation of effective advisement is when student's needs are met academically, socially, and professionally toward their current learning goals. Let students know that they can talk about anything across any discipline (Barnes, Williams & Stassen, 2007). Advisors must create inclusive, trustworthy, non-judgmental, access safe spaces and be confidential. Advisors must continue to look to improve themselves and their advising abilities through continuous professional development activities (Minor, 2003).

Great advisors are able to connect students with small, unique, out of the way opportunities that are the perfect fit for each student. The advisor will expand choices and options for students regarding available resources on campus to enhance student learning. The advisor would create spaces where students can be themselves and they view students as capable and resilient and they remind students of how strong they are not how weak they are. A great advisor will find students' strengths and use those strengths to help students achieve their learning goals in an appreciative manner (Bloom, Hutson & He, 2008). When rendering effective advisement, the advisor will be able to see things from the student's perspective. The advisor will make the University a smaller and a more comfortable place by being a real person; something as simple as remembering a student's name can make a huge impact or remembering student's research interest. It is evident that the advisor professionally care about students and enjoys working to help every student succeed toward their goal (Cooper, 2001).

Each student and every advising interaction is unique. A great advisor responds by adapting their style, technique and strategies to meet individual needs and situations. The advisor sees every interaction as an opportunity to get better. From a historically perspective, great advisors will recognize the uniqueness of each student in terms of background, interests, pressures and goals and deliver resources that suit the individual's needs (Anderson & Swazey, 1998).

Historically, a well-informed advisor will ask the simple but totally illuminating questions that no one has asked before such as how can I help you. A mindful and intentional approach that can create opportunities for students to open up and trust the

advisor with truly sensitive matters and in return the advisor will provide undoubted and sincere support. Great advisors will approach student interactions with genuine curiosity. Advisor will give students the opportunity to talk about whatever interests them (Baird 1995). Great advisors see every session as a way to personally connect and provide individualized support and attention. Also, great advisors will operate from a humble place, letting the student's story unfold - listening and responding with sensitivity, awareness and empathy. Advisors admire students and believe in them. Great advisors also know that every student has their own unique story and challenges and will do everything possible to create opportunity, encouragement and build confidence in each advisee. Advising is collaboration and gives opportunity to confirm students' choices and interests and to reassure students that they are as smart and capable as everyone around them. Effective advisors know that advising is part of a discovery process; over time students get a better sense of who they are, how they learn, where they fit in, who they are going to be, and how to do their best (Barnes, 2005).

Advisors know that every student has the potential to succeed and they use a combination of questioning, empathy, cheerleading, and tough love to help students grow. Great advisors listen, are engaged, and facilitate a supportive community for students. Advisors also recognize that one cannot do it alone; collaboration with faculty, students and staff is key. Great advisors are compassionate and caring in their responses to students' needs. Advisors take the time to ask the simple questions no one has asked before and to ensure student advisees are able to understand policy and procedures regarding, for example, dissertation expectations and processes. Students leave feeling empowered, grounded and like advisors have new solutions and options, because students would know about the whys, whens, whats, hows and the whos as an outgrowth of great advisement (Crookston, 2009). In order to improve advisement services to students, university leadership must promote excellence in services to students by requiring that within each department or program that minimum advising expectations be set for both advisor and advisee. Second, advisement services must be monitored for quality assurance. Such minimum expectations must be implemented for all academic and doctoral programs, and between different types of advisement within academic programs and research projects produced by student advisees (Minor, 2003).

Great advisement should cause the university leadership and advisors to disrupt negative narratives about ability, identity and reframe these by helping students discover and acknowledge previously unrecognized strengths. With this type of practice by the leadership of the university and advisors, students will come away with a new sense of agency, confidence and ability to self-advocate. The university leadership must be able to monitor and communicate to faculty and graduate student advisees on an annual basis at the start of each academic year about general and overall expectations for student success by assessing student learning and receiving feedback from students based on students' experiences (Schuh, 2008). Student advisees must have easy access to

the web and/or current handbook related to the expectations advisor and advisee's role and responsibilities to ensure student success. Knowing too, that the advisor advisee relationship can be reciprocal and that each can teach and learn new things from each other. Remembering too, that great advisors know how to ask the right questions, in the right way and at the right time to increase student learning in a positive manner (Troxel, 2008).

2. Method

2.1. Research design

Qualitative research according to Aiken-Wisniewski, Smith & Troxel (2010) offers the following comments about the nature of qualitative research in a specific manner. Once data in the form of transcripts, field notes, or artifacts are collected, researchers must uncover the meaning of these data items for answering questions and contributing to the body of knowledge of research in the area of interest. The qualitative data from this study came from a small investigation of how doctoral advisors successfully guided doctoral advisees in the doctoral degree program and the voices of students' advisees about services received. Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, the advisors could see their advising role when working with doctoral degree students being important in a more definitive manner.

The Qualitative Research Questions:

*RQ1: **How** does your advisor help you to cope with responsibilities in and out of college while meeting your academic goals?*

*RQ 2: **How** would you describe your prior academic preparation and current academic development experiences in the doctoral degree program?*

*RQ 3: **How** would you describe your relationship building skills with your dissertation advisor?*

*RQ 4: **How** would you describe how your advisor discussed professional goals with you?*

*RQ 5: **What** do you see as the most critical responsibilities as an advisor to students?*

Qualitative questions based on the words and actions of people who become participants for this study are further discussed in the findings. The researchers engaged individuals in conversations, observed their practices, behaviors, and gathers relevant information to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or process from a human perspective on advisement as given by faculty participants and how the advisement was received by advisees perceptively (Aiken-Wisniewski, Smith & Troxel, 2010).

This qualitative narrative inquiry research was used to identify as real-world measurability by the researchers. Narrative inquiry, a relatively new qualitative methodology, is the study of individuals' experiences which is expressed in a narrative format. It is a way of thinking about, and studying the experiences of others expressed

by, in this case, participants in the study. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). Qualitative narrative inquiry interviewing is a powerful data collection method for several reasons. The qualitative narrative inquiry approach gives subtle textures of thoughts and feelings of the participants in the study. The researchers secured the written or spoken words of the sample of participants (graduate students and faculty advisors) in this study. This qualitative study used the what, when and how in communicating advisees' experiences related to faculty advisement. These approaches typically focused on the lived experiences of individual participants as told through their own stories (Thomas, 2012).

Qualitative inquiry data used in this study came from a small investigative sample of n=29 advisees having doctoral advisors who guided advisees in this terminal degree program and being able to hear the voices of student advisees from a comprehensive university about services received as recorded. Given the exploratory nature of the research questions used in this study, it was important to effectively show how advisors saw and rendered services in their advising role and how advisees preceded the services rendered by advisors.

In Qualitative Research, Aiken-Wisniewski, Smith & Troxel (2010) offered the following comments about the nature of qualitative research. Qualitative question based on the words and actions of people who become participants or respondents for a study generates the validity of the study. The researchers engaged with individuals in conversations, observed their practices and behaviors, and gathered relevant information to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or process from a human perspective is key to this study. The reliability of qualitative research is a concept that refers to producing consistent results time after time as the outgrowth of similar research being implemented (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

2.2. Collection and analysis of the data

The researchers conducting qualitative research were guided by a constructivist paradigm, the research in this study involved one-on-one, open-ended qualitative interviews designed to explore advisors' thoughts of services rendered. Students were also sent interview questions electronically for completion. Data were collected from January 25, 2019 February 25, 2019. The six (6) faculty participants for this study were faculty members in one state at a comprehensive university located in the Mid-western region of the United States who teach and advise doctorate level students. Most faculty members as advisors have taught eight to twelve years in the doctorate program at the university. Most advisors in this study have witness having about 92% of advisees graduate from the doctoral degree program during their advisement time with students. The other 8% of students who did not graduate during the advisors' tenure were mostly for personal, family concerns and financial matters. However, as a follow-up, about 8% of students returned to the university fall 2019. In discussing the perceptions of advisors'

responsibilities, participants indicated three areas in which faculty advisors tried to help student advisees: 1). helping student advisees to be successful, 2). to develop students as effective academic researchers, 3). and to develop students as professionals in the area of educational leadership to serve in positions at the building and district level in public school settings.

Data collected were linked to the research questions in this study. Open coding was used and common themes were found. Themes were developed based on advisor's responsibilities, advisor's functions, and the behavior of the advisor/advisees' responsibilities. Date of Survey Completion. Each faculty member teaching in the doctorate program may advise between 5 or more advisees annually. For example, some faculty participants in this study have advised and witness 22 graduating doctorate candidates that were advised between (2001-2019). However, in this specific study, there was a total of 29 doctorate students as advisees and as participants in this study during spring 2019. Instrumentation: The research method employed in this study involved electronically submitted open-ended survey questions and in-depth qualitative interviews designed to explore advisors' perspectives of advisement rendered to graduate students. Ideas for the survey questions came from the Hendrix Academic Survey. Because of participants' busy schedules, the researchers submitted information to participants electronically, too.

2.3. Validation of Narrative Inquiry

When using narrative inquiry, the research stands alone on its own merit based on the voices of the participants and based on their own experiences. Hence, the essence of reliability for qualitative research lies with consistency. Validity in qualitative research means "appropriateness" of the tools, processes, and data. This research study has value based on what participants think of their own encountered experiences while being in the doctoral program as advisees and faculty members being advisors to doctoral student advisees (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3. Findings

The findings in this qualitative narrative inquiry study addressed how faculty advising was both positive and needing improvement as a critical factor in doctoral student attrition. This research used a very small sample n=29 doctorate candidate participants' who gave their perception on academic advising in four domains overall that included: (i) academic advisement relationship building, (ii) advisee perception development, (iii) personal growth, and (iv) professional goals. The six (6) faculty academic advisors to explore perspectives using three domains: 1. advisors' perceived responsibilities, 2.

advisors' function and 3. characteristics/behaviors of the advisor and their relationship toward advisees.

Advisees and Advisors' Voices

The voices of graduate doctoral students were commonly communicated under four major themes and two major themes for advisors in a repeated manner regarding the following information for advisees and advisors. The themes given below were used to conclude the group thinking of both advisees and advisors as applied in this study (Guest & MacQueen, 2012).

Support System and Work Schedule

RQ1: How does your advisor help you to cope with responsibilities in and out of college while meeting your academic goals?

- As a student, I did not always have clear milestones or a strong structured support system at the graduate level in my opinion.
- Like many first year graduate students, I was ambitious and wanted to impress supervisor; therefore, so I would work sometimes 12-14 hour days, and I worked on most weekends too and needed to balance work with graduate studies and it was very difficult. I guess that I did not contact my advisor as often as I should have, but wanted more feedback from the advisor timelier. I realized too, that the advisor was working with other students.
- After taking all courses and the comprehensive examine, I was exhausted, but had made little progress on my research ideas. I was sometimes disappointed with my performance because in spite of working long hours, I was not able to generate data for the dissertation proposal, but the advisor made one feel that it was possible to think how data could be collected after I had received approval to conduct my research.

Prior Preparation

RQ 2: How would you describe your prior academic preparation and current academic development experiences in the doctoral degree program?

- I had performed well in college at the master's degree level, but I did not know how to succeed in a research environment. I saw some peers (who had perfect GPAs in college) struggle as well, and I started to realize that the problem was not that I was not smart enough to get a Ed.D. The reason I was frustrated, was that college did not prepare me for a terminal graduate degree.

Self-Discipline and Confidence

RQ 3: How would you describe your relationship building skills with your dissertation advisor?

- Overall, I felt that I have a good working relationship with the advisor. My advisor was very busy a lot working with other students, but I found the advisor to be flexible in meeting me in person and/or online most of the time. I did feel that the advisor was encouraging and wanted me to believe that I had the ability to complete the doctorate degree, if I would be more discipline with my work. The advisor had me to set up a time-management schedule that was realistic for me follow per week while working on my research.
- In order to complete a graduate-level dissertation, you need to be your own project manager and be discipline in time-management early and later in the process. You need to have the confidence to resolve disputes with your dissertation chair. These are skills that almost nobody learns in college.

Needs of Students

RQ 4: How would you describe how your advisor discussed professional goals with you?

- My advisor would say that is important to have professional goals every five years, because there are a lot of opportunities for grow career wise. I will always remember that my advisor would say whatever you want to do," always learn from the best." Students need more help early with the dissertation for all chapters especially how to write out chapter four. I believe that students need to have very early more and effective academic advisee perception development regarding personal growth toward a career and how the Ed.D degree will benefit students professionally. The advisor would say that the Ed.D degree will give you "choices" if you wish to take those choices for career opportunities in leadership in an educational environment at the district level and elsewhere.

Faculty Advisors

- The six (6) faculty academic advisors explored their perspectives using three domains: 1). advisors' perceived responsibilities, 2). advisors' function and 3). characteristics/behaviors of the advisor/advisee relationship.

Advisors as Participants

- Being given many words to describe self as related to advisement from their experiences are as follows: Mentor, Sponsor, Teacher, Being Resourceful; Supporter, Illustrator, Mentor; Coach, Presenter; Sponsor, Counselor, Demonstrator; Sharing Individual, Peer Information and Resourceful, Sponsor, Teacher. From this list most faculty advisors saw themselves as sponsors.

Voices of the Advisors

RQ 5: What do you see as the most critical responsibilities as an advisor to students?

- **1). Make every point to try to meet advisees' needs to help them to succeed. 2). Articulate the advisor's and collaborative role of the advisee. 3). Show care, support and concern for advisees. 4). Show sensitivity to advisees emotional and academic needs. 5). Reach out to advisees as least two or more times a month to keep them on track. Provide academic support to advisees. 6). Share information with advisees concerning career opportunities.**

Nearly all of the six (6) faculty advisors in this study acknowledged that doctoral advising must be tailored more to the needs of the particular advisee, continuous support based on need should be afforded to all student advisees to ensure student success (Lowe & Toney, 2000). It is important to hear the views of graduate students and faculty members so that advisement services can be improved for students. This study was significant, because it could influence advisement improvement at local university practices and policy expectations for all students receiving advisement face-to-face or remotely. This study also gave a very different perception of what faculty advisors expressed about giving advisement and the perception of student advisees' feelings and thoughts about receiving advisement that was rendered by advisors. One of the findings of this qualitative narrative inquiry study points to faculty advising (both positive and needing improvement) as a critical factor in doctoral student attrition. Faculty members as advisors had the perception that they were student-centered saw self as a teacher, mentor and coach; advises students based on academic need, is available to students, and provides educational resources to students regarding dissertation research.

Overall again, there was a disconnect between what student advisees' perceptions were compared to what faculty advisors thought about their advisement efforts. Furthermore, from the findings there was a great need to improve advisement to student advisees overall early on and make continuation of advisement more effective at the involved university in this study. Second, the findings suggest that there was a great need to improve advisement to student advisees early or more timely during the actual class time not at the end of the course and advisors should be more sensitive to the needs of all advisees individually. The outcome or intent of this research study was to identify findings that have the potential to cite the needed areas of services to improve doctoral advisement quality to students at the university.

4. Results, Discussions and Recommendations

This study deepens the knowledge about the advising relationship in doctoral education. At the same time, it serves as a springboard for further research using a

variety of approaches in advisement to improve student learning (Pascarella, 2006). While this study included faculty members from one and a single discipline, future studies could have a larger sample of participants from a broader number of disciplines at the university or a specific unit i.e. College of Education to see how advisement is viewed from a larger number of participants in a similar study across other university units such as natural science, business, and professional studies.

Most advisors in this study have witness having a high percentage of advisees to graduates from the doctoral degree program under their advisement services to advisees at the comprehensive university. Nevertheless, the voices of the graduates suggested that there is a need to improve advisement efforts with consistency in communication timely and early receipt of information regarding the whole essence of conducting dissertation research and writing the dissertation proposal especially and how to compose the findings for chapter four eventually. If there is more organizational structure for academic advising, the procedures and/or processes could be improved upon among all faculty and there could be less frustration experiences for graduates while being in the program (Habley, 2003). For those students who did not graduate during the advisors' tenure were mostly for personal, family concerns and financial matters. As a follow-up, some of the students, however, returned to the university fall 2019.

For future studies, the researchers could use a mixed method study (Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 2003) or only a quantitative study. The first quantitative phase of a future study could focus on identifying internal and external factors contributing to and/or impeding students' persistence in doctoral degree programs. Second, the researchers could use a cross-sectional survey design, which implies that data will be collected at one point in time and could be used in the study. Third, researchers may collect some quantitative data that could be a self-developed questionnaire or an established questionnaire, containing items of different formats: multiple choices, asking either for one option or all that applies plus being able to examine disciplinary differences in effective and quality advising (Barnes, Williams & Stassen, 2007). Fourth, the researchers could advise graduate students online remotely during COVID-19 or some other crisis by having a one-on-one advisement session with individual students or conduct group advisement using zoom, canvas, blackboard or duo.

The intent of this study was to show what the perceptions of what faculty advisors expressed about giving advisement to doctoral students and the perception of student advisees' feelings and thoughts were about receiving advisement quality that was rendered by advisors. Based on a grounded body of research, there is a broad disconnect of favorability in services rendered based on the voices of some advisees in a number of studies and the researchers in this study also found similar statements from student advisees. However, the researchers conducting this study looked to see the results of

findings from the use of a qualitative set of research questions and common themes that evolved to identify some similar thoughts given by the participants in this study.

It is essential to continue to assess advising services given to student advisees each semester, so that faculty advisors can provide student advisees with the appropriate advisement services needed to ensure student success during the time spent in the doctoral degree program. Perhaps university leaders could ensure too, that more professional development takes place annually on "what does effective advisement look like" for faculty and students at the same time. Because effective advisement is one of the major factors that can contribute to student success and student attrition at the university. The doctoral persistence success factor of program completion and based on national standards being a completer implies that students are successful in obtaining a career in the profession (assistant principals, principals, district-level directors, vice superintendents, district superintendents and college professors and administrators) in which students have been trained as a post follow-up. Being a completer is based on the relevant learner outcomes expected of each student advisee.

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