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PERCEIVED SATISFACTION OF COUNSELING DOCTORAL STUDENTS WITH THEIR DISSERTATION CHAIRPERSON: EXAMINING SELECTION CRITERIA AND CHAIRPERSON BEHAVIORS

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ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED SATISFACTION OF COUNSELING DOCTORAL STUDENTS WITH
THEIR DISSERTATION CHAIRPERSON: EXAMINING SELECTION CRITERIA
AND CHAIRPERSON BEHAVIORS

Cheryl W. Neale-McFall
Old Dominion University, 2011
Chair: Dr. Christine Ward

The relationship between doctoral students and their chairperson has been linked

to students' successful completion of their dissertation and program of study (Gardner,

2009; Lovitts, 2001). It is often the case that failure to complete the dissertation is what

prevents doctoral students from completing their degree. When students do not

successfully complete their degrees, attrition rates rise and programs and students feel the

burden, both financially and as an investment of time. (Bair & Haworth, 2004). Studies

indicate that many students fall short of completing the dissertation, or take much longer

than expected, due to a lack of supervision or mentorship (Garcia, Malott, & Brethower,

1988). Specifically, the single most frequent finding in a meta-synthesis study addressing

doctoral attrition across 118 research studies was that successful degree completion is

related to the amount and quality of contact between a doctoral student and her or his

advisor (Bair & Haworth, 2004). The current study followed a non-experimental survey

research design. The survey was developed by the researcher based on previous literature

on dissertation advising, as well as from themes generalized from a qualitative pilot study

that examined criteria used by recent counseling Ph.D. graduates to select their

dissertation chairperson. The survey assessed counseling doctoral students' and recent

graduates' perceived overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Additionally,

the study examined criteria used by students when selecting their chairperson as well as perceived chairperson behaviors as predictors of overall satisfaction. Demographic variables of the doctoral students were also examined. A sample of counselor education doctoral students (N = 133), both past and present, participated in the current study. Results indicate that the selection criteria component, *Collaborative Style,* and the chairperson behavior components, *Personal Connection* and *Work Style*, were most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Additionally, students who self-selected their dissertation chairs were shown to be more satisfied overall than their counterparts who were assigned their chairperson. Significant differences were not found in the demographic variables. Recommendations for further research and implications of the findings are discussed.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jeffrey McFall, for all of his patience and unconditional love. Thank you for making me smile everyday.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of this dissertation study has been a significant journey, both personally and professionally. I have always maintained that with challenge and risks come extraordinary gains. As a counselor educator, I believe it is of utmost importance to stay abreast of professional research, as well as best practices. With this in mind, the topic of my dissertation was realized. With that said, I would like to thank, first and foremost, my patient and well-read husband, Jeffrey McFall, my biggest supporter. Jeff reminds me of my strengths, even when I am ready to give up, and most of all, he loves me unconditionally. The other special man in my life is my precious pup, Jeep. He makes me smile everyday and he is the best at making sure that by 5:00, I at least take a break from work and take time to feed him and play ball.

As an extension of both my husband and myself, I would like to think our parents. The values that have been instilled in me from my parents, Mark and Bet, include tenacity, loyalty, empathy, and devotion. From my in-laws, Claudia and John and Kirk and Pam, I have learned the power of patience, sincerity, and a sense of peace. I would also like to acknowledge my oldest friend, Frankie Ashley, who has always believed in me and consistently reminds me that I am unique and special.

When I began brainstorming about my dissertation and whom I wanted to work with through this process, I believed that my fit with a dissertation chair was the key to a successful and satisfactory experience. When I chose my advisor, I chose someone who was a role model in both her professional qualities and her ability to balance a home and work life. I chose someone who was challenging, yet supportive, and someone who took

the time to inquire about my personal life in addition to my dissertation work. Dr. Christine Ward is an asset to the counseling program at Old Dominion as well as an exceptional advisor. I look forward to working with her in the future as a colleague. In addition, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Garrett McAuliffe and Dr. Shana Pribesh for their patience, feedback, and professional discussions. Lastly, I would like to thank the counselor educators at Old Dominion University. I am proud to say that I have had the opportunity to work, learn, and collaborate with the brilliant minds in the counselor education department. They have prepared me to think on my own, to appreciate and understand research, and to always keep in mind what is best for the client. I am appreciative of the challenges they have put forth and I will strive to continue to maintain the same level of excellence when I am employed at the next progressive university.

I am blessed to have this opportunity to receive my Ph.D. in counselor education from Old Dominion University. I have thoroughly enjoyed the journey. I am very passionate about the field of counseling and the education of future counselors. My experiences throughout this process will assist me in my future goals, as I set out to live my life to the greatest of my abilities, all the while, keeping my priorities in order and practicing, not just preaching, self-care.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

The process of successfully completing a doctoral program is a multifaceted

journey that depends upon a variety of factors. One key component of degree completion

hinges on the dissertation process. It is well documented in the literature that multiple

invested entities, including the student, faculty, department, and the university, are

affected by the successful completion of a doctoral degree, which stems from the

successful completion of a dissertation (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Garcia,

Malott, & Brethower, 1988; Gardner, 2009; Goulden, 1991; Kritsonis & Marshall, 2009;

Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001).

Doctoral attrition rates in the United States (U.S.) have been measured at 57%

across disciplines (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). More recently, data show that

attrition rates are on a decline for most students in Ph.D. programs; however, those in the

field of humanities fall behind (Inside Higher Ed, 2010). Attrition rates for doctoral

students are a complex issue involving multiple factors. All parties involved are

negatively affected by higher attrition rates and the causes and consequences of this

phenomenon (Bair & Haworth, 2004). Studies indicate that many students fall short of

completing the dissertation or take much longer than expected due to a lack of

supervision or mentorship (Garcia et al., 1988). Specifically, the single most frequent

finding in a meta-synthesis study addressing doctoral attrition across 118 research studies

was that successful degree completion is related to the amount and quality of contact

between a doctoral student and her or his advisor (Bair & Haworth, 2004). Additionally,

research on doctoral attrition specific to the field of counselor education is lacking (Willis & Carmichael, 2011).

The quality of contact between student and advisor specifically refers to the quality of the relationship between the two. For the purpose of this study, advisor and chairperson are used interchangeably. According to Lovitts (2001), the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chair, or advisor, plays a valuable role in determining the success of a completed dissertation. This relationship affects not only students' graduate work, but can also impact students' own work as advisors in the future, as the students adapt their advising based on what was modeled during their own dissertation process (Goulden, 1991). Recently, the Ph.D. Completion Project (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010) recognized the importance of this issue and suggested that, beyond the dissertation process, the success of achieving a doctoral degree depends on students' relationships with their advisor.

Specifically, satisfaction within the student-chairperson advising relationship is positively associated with advisor selection factors and advisor behavior factors (Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007). Research studies (Lovitts, 2001; Protivnak & Foss, 2009) have assessed chairperson behaviors as a factor in influencing satisfaction within the dissertation advising relationship. Chairperson behaviors, such as providing feedback in an efficient and effective manner, seeing the overall relationship in terms of "we" instead of "I," discussing expectations prior to starting the relationship, and even providing assistance for career opportunities, all seem to impact students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson (Bloom, Cuevas, Hall & Evans, 2007; Friedman, 1987; Goulden, 1991; Spillett & Moisiewicz, 2004). Although studies have shown that

chairperson behaviors are related to overall satisfaction, it is unknown which behaviors have the greatest impact. Therefore, the current study examined chairperson behaviors as a predictor of students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

A multitude of books have been written to help students write a dissertation or thesis (Cone & Foster, 2006; Carlin & Perlmutter, 2006). Among the important factors, authors recognize that choosing the dissertation chairperson has a huge impact on the overall dissertation process; however, suggestions for how to choose a chairperson tend to be limited and basic. Suggestions include choosing someone with the same research interests, experience as a chairperson, and based on personal compatibility (Smart & Conant, 1990). Although all of these suggestions may be valuable, books that attest to the perspective of the doctoral student do not seem to exist. More specifically, studies that look at the process of how and why doctoral students select their dissertation chairperson are altogether lacking.

Allowing students to choose, or select, their chairperson gives students a sense of power and accountability (Lenz, 1997). In addition, allowing students to choose their advisor instead of being haphazardly assigned to one increases satisfaction and overall successful completion of a doctoral degree (Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001; Schlosser, Knox, Moskovitz, & Hill, 2003). Specifically, Lovitts (2001) found that participants who chose their dissertation chairperson were six times more likely to successfully complete their degree than students who did not have the option of choosing their chairperson. Although there have been studies that address the importance of students' selecting their own chairperson, there is little research from the students' perspective on how and why they come to make the important decision of whom to choose as their dissertation

chairperson. Therefore, the current study examined students' selection criteria when choosing a dissertation chairperson.

Extant literature also addresses the potential influence of demographic factors on the relationship between doctoral students and their chairperson. In 2008, the Council of Graduate Schools released their first executive summary for the Ph.D. Completion and Attrition Project. This project addressed issues surrounding Ph.D. completion and attrition (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). The first summary of the completion project broke down the demographics of students by cohort, including gender, citizenship, and race/ethnicity. These factors were studied over 12 years (1992-93 through 2003-04) across 30 universities. General results from the study found that completion rates for men (58%) were higher than completion rates for women (55%). Overall, international students complete at a higher rate (67%) than domestic students (54%) across fields and disciplines. Among four racial/ethnic groups of domestic students, White students have the highest completion rate at 55% (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008).

In accordance with the Ph.D. completion and attrition project, it is important to assess and understand how demographic variables influence completion rates. By assessing students' demographic variables such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, as well as doctoral students' selection criteria and chairperson behaviors, this study was able to examine if these constructs predict students' overall satisfaction in the dissertation advising relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess which variables are most influential in predicting satisfaction in the relationship between counseling doctoral students and their dissertation chairperson. More specifically, the purposes of the study were to (a) understand criteria counseling doctoral students use when selecting their chairperson; (b) understand specific chairperson behaviors that influence satisfactory advising relationships; and (c) understand if selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and student demographic variables predict students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson throughout the dissertation process.

Students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson was the dependent variable. The predictor variables for this study included: doctoral students' and recent graduates' criteria for selecting a chairperson; chairperson behaviors; and participants' demographic variables including type of dissertation, age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

This study addressed the lack of research examining what factors counseling doctoral students use when selecting a chairperson, and which chairperson behaviors contribute to a satisfactory relationship between the student and the chair. The relationship between a doctoral student and their chairperson has been linked to students' successful completion of their dissertation and program of study (Gardner, 2009; Goulden, 1991; Kritsonis & Marshall, 2009). Research has given students a few examples of what to look for in a chairperson, such as similar research interests, number of publications, and track record with previous students (Smart & Conant, 1990). Even though literature indicates that the advisor's role in the dissertation process is

fundamental, little scholarly work has examined doctoral students' perceptions of the factors that contribute to a satisfactory dissertation advisory relationship (Spillett & Moisiewicz, 2004). Furthermore, to date, no studies have inclusively examined counseling doctoral students' experiences in selecting a dissertation chairperson, favorable chairperson behaviors, and students' demographic variables in predicting overall satisfaction with their chairperson. Thus, the purpose of this study was to further the knowledge and understanding of the variables that are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

Research Questions

The overall question of *Which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson during the dissertation process?* will be assessed by the following research questions:

RQ1: What selection criteria, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ2: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ3: Do doctoral students' and recent graduates' demographic variables, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and type of study, predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ4: What differences, if any, exist between participants who selected their chairperson and those who were assigned a chairperson on their reports of chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction of their dissertation chairperson?

Significance of the Study

Previous literature states that understanding the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chairperson is essential in determining students' successful completion and defense of the dissertation (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001). Intertwined in this process are the rising attrition rates that have an enormous effect on all individuals involved as evidenced by the potential waste of time and money that the university, department, faculty members, and students all experience (Bair & Haworth, 2004). The current study aimed to fill the gaps in the literature specific to the field of counselor education in order to understand which factors assist in predicting students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. The current study also addressed future recommendations from past studies that focused on the relationship between advisor and advisee and the influence it may have on attrition.

Another implication for this study involved identifying best practices in the selection and chairing processes. Findings from this study have the potential to inform doctoral students and faculty members about factors that contribute to good advising relationships and positive dissertation outcomes. By understanding which selection criteria constructs and chairperson behaviors result in greater satisfaction in the advisor-advisee relationship, both students and faculty may be able to review these criteria, and in turn, make decisions about selection or behaviors that may lead to a favorable dissertation outcome. Results from the current study also have the potential to inform programs of best practices in advising and facilitate critically reflective advising practices by dissertation chairpersons and may provide information to programs on how to decrease doctoral attrition.

Overview of Methodology

A non-experimental survey research design study was conducted and data was gathered from counselor education doctoral students, both past and present. In addition to students who had already proposed their dissertation study, recent graduates (up to 24 months post-graduation) were also included in the study. This inclusion was due to graduates' successful completion of the dissertation process, as well as their perceived ability to view the dissertation process and their dissertation chairperson from selection to final completion. All counselor education doctoral students who had successfully proposed their dissertation up to 24 months post-graduation were eligible to participate in the study. The purpose of the survey was to assess participants' perceptions concerning factors that influenced their selection of a chairperson and behaviors exhibited by the chairperson, in order to predict students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Demographic variables for the participant were also assessed.

Because of the gap in the literature concerning how and why students' select their dissertation chairpersons, the researcher conducted a qualitative study prior to designing the current study. Seven recent counseling Ph.D. graduates from CACREP programs across the nation participated in the qualitative study. The researcher pulled themes from the qualitative study in order to develop the selection criteria section of the survey instrument, as well as a portion of chairperson behavior items, to be used in the current study. Survey construct items including chairperson behaviors, students' overall satisfaction, and demographic variables were created using existing literature.

Limitations and Delimitations

One of the primary limitations of the current study involves participant sampling procedures. The current study aimed to assess counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' perceptions of their relationship with their chairperson. Participants were recruited through emails sent to all potential CACREP program department chairs, as well as a request sent via a counseling list-serve, CESNET. Department chairs were provided with a description of the study, parameters detailing eligible participants, and a copy of the informed consent letter. The post on the list-serve included the purpose, eligibility, and right to withdraw from the study at any time, as well as a direct link to the informed consent. Accordingly, the researcher did not have control over the selection of the participant sample nor have knowledge of the means by which department chairs requested participation from students. It was possible that students may have felt obligated to participate based on the department chairs' request, and, consequently, their report may be skewed. Also, doctoral students who had not successfully proposed their dissertation study were excluded from the participant sampling based on the assumption that their level of satisfaction with their chairperson may not be developed prior to proposing. Additionally, participants' perceptions may have depended on how far along the participant was in the dissertation process (ranging from just proposed to two years post-graduate). The recent graduates may have been biased in their ratings based on the overall outcome of the dissertation, or, for current students, upon their most recent experience with their dissertation chairperson. Thus, individuals' ratings may not have been an accurate representation of the overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson as a whole. Furthermore, due to the potentially sensitive topic of the

relationship with one's chairperson, those who decided to participate in the study may have had strong feelings about their chairperson, either positively or negatively. Therefore, extreme examples of chairperson satisfaction may be evident in the results.

Reliability and validity of the researcher-developed survey instrument is another limitation of the current study. Because the intent of this study was to explore the previously un-researched phenomenon of determining which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson using the variables of selection criteria and chairperson behaviors, the researcher did not propose to establish the psychometric properties of the instrument. Construct validity was also another potential limitation of the current study. When attempting to operationalize the dependent variable of *overall satisfaction*, defining the construct may not have been as clear to participants as it was to the researcher. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if the construct was actually measuring *overall satisfaction.*

Lastly, a delimitation of the study involves the intentional focus on counseling doctoral students' perspectives. This study examined this multidimensional issue from only the perspective of doctoral students, either current or past; therefore, results only inform the literature on the perception of students' selection criteria, perceived chairperson behaviors, and students' overall satisfaction with the chairperson. It is possible that chairpersons may have different perspectives of the advisory relationship and dissertation experience.

Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that all participants understood the instrument and rated items accurately and honestly with minimal influence from social desirability. Additionally, it is assumed that there was a considerable correlation between students' selection criteria and chairperson behaviors as rated by the doctoral students and recent graduates and the actual selection and behaviors of the dissertation chairperson.

Definitions of Terms

Doctoral advisor

A member of a university faculty, also known as a dissertation chair advisor, whose role is to guide a graduate student. Guidance can be done in the form of helping students select coursework, as well as shaping, refining and directing the students' choice on which they will write a dissertation.

Dissertation

A scholarly document demonstrating the doctoral candidates' ability to conduct and publish research, and to enter into scholarly ranks (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005)

Graduate attrition

When a student does not complete a degree and drops out from the program.

CACREP

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs: a board that provides accreditation to counseling graduate

programs. CACREP reviews professional curriculum and requires specific aspects of assurance and gatekeeping to promote and assure a quality program of study (www.cacrep.org).

Recent graduates — Someone that has graduated from a CACREP-accredited counseling program in the last 24 months that holds a Ph.D.

Counseling doctoral student participant — A doctoral student from a counseling program who has successfully proposed their dissertation and is currently working with a dissertation chairperson or advisor.

Chairperson — A faculty member, also known as an advisor, whose role is to guide a doctoral student through the dissertation process.

Chairperson Selection Criteria — Variables that influence how or why a chairperson, or advisor, was chosen by a doctoral student.

Behaviors of the chairperson — The behaviors exhibited by the chairperson, as perceived by the student or recent graduate.

Overall satisfaction — How content an individual participant is with their dissertation chairperson and the dissertation process.

Successful completion — Graduating from a doctoral program with a Ph.D.

Summary

Existing literature suggests that the variables of student selection criteria and chairperson behaviors, along with demographic variables of both the student and the chairperson, influence students' overall satisfaction with the advisory relationship. Although past studies are helpful in showing a link between student selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and overall satisfaction, there is a lack of research specific to counselor education doctoral students. In the current study, survey data was analyzed in order to assess the components that counselor education doctoral students, both past and present, perceived as influencing their selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and demographic variables, and using these constructs to predict overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the current study was to understand which variables were most influential in predicting satisfaction in the relationship between counseling doctoral student and chairperson. In the following chapter, existing literature regarding attrition and the role between attrition and the advising relationship will be examined. In addition, literature will be reviewed on the selection process and behaviors of chairpersons, as well as demographic variables, in regard to students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. In conclusion, the link between the student/chairperson relationship and program completion will be discussed.

Attrition in Doctoral Programs

Doctoral attrition rates in the U.S. have been measured at 57% across disciplines (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). Doctoral attrition refers to students who drop out of programs prior to completing the doctoral degree. High attrition rates are costly for the institution sponsoring the student, the faculty that works with the student and the students themselves (Gardner, 2009). According to the Council of Graduate Schools (2006), attrition in U.S. doctoral programs is a waste of stakeholders' financial resources in addition to their time and energy. By understanding the causes and consequences of attrition, doctoral programs might take steps to increase completion and graduation rates for all students, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

Research focusing on the impact of attrition and ways in which to address the reduction of attrition rates is commonplace. Specifically, Tinto (1975), Bean (1980), and Grover and Malhotra (2003) all have created student attrition models to better understand the variables that may contribute to student persistence. Overall, the constructs of these models include background variables, organizational factors, academic factors, and social

factors. Additional research (Mitchell, 2003) has addressed how budget allocations may influence student persistence and potentially how to forecast student attrition. In 2009, Davidson, Beck and Milligan created a questionnaire for the purpose of predicting student attrition. In addition to these attrition-reduction concepts, departments are attempting to restructure and look outside the box in order to address and decrease student attrition in higher education. Reigle (2010) suggested that programs might decrease student attrition by increasing online learning opportunities. In a previous study looking at decreasing attrition rates in organic chemistry (Grove, Hershberger & Bretz, 2008), researchers assessed the impact of changing the curriculum to a "spiral curriculum." A spiral curriculum provides students with a broad, general overview of the course topic during the first semester, followed by exploration of topics in more detail during subsequent semesters. This process is thought to decrease student anxieties and keep students in school. Within a nursing program, researchers assessed the impact of creating a connection with the students by incorporating an inquiry-based curriculum where feedback from students was gathered on what was working and what needed to be improved in order to decrease nursing student attrition rates (Taylor, 2005). Additionally, in Old Dominion University's psychology department, researchers have looked at how providing students with a dissertation preparation course has influenced attrition rates (Cash & Sanchez-Hucles, 1992).

There have been a multitude of studies and projects conducted to capture the potential reasons for attrition and how to alleviate these variables (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Gardner, 2009; Golde, 2005; Golde, 2000; Lovitts, 2001). Most studies, however, have focused solely on single institutions and sometimes even single programs (Bair & Haworth, 2004), making it difficult to generalize across programs and disciplines.

Attributions of Doctoral Student Attrition

When reviewing the literature on doctoral attrition, many fingers point to the

individual student as the cause of drop-out; however, other researchers agree that there

are other factors in play (Gardner, 2009; Golde, 2005; Lovitts, 2001). Further

investigation into the phenomenon of attrition reveals that additional variables, such as

the department and discipline (Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Golde, 2005; Willis &

Carmichael, 2011), social isolation in the doctoral program (Ali & Kohun, 2007; Golde,

2000), and contextual factors (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001) have an impact on student

attrition. Research has shown that the department, rather than the institution as a whole,

is central when determining the curriculum, policies, and requirements in terms of degree

completion for the student (Golde, 2005). Drawing from over 50 interviews with

students who did not complete their Ph.D. and observations of four departments, Golde

(2005) found six themes that attributed to the attrition of doctoral students at a

Midwestern University. The four departments included geology, biology, history, and

English. The themes from the interviews include: research practices not matched with

student's strengths, meaning the student did not feel comfortable conducting research;

poor fit of expectations between student and department, meaning the student and the

department had different ideas of what was expected and given; mismatch between

student and advisor, meaning there were not similar expectations between the advisor and

student; student perceives research faculty life is incompatible with personal goals;

student perceives job market to be poor; and structural isolation of student, meaning the

student felt isolated from the department. Within these six themes, the mismatch

between advisor and student was the focal cause of attrition. Specific to his study, Golde

(2005) states, "Given that the advising relationship is a critical and central component of science doctoral education, when the advising relationship either never flourished or withered, the student's education was severely impaired" (p. 687).

Willis and Carmichael (2011) explored the lived experience of late-stage doctoral student attrition for counselor educators. Participants included six late-stage (after three years) doctoral non-completers from counselor education programs. All six participants withdrew from their respective program during the dissertation stage of their doctoral degree. The number one barrier found across all "dropping out" participants was Problematic Chair Relationship. Key comments from students on the topic of relationship problems with their chairperson included a lack of mentorship and connection, insufficient time to meet, and need for additional research guidance. The results of the study describe how a problematic relationship with dissertation chairpersons played a significant role in attrition for the counselor education doctoral student (Willis & Carmichael, 2011).

Ferrer de Valero (2001) assessed departmental factors affecting time-to-degree and completion rates of doctoral students at a mid-Atlantic land-grant research institution. The research employed quantitative and qualitative methods. Four clusters of departments were developed including those with high completion rates and short times to degree (HS); low completion rates and short times to degree (LS); high completion rates and long times to degree (HL); and low completion rates and long times to degree (LL). Factors affecting graduate student success were compared among clusters. For HS departments, deemed the most effective cluster, student success was attributed to successful advising and departmental orientation. Findings suggest that closer

relationships between doctoral students and chairpersons were most likely to be found among departments where there were high completion rates and short times to degree. Overall results from the study support the view that good relationships between student and advisor are a major determinant of student success (Ferrer de Valero, 2001). Ferrer de Valero found that changing advisors was determined to be an impediment to success in graduate school in all clusters, suggesting, "the crucial role advisors play in doctoral programs and the importance of matching student and advisor research interests and personalities" (p. 362).

Ali and Kohun (2007) conceptually explored social isolation, or a lack of meaningful relationships, as a central factor for attrition among doctoral students. The authors divide the completion of doctoral degrees into four distinct stages, including: preadmission to enrollment; first year of program; second year through candidacy; and the dissertation stage. This last stage of dissertation completion is marked by the individual student working with his or her advisor or chairperson in order to complete the degree. Ali and Kohun assert that maintaining a good relationship with the advisor during this final stage is essential. However, very little is done by doctoral program administrators to assist with the match between advisor and student. Ali and Kohun suggest that lack of match between advisor and student appears to be the cause of the majority of problems students encounter, including the feeling of isolation. Golde (2000) also investigated the role of social isolation in regard to doctoral attrition. Golde's (2000) qualitative study incorporated the views of three students in traditional arts and science fields who dropped out of Ph.D. programs. The three themes that emerged from the narratives included: academic integration, which focuses on the relationships with

faculty; social integration, which focuses on the student involved in the community; and telling others about leaving. In regard to the academic integration and relationships with faculty, Golde (2000) suggests that the relationship with one's advisor needs to take center stage for doctoral students. All three students expected and appreciated a committed and caring advisor (Golde, 2000).

In their respective studies, Gardner (2009) and Lovitts (2001) include the voices and perceptions of both the doctoral students and faculty members. Gardner examined sixty students' and thirty-four faculty members' perceptions of variables that contribute to attrition in high and low-completing doctoral programs in the United States (communication, oceanography, psychology, English, mathematics, and engineering). Attributions of attrition by faculty in both high and low completion departments showed themes such as student lacking [certain abilities] (53%), student should not have come (21%), and student personal problems (15%) (Gardner, 2009). Students attributed attrition to themes such as personal problems (34%), departmental issues (30%), and wrong fit (21%) (Gardner, 2009). In regard to the departmental issues, bad advising was discussed most often as the reason for students' departure from the program. In addition, Gardner discusses the fact that many faculty members seem to be removed from the issue of attrition and ascribe the problem to the student. Specifically, this removal from the problem demonstrates a distance between faculty members and the students with whom they work (Gardner, 2009).

Many research studies that have explored variables that influence attrition have based their work on Lovitt's (2001) multiple, in-depth studies on the causes and consequences of attrition (e.g., Gardner, 2009; Golde, 2000; Ali & Kohun, 2007).

Lovitts' work comes from a personal perspective as well as a researcher's perspective. As a two-time Ph.D. drop-out who successfully completed her degree the third time around, Lovitts brings personal experience to her research on graduate student attrition. Instead of focusing on what is wrong with the student, Lovitts posits contextual factors as the main attribution for attrition. Findings from Lovitts' multiple, longitudinal studies have shown that the more resources a department has available for integration, specifically academic integration, the lower the department's student attrition rate. Within the realm of academic integration sits the role of the advisor. Lovitts looked at the differences between high and low Ph.D.-producing faculty in relation to student satisfaction. Specifically, the research assessed ways faculty members establish relationships with their students, amount of time faculty spend with students, and other exhibited behaviors of advisors. Results show that the amount of time faculty spend with students, where they interact with students (formal vs. informal settings), the quality and quantity of their collaborative work with students on projects and papers, and their social interactions with students, all influenced doctoral students' satisfaction with their chairperson or advisor. In addition, participants in the study who did not go on to complete their doctoral degree were six times more likely to be assigned to their advisors than to have the ability to choose their advisors. Furthermore, completers were cited as feeling much more satisfied with their advisors than non-completers. Therefore, the act of choosing one's advisor and not being assigned to an advisor haphazardly was a core factor in satisfaction and completion of doctoral students in this study (Lovitts, 2001).

Bair and Haworth (2004) conducted a meta-synthesis, including both qualitative and quantitative studies, which focused on doctoral student attrition and persistence. The

meta-synthesis analyzed 118 studies that were conducted between 1970 and 1998 to

determine which factors really make a difference when exploring this phenomenon. One

of the key findings from all of the synthesized studies included the degree and quality of

the relationship between doctoral student and advisor. Specifically, Bair and Haworth

state, "Finally, of all the studies reviewed here, not a single one countered the importance

of the relationship between student and advisor or student and faculty toward the

completion of the doctoral degree" (p. 495). Additional key findings from the meta-

synthesis included: departmental culture affects doctoral student persistence;

demographic variables do not conclusively distinguish persisters from those who drop

out; students who hold either a teaching assistantship or research assistantship have

higher rates of completion; doctoral programs that have a smaller entering cohort have

higher completion rates than programs with larger entering cohorts; and attrition and

persistence rates vary across field and program of study. The lowest attrition rates are

found in laboratory sciences and the highest rates are typically found in social sciences

and humanities (Bair & Haworth, 2004). One theory behind this phenomenon suggests

that hard sciences offer more course work and training on how to conduct research, while

disciplines that do not focus on research or provide as much direction for how to conduct

research end up housing students who do not feel as prepared to conduct their own

research. Therefore, when it comes time to complete the dissertation, students in social

sciences and humanities are potentially at a disadvantage. Because counseling education

programs fall within the social science discipline, this may hold true for counselor

education doctoral students.

Regardless of the initial attributing factor or theme found in all of these studies, the key component that emerged in all of the studies centered on the relationship between student and advisor, or chairperson. Overall, understanding how and why the advising relationship works is central to the topic of attrition rates for doctoral students and the programs with which they are affiliated.

Successful Advising Relationships and Doctoral Completion

"The advising literature confirms the graduate student - graduate advisor relationship as the most important factor in graduate student success" (Bloom, Cuevas, Hall, & Evans, 2007, p. 28). Although some students drop out of doctoral programs prior to beginning the dissertation process, research has shown that at least 25% do so after completing their course work, with the dissertation serving as the final obstacle preventing student success and degree completion (Garcia, Mallott, & Brethower, 1988). A multitude of articles and books have been written to assist doctoral students in the painstaking process of completing a dissertation. Topics include providing suggestions for doctoral dissertation advisors (Kritsonis & Marshall, 2009); how to find and select an ideal dissertation topic (Blanton, 1983; Cone & Foster, 2006; Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005; Lei, 2009); whom to select as a dissertation chair (Cone & Foster, 2006; Carlin & Perlmutter, 2006); models that may assist in dissertation completion (Grover & Malhotra, 2003) and the requirements and practices of the dissertation process (Sanchez-Hucles & Cash, 1992).

Faghihi, Rakow, and Ethington (1999) suggest the most important predictors of dissertation progress include the relationship between doctoral students' background characteristics, research involvement and preparation, advisee-advisor relationship, and

research self-efficacy. Participants from three different departments within the college of education included 97 doctoral students who had passed comps but had not completed their dissertation (Faghihi et al., 1999). The study also examined assistantships in relation to dissertation progress. A survey questionnaire designed to address the most important predictors of dissertation progress indicated that students' research self-efficacy and their relationships with their advisors and committee members significantly contributed to their dissertation progress (Faghihi et al., 1999). Also of note, students who held an assistantship at some point in their doctoral studies exhibited higher self-efficacy and were further along in their dissertation progress. Effects were consistent across background characteristics (Faghihi et al., 1999). Again, the research shows that for students in the social science and humanities fields, feeling comfortable conducting research as well as their relationship with their advisor, contribute to progress in their dissertation process.

Protivnak and Foss (2009) conducted a qualitative study to assess themes that influence the doctoral experience. Participants included 141 counselor education doctoral students whose email addresses were accessed from the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET). Participants were emailed five open-ended questions along with a demographic form. The researchers found specific themes influencing the students' experiences in their doctoral programs, including: departmental culture, mentoring, academics, support systems, and personal issues (Protivnak & Foss, 2009). Many participants found mentoring as the most helpful experience in their doctoral program, suggesting that this aspect of mentoring by a doctoral faculty member assisted in

inducting students into the culture and profession of counselor education. In addition, the theme of mentoring that emerged between the faculty members and the doctoral students was posed as a topic of evaluation for future studies (Protivnak & Foss, 2009).

Casto, Caldwell and Salazar (2005) also examined the importance of mentoring relationships between faculty and students. Their conceptual study focused specifically on faculty and doctoral students in the field of counselor education. Casto et al. spoke about the benefits of having a mentor in the field of counselor education to assist with co-teaching, research activities, enhancing professional competence and identity development. Kolbert, Morgan and Brendel (2002) also commented on the unique faculty-student interaction within counselor education programs. Specifically, Kolbert et al. (2002) recognized that counselor education doctoral students interacted in multiple roles, including: supervisors, teachers, administrators, academic advisors, and graduate assistant employers. In addition to these roles, students also are required to participate in process groups, where faculty members may serve as the facilitator; therefore, the interactions between faculty members who serve as advisors, supervisors, and mentors and the doctoral student need to be understood in order to recognize what contributes to a satisfactory advising relationship.

All of these studies speak to the complexity of the dissertation process and to the necessity of the mentoring, or advising, relationship that exists. When this relationship exists, completing the dissertation to attain the goal of program completion is of greater likelihood. Throughout these studies, one factor remains constant: the importance of a student's dissertation advisor. According to Grover and Malhotra (2003), "The key to having a successful dissertation process is for the Ph.D. student to establish a good

working relationship with his/her advisor" (p. 16). However, although these studies are helpful in showing the importance of the relationship between student and chairperson, only two studies (Ferrer de Valero, 2001; Protivnak & Foss, 2009) are specific to counselor education doctoral students.

Perceptions of Successful Relationships: Behaviors and Selection

The key ingredient to successful dissertation completion, and therefore degree completion, is the relationship between the doctoral student and his or her chairperson (Gardner, 2009). There are a number of studies that attempt to pinpoint the secrets to that successful relationship. The following studies examine the perceptions of both advisors and graduate students regarding the characteristics or behaviors that are present in successful relationships between doctoral students and their chairpersons.

Spillett and Moisiewicz (2004) conducted a study examining various roles of the dissertation advisor. Based on their research Spillett and Moisiewicz assert that both support and challenge are necessary when guiding students through the dissertation process. However, their study revealed that faculty members may not employ or understand the role of support, the lack of which could potentially lead to a less than satisfied student during the dissertation process (Spillett & Moisiewicz, 2004). The concept of balancing support and challenge also hinges on congruency of expectations between faculty member and student. In a subsequent study, Friedman (1987) explored the concept of incongruence among both satisfied and dissatisfied students in the fields of engineering, economics, and history at four universities. The main premise of the study was based on how understanding prior expectations influenced the actual experiences of advisees and advisors during the dissertation process (Friedman, 1987). Results show

that for students who found the experience overwhelmingly negative, their dissatisfaction centered on their feelings of neglect by their advisor. When the advisors were interviewed, however, their views were dramatically different. What students viewed as neglect, advisors saw as deliberate actions on the advisors' part designed to foster independence within the student (Friedman, 1987). These results suggest that communication addressing the expectations of both advisor and advisee should be established prior to the start of the dissertation working relationship.

In a related study, Goulden (1991) researched perceptions of speech communication doctoral advisors and advisees during the dissertation process in regard to communication between advisor and advisee, and the personal relationship between the pair. The advisors and advisees were asked to respond to open-ended survey questions that focused on perceptions of roles, nature of the relationship, and communication between advisor and advisee (Goulden, 1991). Respondents who rated their overall experience as very positive also rated advisor relationship and communication as the primary factors leading to their dissertation satisfaction. In addition, students who had a higher degree of congruence between expected and realized roles during the dissertation process also had a higher degree of overall satisfaction. Among the implications listed by Goulden was the suggestion that prior to the dissertation process the student and the faculty advisor should share expectations about roles, responsibilities, levels of independence, and the nature of the relationship.

In 1990, Smart and Conant gauged the perceptions of 34 seasoned advisors who had served as chairperson for many successful marketing doctoral students. The researchers asked the advisors to identify specific characteristics that made dissertation-

stage doctoral candidates most successful. Seven prominent themes that ranked highest included: perseverance (39 %), intellectual curiosity (18%), research skills (14%), and interpersonal skills (13%) (Smart & Conant, 1990). Advisors in the study also identified as their top three suggestions for achieving success regarding dissertation topics to be: having a genuine interest in the selected dissertation topic (30%), selecting a "cutting-edge" topic (30%), and getting an early start (23%) (Smart & Conant, 1990).

Graduate students' perceptions of outstanding graduate advisor characteristics did not appear to match the observations that advisors had of the characteristics of successful doctoral students as outlined in the previous study. Bloom, Cuevas, Hall and Evans (2007), accumulated 24 letters of nomination for outstanding advisors from a variety of students enrolled in the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois. Five emergent themes were identified, and the researchers interviewed seven students who had nominated their advisors for honors for member-check confirmation (Bloom et al., 2007). The five major themes identifying behaviors of successful advisors included: demonstration of genuine care for students, accessibility, being a role model in professional and personal matters, individually tailoring guidance, and proactively integrating students into the profession (Bloom et al., 2007). The emerging themes centered on the importance of support and nurturing characteristics of the advisor rather than the research background or reputation of the chairperson.

There is limited research and differing views regarding how or why doctoral students select their dissertation chairpersons. Smart and Conant (1990) studied advisors' opinions of effective chairperson selection. Their research revealed that, from the advisor's point of view, the most important considerations for selecting a dissertation

chairperson were that person's expertise and experience in their field (33%) (Smart & Conant, 1990). Specifically, advisors recommended that students evaluate the chairpersons' research skills, publications, and track records with previous students. The second theme that emerged in reference to selecting a dissertation chairperson centered on personal compatibility (22%); specifically, interpersonal dynamics and communicating and understanding the importance of work habits. The third most prominent theme that resulted from the study was the importance of research compatibility (21%). The list of variables also included chairperson availability, supportiveness, and organizational skills, but these only accounted for eight percent of the responses collectively (Smart & Conant, 1990).

In a related study, Wallace (2000) researched meaningful mentoring relationships among six female doctoral students and their dissertation chairpersons from the perspective of the doctoral student. A portion of the study included research on how the student/chairperson relationship began, or why the chairperson was selected. Previous interactions, personality matching, and similar research interests were the three most prominent themes that emerged from the study (Wallace, 2000). All of the female students that chose female advisors (n=4) had previous interactions with their selected advisors, where females who chose males as their advisors (n=2) had not had previous interactions with them, but did have similar research interests as their advisor. Within the theme of previous interactions, the majority of students in the study commented on the fact that their selection was based on having been in a class conducted by the chosen chairperson or having worked with that faculty member prior to the dissertation process. Regarding personality matching, the female students perceived that having similar

personality styles as their chairpersons would lead to similar perceptions and expectations in their relationship (Wallace, 2000). Again, the results from the two studies (Smart & Conant, 1990; Wallace, 2000) reveal differing and distinctive views regarding selection of a chairperson dependant upon whether the participant was a student or an advisor.

In 2003, Schlosser, Knox, Moskovitz, and Hill used the method of consensual qualitative research (CQR) to interview 16 3rd-year counseling psychology doctoral students regarding their relationships with their graduate advisors. Third-year students were selected because of the nature of their relationship with their advisors at that point in their program (Schlosser et al., 2003). The demographic form assessed the age, gender, and race/ethnicity of both student and advisor, as well as the amount of time the pair worked together, if their chairperson was selected by the student or selected for the student, and if the student had switched advisors during their program. Of the sixteen students, 10 indicated they were satisfied and 6 unsatisfied with their advising relationships. Students that were satisfied were more likely to have chosen their advisor instead of being assigned to an advisor, had more frequent meetings with their advisor, and saw the advisor-advisee relationship as beneficial personally and professionally. In addition, those advisees who were satisfied were also more likely to have addressed any conflict situations up front with their advisors as opposed to ignoring the potential issue. Furthermore, all of the satisfied students reported that their advising relationships became more positive over time, whereas many of the unsatisfied students reported that their advising relationships worsened, or became more distant over time (Schlosser et al., 2003).

In a follow-up study (Knox, Schlosser, Pruitt & Hill, 2006) CQR was again utilized to assess the perspective of the advisors in counseling psychology doctoral programs. Specifically, 19 faculty members were interviewed regarding their advising relationships with doctoral students. Four domains of the research involved: defining the role of the advisor and advisee, how one learned to be an advisor, the benefits of advising, and the costs of advising. Results from this study indicate that the advisors informally learned to advise from their experiences with their own advisors, as well as from experiences with their advisees (Knox et al., 2006). Advisors defined their role as supporting and advocating for the advisee. Advisors described good advising relationships as those that included positive personal or professional characteristics of the advisees, mutual respect between the pair, open communication, similarity in career path, and lack of conflict. Negative personal or professional characteristics, lack of respect, communication problems, rupture of the relationship, and conflict avoidance marked advisee characteristics of difficult relationships with their advisors. Overall, advisors perceived that the positive characteristics of the students were of major importance to a successful advising relationship (Knox et al., 2006). Future recommendations from the study focused on the concept of whether training in advising is necessary and if advisors and advisees should be matched. According to the authors, contextual factors, such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity also require further exploration.

Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity Related to Dissertation Chair Satisfaction

In 2008, the Council of Graduate Schools released their first executive summary for Phase 1 of the Ph.D. Completion and Attrition Project. The Ph.D. completion project is a seven-year, two-phase project, that addresses issues surrounding Ph.D. completion

and attrition. This first summary of the completion project broke down the demographics of students by cohort including, gender, citizenship, and race/ethnicity over 12 years (1992-93 through 2003-04) from 30 universities. Overall, initial research showed that completion rates for men (58%) were higher than completion rates for women (55%) (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). Specifically, data revealed that men had higher completion rates in Engineering, Life Sciences, Math and Physical Sciences, while women completed at higher rates in Humanities and Social Sciences. Overall, international students completed at a higher rate (67%) than domestic students (54%) across fields; however, domestic students were more likely than international students to complete their degrees within seven years. Among the four racial/ethnic groups of domestic students, White students had the highest completion rate at 55%. Hispanic Americans completed at 51%, while the completion rate was 50% for Asian Americans and 47% for African Americans (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008).

In a study conducted at the University of California Los Angeles (Benkin, Beazley, & Jordan, 2000), researchers reviewed exit surveys regarding doctoral students' satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Overall, men were more likely to be satisfied with their dissertation chairperson than women, and reported more satisfaction in reference to time spent with their dissertation chairperson. Additionally, fewer than 70% of both women and men indicated that they would choose the same advisor (Benkin et al., 2000). Although men were more satisfied overall with their dissertation chairperson, women were more likely to choose the same advisor if starting over again (Benkin et al., 2000).

Lenz (1997) focused specifically on nontraditional-aged women and the dissertation process. The researcher compared successful student completers of Ph.D. programs with All But Dissertation (ABD) students across several dimensions. The purpose of the study was to determine what factors promote or inhibit the completion of a dissertation by nontraditional-aged women (Lenz, 1997). Five ABD students and six Ph.D. completers, ranging in age from 42 to 53 years, all majors in education or science, participated in the qualitative study. The core difference found between the groups showed that selecting a suitable advisor for the dissertation process was an important factor for the female dissertation completers. Lack of a suitable advisor was a contributing factor for non-completion of the dissertation for the female ABD students (Lenz, 1997). Additionally, one of the ABD participants said that information on choosing a chairperson was the weakest part of her program because no one ever talked about it. Therefore, she was tasked to choose without the benefit of knowing how to go about the task (Lenz, 1997).

Developing mentoring relationships in doctoral programs is an essential factor in the doctoral process (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Lovitts, 2001). Having someone to assist the student with tasks such as chairperson selection, paperwork completion, and finding one's way through departmental politics appears to be beneficial for most doctoral students. In a related conceptual article, Adams (1992) examined the mentoring alliance formed between the dissertation advisor and the doctoral student, specific to minority students within the engineering and science disciplines. The researcher concluded that, specifically for minorities, good mentoring is a key variable when determining success or failure in completing a doctoral degree because the mentor

is able to serve as a bridge between the student and the department. This connection increases collegiality and lessens isolation (Adams, 1992). In addition, Adams suggests that faculty tend not to be concerned or to attend conference sessions on mentoring techniques because they are more focused on funding and research and see it as "below their need to know" (p. 8). Therefore, it is up to the student to actively seek out an appropriate mentor. The article includes key questions for students to ask when deciding on choosing a mentor, information on self-report mentor and student assessments, and the benefits of the mentoring alliance.

In another study assessing mentoring of ethnic minorities, pre-doctoral students in the field of psychology and their mentors were interviewed (Chan, 2008). The dyads were assigned based on shared research and clinical interests. Based on the principles of grounded theory, emergent themes of mentoring practices included: providing information and advice; coaching; insuring exposure and visibility in the program; providing time and strong communication; providing feedback and validation when talking about race; and offering a reciprocal relationship (Chan, 2008). Overall, students reported feeling empowered by their mentors and feeling as if they had gained access to the inside story of the program because of the reported actions of their mentors (Chan, 2008).

The Relationship between Selection, Behaviors, and Overall Satisfaction

Existing research supports the notion that students experience a more positive and satisfactory relationship with their chairperson when allowed to self-select, as opposed to having their chairperson assigned to them (Lovitts, 2001). In addition, allowing the doctoral student to choose his or her chairperson empowers the student to make their own

choices and gives students a voice in that the all-important decision. Understanding chairperson behaviors and styles also leads to a satisfactory relationship. Research has shown that students prefer advisors who are available to meet, provide helpful feedback, and who are both supportive and challenging (Spillet & Moisiewicz, 2004; Wallace, 2000). The factors of student selection criteria and chairpersons' behaviors are shown to influence overall satisfaction between the doctoral student and their chairperson (Goulden, 1991; Lovitts, 2001). According to Benkin et al. (2000), "Faculty-student interaction directly affects whether students complete degrees, the time to degree, and student satisfaction with the experience of obtaining a doctoral degree" (p. 4).

Zhao, Golde, and McCormick (2007) set out to examine how selection of a chairperson and chairpersons' behaviors affect doctoral student satisfaction. As the researchers point out, the process by which students and advisors, or chairpersons, come together is relatively unexplored. In addition, understanding the link between students' selection strategies and satisfaction with one's chairperson is also relatively unexplored. Zhao et al. examined two research questions, including: (1) After controlling for student characteristics, do patterns of advisor choice and advisor behavior differ by discipline area? (2) After controlling for student characteristics and disciplinary area, how do advisor choice and advisor behavior relate to satisfaction with the advisor relationship? The researchers define the advisor as "the one faculty member who is the academic advisor, dissertation chair or research supervisor whom the student considers his or her primary formal advisor" (Zhao et al., 2007, p. 264). Data for this study was gathered from a previous national survey of advanced doctoral students across 11 disciplines at 27 leading doctorate-producing universities. The sample consisted of 4,010 students. The

four broad discipline areas included: humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and biological sciences. The survey instrument consisted of 13 possible reasons for students' selection choice of advisor. Students were asked to rate to what extent the statement described why they chose their advisor. Examples included: Advisor doing interesting research; Has money to support me; and, Recommended by other people. The next section of the survey addressed potential chairperson behaviors. There were 24 questions in which the students answered to what extent the statement described their chairperson. Examples of potential behaviors included: Available when I need help with my research; Teaches me survival skills for this field; and, Gives me regular and constructive feedback on my progress toward degree completion. The last section of the survey addressed overall satisfaction in the student-advisor relationship and included three questions. An example of a satisfaction item included: Currently have the advisor I want. Factor analysis results revealed three major dimensions under students' selection, including advisor reputation, intellectual compatibility, and pragmatic benefits. Advisor behaviors identified four factors that included academic advising, personal touch, career development, and cheap labor. Results revealed differences within disciplines for selection, behaviors and satisfaction. For the humanities and social sciences, the academic advising factor, within chairperson behaviors, had the highest score, whereas cheap labor, which was more of a factor in physical and biological sciences, had the lowest score in relation to satisfaction. In regard to advisor choice, intellectual compatibility and advisor reputation were mentioned most often in the humanities, while pragmatic benefit was negatively rated. Overall, the humanities students were the most satisfied, and the biological science students were the least satisfied in their relationship

with their advisor. In addition, student background characteristics appeared to play a limited role in predicting advisor choice or advisor behavior, although men were found to be minimally more satisfied than women in their relationship with their advisor. Results suggest that overall satisfaction with the advising relationship is positively correlated with advisor choice and advisor behavior factors (Zhao et al., 2007). The researchers suggested that results from this study can assist students (depending on discipline) in determining which factors to consider when choosing an advisor. Although this research was generalized across disciplines, information specific for the counseling field is lacking.

Summary

Research indicates that the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chairperson is a key element in determining the success of the student in completing their degree (Bloom et al., 2007). Much of the previous research in the area of assessing behaviors has been conducted in a qualitative manner in order to give voice to the participants and to understand their stories in a more specific tone. Both advisors and students' perspectives were taken into consideration, and as the research literature shows, students and faculty are not always on the same page as far as their assumptions as to what creates the best working relationship. Although there is limited research on how students choose their advisors, evidence shows that it is important that students have that option (Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001). This action empowers the student and allows for student accountability during the dissertation process. In addition, the behaviors that advisors are likely, or unlikely, to exhibit also affect the level of satisfaction in the student-advisor relationship (Goulden, 1991; Spillet & Moisiewicz, 2004). All of these

studies have been informative across disciplines, however, there is a gap in the counseling literature concerning how counseling doctoral students select their chairperson, what potential behaviors their chairperson demonstrates, and if these variables predict overall satisfaction within the student-chairperson relationship. An available instrument to measure these constructs for counseling students is also lacking. Specifically, researchers have acknowledged that "a limited amount of research focusing on counselor education doctoral students has been conducted" (Protivnak & Foss, 2009, p. 240). Research also shows that the interactions between faculty and students in counseling education programs seem to be unique. Therefore, the current study was designed to address the gaps in the literature regarding selection and behaviors as predictors of satisfaction, particularly among the counselor education doctoral population.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter addresses the methodology and research questions for the study, including: rationale for the study, description of the research design, research questions, participant selection, instrumentation, item generation, content validity, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis.

Rationale

According to the Council of Graduate Schools (2008), the U.S. attrition rate for doctoral students has been measured at 57% across disciplines. These high attrition rates translate into costs for the universities that educate the students, faculty members who work with these students, and the students themselves who invest time and tuition costs (Bair & Haworth, 2004). The successful completion of a dissertation, and therefore a Ph.D. degree, has been linked to an effective working relationship with one's chair or advisor (Burnett, 1999; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Garcia, Malott, & Brethower, 1988).

Satisfaction with the student-chairperson advising relationship is positively associated with advisor selection and behavior factors (Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007). For example, providing an adequate amount of support during the dissertation process, availability for help with research, and advocating for the student are all examples of potential chairperson behaviors. Overall, research shows that success in attaining a Ph.D. may be dependent on an effective and supportive relationship between the dissertation advisor and doctoral student (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010). Accordingly, in order to improve overall satisfaction of the doctoral student in the dissertation advising relationship, it is important to understand which variables are most

influential in predicting overall satisfaction. Therefore, the present study intends to determine which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their selected chairperson by examining participants' selection of their chairperson, the reported behaviors of their selected chairperson, and participants' and their chairpersons' demographic variables.

As the previous chapter examined, at the time of this study no instruments for measuring overall satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson in the field of counseling have been disseminated in the literature. Zhao et al.'s (2007) research study, examining doctoral student satisfaction across 11 broad disciplines, is the closest study to touch on the importance of advisor selection and behaviors, and overall satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson. Because this study was not specific to counseling doctoral students or recent graduates, nor did it take into consideration the individual experiences of how students came to select their dissertation advisors, the survey used in Zhoa et al.'s (2007) research was not used in this study. Therefore, for the present study, a new survey instrument was created in order to measure counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' use of specific criteria to select their chairperson, chairperson behaviors, and overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

Research Design

This study utilized a non-experimental survey research design. The study was conducted by gathering data from counselor education doctoral students and recent graduates to assess the participants' perceptions concerning factors that influenced their selection of a chairperson for the dissertation process (i.e., selection criteria), perceived chairperson behaviors, and students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation

chairperson. The survey instrument was created by the primary investigator of this study. The instrument included items that assessed the three variables of selection, behaviors, and satisfaction. Participants were also asked to complete a demographic form. This form included questions concerning the variables of gender, age, and race/ethnicity of the doctoral student and chairperson, months spent working with their chairperson, status of participant (doctoral student vs. recent graduate), if the chairperson was assigned to the student or selected by the student, along with assistantship opportunity and type of dissertation study (qualitative, quantitative, other).

Research Questions

The overall question of *Which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson during the dissertation process?* was assessed by the following research questions:

RQ1: What selection criteria, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ2: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ3: Do doctoral students' and recent graduates' demographic variables, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and type of study, predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

RQ4: What differences, if any, exist between participants who selected their chairperson and those who were assigned a chairperson on their reports of chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction of their dissertation chairperson?

Hypotheses

The null hypothesis was assumed for each of the above research questions.

H_0 1: Participants' selection criteria do not predict their overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

H_0 2: Chairperson behaviors do not predict participants' overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

H_0 3: Doctoral students and recent graduates' age, gender, and race/ethnicity do not predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

H_0 4: There are no significant differences between those who selected their chairperson and those that were assigned chairpersons' reports of chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

Participants

The participants for this study were recent graduates from counseling doctoral programs and counseling doctoral students in doctoral counseling programs who had successfully proposed their dissertation study. Recent graduates were included in the sample due to their successful completion of the dissertation process, in addition to their perceived ability to view the dissertation process and their dissertation chairperson in a more thorough manner. The number of potential participants who fit the above criteria was unknown. A priori power analysis was conducted to determine the number of participants needed to limit the likelihood of committing a Type 1 (rejecting a true null hypothesis) or Type 2 error (accepting a false null hypothesis). Assuming a medium effect size of .05 at Power = .80, 91 participants were needed to complete the survey (Cohen, 1992).

Procedures

All procedures and instrumentation were approved by the Institutional Review

Board (IRB) at Old Dominion University prior to the collection of data.

Data Collection

Upon approval of the study, emails were sent to the department chairs of CACREP-

accredited doctoral programs requesting the department chairs forward the email to

counselor education doctoral students who had successfully proposed their dissertation

and recent graduates of that respective program. The email explained the study, detailed

participant eligibility requirements, and included a link to the study that could be

forwarded to eligible participants (See Appendix A). After three weeks with only a

limited amount of responses (n = 26), a request was posted on Counselor Education and

Supervision Network (CESNET), an email list serve consisting of professional counselor

educators who self-identify as graduate students, professors, and therapists. At the time

of the email request, 1,742 individuals were members of the list serve. However, it is

unknown how many CESNET recipients were eligible to participate in the current

research study, as CESNET does not track members' demographic and professional

affiliations. In addition, by opening up the study to include eligible current or past

counselor education doctoral students on CESNET, it is unknown whether or not the

participant attended a CACREP-accredited doctoral program. Requests for participation

on CESNET were made three times within a four-week span. The request for

participation included information to introduce the study and included a link to the

electronic survey on SurveyMonkey, an encrypted online survey program. The informed

consent was the initial page of the survey and loaded once participants clicked on the

link. Participants indicated their consent by clicking continue on the survey. Participants were also able to see their progress as they moved through the survey. One week after the final CESNET request posting, 133 participants had completed the survey. Overall, the survey was open for eight weeks.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used for this study was comprised of four sections (Appendix B). The informed consent (Appendix C) appeared at the beginning of the survey and participants were required to confirm their consent in order to proceed to the overall survey. The first section of the survey included demographic items about the participant and the dissertation chairperson. The second section contained items pertaining to participants' selection criteria of their dissertation chair. The third section included items about chairpersons' behaviors. The fourth section included items about participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

Item Generation

Survey items were developed based on prominent ideas that emerged from a qualitative pilot study and a review of peer-review literature addressing chairperson behaviors, criteria used by individuals to select their chairperson, and individuals' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. The qualitative study, conducted by the researcher, examined the factors that influenced new counseling professionals' selection of their dissertation chairperson and chairperson behaviors. Purposeful and snowball sampling were used to secure seven participants for individual interviews. Interview questions assessed how the participant went about selecting their chairperson, what they considered to be the most important factors for selection, and behaviors their chairperson exhibited

that positively or negatively impacted the advising relationship. Axial coding was used for constant comparison and nine prominent ideas were found (Patton, 1990). The five prominent ideas from the selection criteria portion of the study included: previous relationship, research/methodology, reputation, abilities/benefits, and alignment/similarities. The four prominent ideas found from the chairperson behaviors section included: academic assistance, personal connection, career involvement, and mentoring abilities. At least three questions were developed for each prominent idea to ensure comprehensive coverage (DeVellis, 2003). In addition to the qualitative study, existing literature was also used to create survey items for chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction. Because of the gap in the literature addressing how and why doctoral students select specific chairpersons, the qualitative study focused more on the selection criteria construct; therefore, literature was used to fill the gaps for the behaviors and satisfaction constructs.

Demographic Information

For this section of the survey, participants were asked to provide information about themselves and their dissertation chairperson. The demographic information included items pertaining to age, gender, and race/ethnicity of both the participant and the chairperson. In addition, the participant was asked to provide information on their status (recent graduate or doctoral student), number of months working with their chairperson, how their current chairperson was selected (assigned to or selected by student), if the student switched chairpersons at any point, tenure status of chairperson, assistantship status of participant, and type of dissertation study. If the student selected "assigned to chairperson," the participant was automatically routed to the *chairperson behaviors*

section. Demographic information was gathered on participants as well as their chairpersons in order to address past research studies' future recommendations.

Criteria Used by Participants to Select Their Dissertation Chairperson

This section of the survey instrument was developed based prominent ideas that emerged from a qualitative study completed by the researcher that examined factors that influenced new counseling professionals' selection of their dissertation chairperson. The prominent ideas that emerged from the qualitative study for selection criteria included: previous relationship, research/methodology, reputation, abilities/benefits, and alignment/similarities. Examples of the items included: "Is doing research similar to my dissertation topic;" "Has a good reputation as a researcher;" "I have previously worked with this person as a supervisor;" and, "Matches my personality style." Participants answered the selection criteria items using the prompt, "The reason(s) I selected my dissertation chairperson was/were because:" The participants rated each item using a 4-point Likert scale (1= not at all an important reason, 4= very important reason).

Assessment of Participants' Perceptions of Chairpersons' Behaviors

This section of the survey assessed doctoral students' and recent graduates' perceptions of behaviors their chairperson displayed throughout the dissertation process. Items for this section were developed utilizing prominent ideas from the qualitative study (academic assistance, personal connection, career involvement, and mentoring abilities), as well as from peer-reviewed literature (Zhao et al., 2007). Participants were asked to rate each item, using a 4-point Likert scale (1= completely disagree, 4= completely agree), prompted by the question, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your chairperson's behavior during the dissertation process?"

An example of this type of question included, "My chairperson provides me with effective feedback that is useful for my dissertation."

Rating of Participants' Overall Satisfaction with the Dissertation Chairperson

This section of the survey assessed doctoral students' and recent graduates' perceptions of overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Items for this section were developed utilizing peer-reviewed literature (Zhao et al., 2007). An example of this question included, "I'm satisfied with the amount of time spent with my dissertation chairperson." The participants rated the items on a 4-point Likert scale (1= completely disagree, 4= completely agree) according to the following prompt: "Please rate your agreement or disagreement on the following statements:"

Content Validity

The final instrument consisted of 62 items, excluding demographic variables. As previously noted, survey questions were developed based prominent themes derived from a qualitative study conducted prior to the current study, and existing literature that details behaviors exhibited by chairpersons and overall satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2007). The initial list of items was sent to a panel of experts for the purpose of ensuring the appropriateness of the items for the study. This panel consisted of persons who had recently (within the last 5 years) completed their doctoral dissertation from a CACREP-accredited university in the field of counseling. Utilizing recent Ph.D. graduates ensured that their own dissertation process, selection criteria, and overall satisfaction were still a recent experience.

The expert panel was asked to rank the list of each survey item for relevance for examining doctoral counselor education students' selection of chairperson, chairperson

behaviors, and overall satisfaction of the doctoral students' dissertation chairperson. The indication of relevance was categorized as *Not at all, Somewhat*, or *Completely*. The expert panel also provided an opportunity to add additional items that they believed should be included in the survey and provided edits to existing items. Once this feedback was received, one item was added to the demographics questionnaire, two items were modified for clarity, and one item was deleted based on repetition.

Data Analysis

Three separate multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction based on participants' selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and demographic variables including, type of dissertation study, and participants' age, gender, and race/ethnicity. In addition, a Mulitvariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess significant differences between students who selected their dissertation chairperson and those that were assigned a dissertation chairperson.

Prior to conducting analyses to address the research questions, principal components analysis was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the instrument and to identify selection criteria and chairperson behavior components to be used as predictor variables in the analyses. Research questions were analyzed as follows: Research Question 1: Multiple regression was conducted to investigate which selection criteria were most influential in predicting participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. The predictor variables for this analysis were the four selection criteria components (Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Collaborative Style, Obligation/Culture) and the dependent variable of overall satisfaction with the

participants' chairperson. Mean scores for each component were calculated, and the mean score served as the predictor variable.

Research Question 2: Multiple regression was conducted to investigate which chairperson behavior components were most influential in predicting participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. The predictor variables for this analysis were the five chairperson behavior components (Work Style, Personal Connection, Academic Assistance, Mentoring Abilities, Professional Development) and the dependent variable the overall satisfaction with the participants' chairperson. Mean scores for each component were calculated, and the mean score served as the predictor variable.

Research Question 3: Multiple regression was conducted to investigate which participant demographic variables, including type of dissertation study, age, gender and race/ethnicity, were most influential in predicting overall satisfaction with the participants' chairperson. The predictor variables for this analysis were participants' type of study, age, gender, and race/ethnicity, and the dependent variable the overall satisfaction with the participants' dissertation chairperson. Dummy variables were calculated for categorical variables that included more than two levels (e.g., race/ethnicity).

Research Question 4: A MANOVA was conducted to investigate whether significant differences existed between selection type of participant (selected vs. assigned) on chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction of their chairperson. For the MANOVA, the factor was selection type, and the dependent variables the chairperson behavior construct and overall satisfaction of the participants' chairperson. See Table 1 for a comprehensive listing of data analysis with research questions.

Table 1: Data Analysis and Hypothesis by Research Question

Research Question	Hypothesis	Analysis
RQ1: What selection criteria, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?	H_0 1: Participants' selection criteria do not predict their overall satisfaction with their chairperson.	Multiple Regression: Predictor variable: 4 selection criteria components; Construct mean scores calculated
RQ2: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?	H_0 2: Chairperson behaviors do not predict participants' overall satisfaction with their chairperson.	Multiple Regression: Predictor variable: 5 chairperson behavior components; Construct mean scores calculated
RQ3: Do doctoral students' and recent graduates' demographic variables, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and type of study, predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson?	H_0 3: Doctoral students and recent graduates' age, gender, and race/ethnicity do not predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson.	Multiple Regression: Predictor variables: type of study, age, gender, and race/ethnicity; Dummy variables calculated for categorical variables
RQ4: What differences, if any, exist between participants who selected their chairperson and those who were assigned a chairperson on their reports of chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction of	H_0 4: There are no significant differences between students who selected their dissertation chairperson and those who were assigned dissertation chairpersons' reports of chairperson behaviors and	MANOVA The factor was selection type (selected vs. assigned) Dependent variables: chairperson behavior construct and overall satisfaction construct

their dissertation	overall satisfaction with
chairperson?	their dissertation
	chairperson.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to address gaps in the counseling literature by researching current and past counseling doctoral students' perceptions regarding their selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and demographic variables in order to predict participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Survey items for this current study were created utilizing themes from a prior qualitative study conducted by the researcher, therefore increasing content validity and giving voice to the participants within the field of counselor education.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Participants were recruited over an 8-week period from May 16, 2011 to July 5, 2011. A total of 133 participants responded to the survey. After individual cases were assessed to find incomplete responses, 11 cases were deleted, leaving a total of 122 valid participant cases. Principal component analyses were then conducted in order to extract specific components from the selection criteria construct and the chairperson behaviors construct (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). The principal components analyses also aided in establishing the instruments' reliability and rigor.

Data Screening

All data from SurveyMonkey was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet. From Excel, the data was transposed into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for screening and analyses. Individual cases were assessed to find incomplete survey responses. Eleven participant cases were identified and removed, leaving a total of 122 valid participant cases (N=122). Eight items were then reverse coded and frequencies were run on all items to assess missing responses. One item (Worked_other) had 18% missing responses and was omitted from the analyses. The demographic item, Age, had 9% missing responses and the mean (M =37.08) was used to fill the missing values. All other items showed less than 5% of missing values and therefore the Listwise default was used for analyses.

Chairperson Behaviors Construct

Prior to running a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), additional data screening was conducted to address multivariate outliers. With the remaining 122 participants (N = 122), grouped quantitative variables (selection criteria items, behavior items, and

satisfaction items) were examined by testing Mahalanobis' distance to screen for multivariate outliers. Four outlier cases were found for the behavior items, one for selection criteria, and three outlier cases were found for the satisfaction items, leaving a total of 117 participants to be used in the analyses. Principal component analysis (PCA) was then conducted in order to extract components from the behavior construct. The PCA assessed the 34 behavior items utilizing a varimax rotation. Eigenvalues, variance, scree plot, alpha reliabilities, and communalities were used to determine the appropriate number of components to retain. The initial analysis revealed a five-component solution. The five components accounted for 63% of the variance in the overall chairperson behaviors construct. After further review of the items, five items showed cross-loads on more than two components. These five items were removed and a subsequent principal components analysis was conducted and five components accounting for 64% of the variance were retained. After reviewing the component matrix, four additional items were removed based on low loadings (< .45) and reliabilities. A third PCA was conducted with the remaining 25 items. The scree plot and Eigenvalues (>1) continued to show five components; however, component four only consisted of two items. Alpha reliabilities and communalities were reviewed and two items were removed, leaving a final item count of 23 for the behaviors construct. The final PCA revealed five components, with an alpha reliability of .94 and 67% variance accounted for within the five components. Component 1 included five items with positive loadings and was identified as *Work Style* (WS). Component 2 included five items with positive loadings and was identified as *Personal Connection* (PC). Component 3 included five items with positive loadings and was identified as *Academic Assistance* (AA). Component 4

included five items with positive loadings and was identified as *Mentoring Abilities* (MA). Component 5 included three items with positive loadings and was identified as *Professional Development* (PD). Table 2 lists the five components, the items, and loadings within each component.

Table 2: Component Loadings for Chairperson Behaviors Construct

Items	WS	PC	AA	MA	PD
Spoke in "we" vs. "you" statements	.756				
Provided appropriate structure	.732				
Held me accountable and on track	.725				
Provided effective feedback on my dissertation work	.698				
Discussed expectations prior to the working relationship	.685				
Personable and comfortable to be around		.872			
Used humor in our interactions		.678			
Advocated for me with others		.670			
Was patient with my progress		.634			
Invested in me as a professional		.609			
*Unwilling to see others' perspectives			.711		
*Did not involve me in methodological decisions			.698		
*Did not allow for flexibility and			.693		

Table 2: Continued

Individuality

*Did not focus on my strengths		.647	
*Did my research for me		.582	
*Was difficult to schedule appointments			.643
Provided helpful edits	.518		.606
Was accountable and dependable	.516		.582
Was patient with me and the dissertation process		.519	.573
Sent me helpful research articles			.521
Helped me develop professional relationships in the field			.829
Assisted with career possibilities			.694
Taught me about research practices			.620

*= reverse-coded items
All loadings below .5 were suppressed

Selection Criteria Construct

Principal component analysis was conducted on 22 behavior items utilizing a varimax rotation. Eigenvalues, variance, scree plot, alpha reliabilities, and communalities were used to determine the appropriate number of components to retain. The initial analysis retained six components. The six components accounted for 58% of the variance. After reviewing the component matrix, three items were removed based on low loadings (< .45) and communalities. A second PCA was conducted with the

remaining 19 items and revealed five components; however, component five had only two items. A final principal components analysis was conducted using varimax rotation and a set factor loading of four. The matrix revealed four components, with an alpha reliability of .79 and 53% variance accounted for within the four components. Component 1 included seven items with positive loadings and was identified as *Success/Reputation* (S/R). Component 2 included five items with positive loadings and was identified as *Research/Methodology* (R/M). Component 3 included four items with positive loadings and was identified as *Collaborative Style* (CS). Component 4 included three items with both negative and positive loadings and was identified as *Obligation/Culture* (O/C). Table 3 shows the components, items and loadings within each component.

Table 3: Component Loadings for Selection Criteria Construct

Items	S/R	R/M	CS	O/C
Has a good reputation as a researcher	.810			
Has a good reputation as a dissertation chairperson	.801			
Recommended by other colleagues or peers	.733			
Higher chance of publishing my dissertation study	.606			
Has excellent writing skills	.586			
For a beneficial recommendation letter	.537			
Number of chairpersons' previous	.460			

Table 3: Continued

publications

Is doing research similar to my dissertation topic	.727		
I was approached by the faculty member	.630		
Previously worked with this person on research projects	.518		.505
Has the ability to understand my methodology	.490		
Ability to use already collected data	.473		
We share a similar work ethic		.743	
Matches my personality style		.733	
Previously worked with this person as a professor		.598	
Willing to serve as my chair		.519	
Felt obligated to work with this person			-.684
Previously worked with this person in my assistantship			.572
Is the same race/ethnicity			-.493

Demographic Statistics

Participants' ages ranged from 26 to 63 years, with a mean age of 37 (SD = 8.64). Ninety-one participants identified as female (n = 91), 29 as male (n = 29), and one as transgender (n = 1). The majority of participants identified as White (72 %) or African

American (18%). A small percentage identified as Asian American (1.6%), Hispanic (2.5%), Native American (1.6%), and biracial (1.6%). Three participants selected "other" for race/ethnicity. Of the 122 participants, 42% were counselor education graduates and 58% were counselor education doctoral candidates. Fourteen participants (11.5%) indicated that they had switched chairpersons during their dissertation process. Number of months working with one's dissertation chairperson ranged from 2 months to 96 months, with a mean of 22 months (SD= 15). Participants identified their type of dissertation as qualitative (36%), quantitative (60%), and other (14%). Ninety-two participants (75%) selected "Yes" to having an assistantship at some point during their dissertation process. Lastly, 107 (88%) participants indicated that they selected their chairperson and 15 (12%) indicated that their chairperson was assigned to them. Participants were asked to identify their chairpersons' gender, ethnicity, and years at the university. Chairperson gender was split approximately equally between female and male (52% and 48%, respectively). Over 83% of the chairpersons were identified as White, 5% were identified as Hispanic and 3.5% were identified as African American and Asian American. Chairpersons reported years at their current university ranged from 0-3 years (3%), 4-6 years (26%), 7-10 years (30%), and 10+ years (40%). Table 4 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 4: Demographic Statistics of Participants (N = 122)

Variable	n	Percentage
Gender		
Female	91	74.6

Table 4: Continued

	Male	29	23.8
	Transgender	1	.8
Race			
	African American	22	18
	Asian American	2	1.6
	Hispanic	3	3.5
	Native American	2	1.6
	White	88	72.1
	Biracial	2	1.6
	Other	3	2.5
Status			
	Doctoral candidate	71	58.2
	Recent graduate	51	41.8
Switched Chairperson			
	Yes	14	11.5
	No	108	88.5
Dissertation Type			
	Qualitative	32	26.2
	Quantitative	73	59.8
	Other	17	13.9
Assistantship			
	Yes	92	75.4

Table 4: Continued

No	30	24.6
Select your chairperson		
Yes	107	87.7
No	15	12.3

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics for the selection criteria items, separated into components. Scores were based on a 4-point range (1 = Not at all important, 4= Very important). Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics for the chairperson behaviors items, separated into components. Scores were based on a 4-point range (1= Completely Disagree, 4= Completely Agree).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Selection Criteria Items by Component

Component	Item	Mean	SD
Success/Reputation			
	Research Rep	3.01	1.04
	Chair Rep	3.15	1.03
	Recommended	2.25	1.02
	Publishing Diss	2.19	1.07
	Writing skills	3.02	1.01
	Rec Letter	1.79	0.97
	Prev Publications	2.06	0.90
Research/Methodology			

Table 5: Continued

		Mean	SD
	Similar Research	2.42	1.03
	Approached	1.64	0.89
	Worked Research	2.32	1.16
	Methodology	3.26	0.91
	Collected data	1.49	0.94
Collaborative Style			
	Work Ethic	3.38	0.77
	Personality Match	3.36	0.82
	Worked Prof	3.33	0.88
	Willing to Serve	3.44	0.75
Obligation/Culture			
	Obligatory	1.24	0.64
	Worked Assistantship	1.93	1.15
	Same race	1.10	0.33

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Chairperson Behaviors Items by Component

Component	Item	Mean	SD
Work Style			
	We vs. You	3.02	0.88
	Structure	3.30	0.79
	Accountable	3.26	0.72
	Feedback	3.56	0.58

Table 6: Continued

	Expectations	2.99	0.85
Personal Connection			
	Personable	3.58	0.59
	Humor	3.37	0.76
	Advocated	3.45	0.71
	Patience	3.66	0.56
	Invested	3.57	0.65
Academic Assistance			
	Willing	3.69	0.50
	Methodology	3.94	0.24
	Flexible	3.50	0.71
	Strengths	3.57	0.64
	Research	3.61	0.63
Mentoring Abilities			
	Scheduling	3.31	0.80
	Helpful edits	3.52	0.69
	Dependable	3.43	0.68
	Patient with Progress	3.54	0.61
	Articles	2.56	0.96
Professional Development			
	Professional Relationships	2.87	0.94
	Career Future	3.18	0.86

Table 6: Continued

Taught Research	2.90	0.90

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What selection criteria, if any, predicts doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

H₀ 1: Participants' selection criteria will not predict their overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

Research question one was addressed by conducting multiple regression, using the enter regression method. The four selection criteria components were entered in as independent variables with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable. Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts overall satisfaction, R^2 = .251, R^2_{adj} = .219, $F(4,98)$ = 7.87, $p < .001$. This model accounts for 25.1% of the variance in overall satisfaction. However, review of the regression coefficients indicates that only one component, Collaborative Style, significantly contributed to the final model, β = .445, $t(102)$ = 4.58, $p \leq .000$. See Table 7 and 8 for a summary of the regression model and components and coefficients.

Table 7: Selection Criteria Model Summary Predicting Overall Satisfaction

	R	R^2	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F_{chg}	p	df_1	df_2
Model 1	.501	.251	.219	.251	7.87	.000	4	94

Table 8: Coefficients Table for Selection Criteria

Component	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig	t	partial r
Collaborative Style	.376	.082	.445	.000	4.56	0.43
Success/Reputation	.058	.077	.084	.457	0.75	0.08
Research/Methodology	.046	.078	.060	.560	0.58	0.06
Obligation/Culture	-.027	.095	-.026	.779	-0.28	-0.03

Based on results from the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected. One selection criteria component, Collaborative Style, significantly contributed to the overall model for predicting participants' overall satisfaction with participants' chairperson.

Research Question 2: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

$H_0 2$: Chairperson behaviors will not predict participants' overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

Research question two was addressed by conducting multiple regression using the enter regression method. The five chairperson behavior components were entered in as independent variables with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable. Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts overall satisfaction, $R^2 =$ .720, $R^2_{adj}= .707$, $F(5,107) = 55.10$, $p \leq .001$. This model accounts for 72 % of the variance in overall satisfaction. Review of the regression coefficients indicates that two components, Work Style ($\beta = .390$, $t(112)= 4.96$, $p \leq .001$) and Personal Connection ($\beta = .456$, $t(112) = 6.19$, $p \leq .001$), significantly contributed to the final model. See Table 9 and 10 for a summary of the regression model and components and coefficients.

Table 9: Chairperson Behaviors Model Summary Predicting Overall Satisfaction

	R	R²	R²adj	ΔR²	Fchg	p	df₁	df₂
Model 1	.849	.720	.707	.720	55.10	.000	5	107

Table 10: Coefficients Table for Chairperson Behaviors

Component	B	Std.Error	Beta	Sig	t	Partial r
Work Style	.327	.075	.390	.000	4.96	0.43
Personal Connection	.498	.080	.456	.000	6.19	0.51
Academic Assistance	.029	.093	.020	.757	0.31	0.03
Mentoring Abilities	.089	.082	.089	.276	1.10	0.11
Professional Development	.010	.053	.012	.856	0.18	0.02

Based on results from the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected. Two chairperson behaviors components, Work Style and Personal Connection, significantly contributed to the overall model for predicting participants' overall satisfaction with participants' chairperson.

Because both regression models in research questions one and two were significant, a subsequent regression was conducted in order to assess both the selection criteria components and the behavior components in predicting overall satisfaction with the participants' chairperson. Conducting this regression has the ability to show a possible interaction between the two separate constructs when predicting overall satisfaction. For this analysis, stepwise regression was used based on the previous

regression results. Components were entered based on significant contribution by assessing each component's beta value. The components were entered in the following order: Personal Connection, Collaborative Style, Work Style, Mentoring Abilities, Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Obligation/Culture, Academic Assistance, and Professional Development. Results from the regression indicate that two behavior components, Work Style and Personal Connection, and one selection component, Success/Reputation, account for 72.7% of the variance for the dependent variable overall satisfaction and contributes significantly to the model. See Table 11 for a summary of the regression models.

Table 11: Chairperson Behaviors and Selection Criteria Model Summary

	R	R^2	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F_{chg}	p	df_1	df_2
Model 1	.770	.593	.589	.593	138.52	.000	1	95
Model 2	.846	.715	.709	.122	40.14	.000	1	94
Model 3	.853	.727	.719	.012	4.23	.043	1	93

Model 1 = Work Style
Model 2 = Work Style and Personal Connection
Model 3 = Work Style, Personal Connection, and Success/Reputation

Research Question 3: Do doctoral students' and recent graduates' demographic variables, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and type of study, predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

$H_0 3$: Doctoral students' and recent graduates' age, gender, and race/ethnicity will not predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

In order to address research question three, multiple regression was conducted. Prior to running the analysis, dummy codes were created for the categorical variables with more than two categories, including race/ethnicity and type of dissertation. Because there was only one participant that identified as transgender for the gender variable, the case was not used and gender remained with two categories. The four variables of age, gender, race, and dissertation type were entered in as independent variables with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable. Because of the unknown relevance of the independent variables, the enter method was selected. Regression results indicate that none of the independent variables significantly contributed to the dependent variable overall satisfaction, $R^2 = .011$, $R^2_{adj} = -.024$, $F(4,111) = .31$, $p = .868$. See Table 12 and 13 for a summary of the regression model and components and coefficients.

Table 12: Demographic Variables Model Summary Predicting Overall Satisfaction

	R	R^2	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F_{chg}	p	df_1	df_2
Model 1	.145	.021	-.024	.021	.471	.797	5	110

Table 13: Demographic Variable Coefficients

Component	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig
Age	-.004	.007	-.059	.536
Gender	-.109	.126	-.083	.388
Race	-.004	.035	-.010	.918
Dissertation Type	.012	.095	.012	.900

Based on the results from the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Doctoral students and recent graduates' age, gender, and race/ethnicity did not predict

overall satisfaction with participants' chairperson.

Research Question 4: What differences, if any, exist between participants who selected

their chairperson and those who were assigned a chairperson on their reports of

chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction of their dissertation chairperson?

H₀ 4: There are no significant differences between those who selected their chairperson

and those that were assigned chairpersons' reports of chairperson behaviors and overall

satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted in order to

address group differences between participants who selected their chairperson and those

that were assigned dissertation chairpersons. Because groups are being compared in

research question four, homogeneity of variance was tested. Box's M revealed a

significant value ($p = .007$) indicating that homogeneity of variance between the groups

could not be assumed. This is likely due to the unequal group sizes for participants who

selected (n = 102) their chairperson versus those who were assigned to their chairperson

(n = 15). Therefore, Pillai's Trace, a more robust statistic, was used as the multivariate

test statistic (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). The independent variable was type of

participant (selected vs. assigned) and the dependent variables overall satisfaction and

overall chairperson behaviors. MANOVA test results reveal that there is a significant

difference between doctoral students that selected their dissertation chairperson and those

that were assigned a dissertation chairperson on the dependent variables of overall

satisfaction and overall chairperson behaviors (Pillai's Trace = .103, $F(1, 116) = 6.635, p$

$= .002$, $\eta^2 = .103$). The effect size indicates that 10.3% of the variance in overall

satisfaction and overall chairperson behaviors can be attributed to the ability to select a

dissertation chairperson.

Table 14: Univariate Statistics for Selected vs. Assigned

Dependent Variable	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Satisfaction Construct	4.27	1	4.27	10.69	.001
Behavior Construct	2.83	1	2.83	13.02	.001

Based on the results from the MANOVA, the null hypothesis is rejected. Although

significant differences were found for both dependent variables, results must be

interpreted with extreme caution due to the differences in group size (Select, n = 103;

Assigned, n = 15). These results have a propensity towards an inflated probability of

Type I error.

Summary

Four research questions and four corresponding null hypotheses were addressed in

this study. The following null hypotheses were rejected:

H_0 1: Participants' selection criteria will not predict their overall satisfaction

with their chairperson.

H_0 2: Chairperson behaviors will not predict participants' overall satisfaction with

their chairperson.

$H_0 4$: There are no significant differences between those who selected their chairperson and those that were assigned chairpersons reports of chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

The analyses failed to reject one hypothesis:

$H_0 3$: Doctoral students' and recent graduates' age, gender, and race/ethnicity will not predict overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

The following chapter will expand on the current chapter's research results and discuss the study's limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for counselor educators.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to address gaps in the literature specific to counselor education doctoral students and satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson, which leads to higher degree completion rates and potentially lower attrition rates. Doctoral attrition rates in the U.S. have been measured at 57% across disciplines (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). In addition to many doctoral students falling short of completing the dissertation, others take much longer than expected. A high percentage of these cases are due to a lack of supervision or mentorship (Garcia et al., 1988). In fact, the single most frequent finding in a meta-synthesis study addressing doctoral attrition across 118 research studies was that successful degree completion is related to the amount and quality of contact between a doctoral student and her or his advisor (Bair & Haworth, 2004). In addition, Bloom et al. (2007) assert that the graduate student-graduate advisor relationship is "the most important factor in graduate student success" (p. 28). Within this relationship are the factors of student selection criteria and chairpersons' behaviors, which are shown to influence overall satisfaction between the doctoral student and their chairperson (Goulden, 1991; Lovitts, 2001). Therefore, the present study was conducted in order to better understand which variables are most influential in predicting satisfaction in the relationship between counseling doctoral students and their dissertation chairperson. Specifically, the study was designed to address the gaps in the literature regarding selection and behaviors as predictors of student satisfaction among the counselor education doctoral population. By understanding the causes and consequences of attrition, doctoral programs have the potential to take steps to increase completion and graduation rates for all students.

Student satisfaction with the chairperson, criteria used by the student to select the chairperson, and chairperson behaviors were measured using a researcher-developed survey. Pre-existing literature and data from a qualitative pilot study conducted by the researcher were used to create the survey. Multiple regression analyses were used to predict which selection criteria components, chairperson behavior components, and demographic variables were most influential in predicting overall satisfaction with one's chairperson. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to assess group differences between counselor education doctoral students (both current and past) who selected their chairperson versus those who were assigned to a chairperson. After data screening, 122 complete and valid surveys remained (N=122). The results of the analyses and the implications of the findings are summarized in this chapter.

Discussion Regarding Research Questions

The present study sought to address the link between students' selection strategies and their overall satisfaction with their chairperson, as previous research indicated that little is known about selection as it relates to satisfaction (Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007).

Selection Criteria and Satisfaction

Research question one examined the extent to which selection criteria used by doctoral students and recent graduates predicted participants' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. This question was answered by first conducting a principal component analysis, which revealed four separate selection criteria components including *Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Collaborative Style*, and *Obligation/Culture*. Multiple regression was then conducted to determine which, if any, of these four

selection criteria significantly predicted students' and graduates' satisfaction with their dissertation chair. Results from the regression suggested that *Collaborative Style* significantly contributed to overall satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson. There are four items within the component of *Collaborative Style*, which include: *share a similar work ethic, personality match, worked with previously as professor,* and *willing to serve.* These particular items suggest a shared style between chairperson and doctoral student. It can therefore be concluded that doctoral students' perceptions of their style matching with, or being in collaboration with, one's chairperson is most influential in predicting overall satisfaction in the advisor-advising relationship. The four items within this component seem to share a sense of alignment between the student and professor, which involves internal compatibilities, such as a similar work ethic and similar personality styles. These contrast with external similarities and benefits, such as a focus on similar research interest or receiving a beneficial recommendation letter.

These particular findings support those of Wallace (2000), who found that both previous interactions (specifically, being in a class conducted by the chosen chairperson) and personality match, which Wallace asserted leads to similarities in the chairperson's and student's perceptions and expectations of one another and the dissertation process, were among the top reasons doctoral students selected their dissertation chairperson. However, the present study conflicts with a third finding by Wallace. The author found that students were more likely to choose a chairperson whose research interests were similar to their own. Within the four selection components in the present study, similar research interest fell into the *Research/Methodology* component, which did not produce significant results when predicting overall satisfaction. This could possibly indicate that

although research and methodology are factors often used in the selection process, it does not contribute to a satisfactory advisory relationship.

The findings in Zhao et al's study both support and conflict with the current study's findings. In Zhao et al.'s findings, the factors of Advisor Reputation and Intellectual Compatibility were found to be the most prominent selection choices for participants in the field of humanities. In terms of predicting satisfaction among selection, Intellectual Compatibility was found to be significant in Zhao et al.'s study. Findings from the current study show items such as collaboration and previous interactions to be significant predictors for satisfaction. Although Zhao's study shows differing results, his study was not specific to counselor education doctoral students nor were previous relationships and personality match options available for participants to select. In addition, the findings were generalized to all fields of Humanities. Therefore, findings from the current study may be more indicative of counselor education doctoral students' preferences. Finally, previous research (Smart & Conant, 1990) shows that, from the perspective of the advisor, the most important consideration when selecting a chairperson should be that person's expertise and experience in the field. This most closely aligns with the *Success/Reputation* component. Similarly, in the current study Success/Reputation was a significant factor for counseling doctoral students in the follow-up regression analysis.

Chairperson Behaviors and Satisfaction

Research question two explored which chairperson behaviors best predicted overall satisfaction with one's chairperson. Principal component analysis was conducted and five chairperson behavior components were extracted, including *Work Style,*

Personal Connection, Academic Assistance, Mentoring Abilities, and *Professional Development.* A multiple regression analysis was then conducted to determine which, if any, of these chairperson behavior constructs significantly predicted participants' satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Results from the regression suggest that two components, *Work Style* and *Personal Connection,* significantly predicted overall satisfaction. The model containing these two components contributed over 71% of variance in overall satisfaction. Within the *Work Style* component are items such as: Spoke in "we" vs. "you" statements, provided appropriate structure, held me accountable and on track, provided effective feedback, and discussed expectations prior to the working relationship. Items within the *Personal Connection* component include: Personable and comfortable to be around, used humor in our interactions, advocated for me with others, was patient with my progress, and was invested in me as a professional. These significant chairperson behavior components center on personal, mentoring, and validating behaviors shown by chairpersons as perceived by students. These findings support previous research that suggests that students feel more comfortable and more satisfied when expectations are shared and discussed up front (Friedman, 1987; Goulden, 1991; Golde, 2005). In addition, results of the present study support previous research that suggests that providing genuine care and support was also shown to increase student satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson (Bloom et al., 2007). Results from the study conducted by Zhao et al. (2007) both support and negate the current findings. Participants in both Humanities and Social Sciences (not specific to departments) showed the factor of Academic Advising contributing the most to satisfaction. This factor does have some items in common with the current study's component of *Work Style,* such as

receiving effective feedback, which incidentally was the highest loading in Zhao's advising factor; however, the remainder of the items matched closest with *Professional Development* and *Academic Assistance*, which did not significantly contribute to predicting overall satisfaction. Other qualitative research (Bloom et al., 2007; Protivnak & Foss, 2009) also found professional aspects, such as integrating students into the profession, as an important theme when identifying successful behaviors demonstrated by advisors; however, the majority of the findings from previous research centered on the importance of personal aspects such as mentoring, providing a nurturing environment, and supporting the student. These themes were also important findings from the current study.

Selection Criteria, Chairperson Behaviors and Satisfaction

A subsequent regression was conducted as a follow-up to research questions one and two. The independent variables included the four selection criteria components (*Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Collaborative Style,* and *Obligation/Culture)* and the five chairperson behavior components (*Work Style, Personal Connection, Academic Assistance, Mentoring Abilities,* and *Professional Development).* All of the components were entered into the analysis in order to assess which components, when combined, best predicted overall satisfaction. For this regression, the stepwise method was used based on the previous beta weights from the results of research questions one and two. The component with the highest beta weight (*Personal Connection*) was entered first, and the remaining components were entered until the component with the lowest beta weight (*Professional Development*) was entered. Results from the regression model suggest that three components, *Work Style, Personal*

Connection, and *Success/Reputation* together contributed to 72% of the variance explained in overall satisfaction. Interestingly, the same two components from chairperson behaviors significantly contributed to overall satisfaction in both the combined regression as well as the individual regression (research question two); however, their beta weights were reversed, indicating that in the overall regression, *Work Style* proved to be the most significant predictor of satisfaction. *Success/Reputation,* which was a selection criteria component, did not prove to be significant in the regression examining selection criteria as predictors of satisfaction (research question one). However, this component did significantly predict satisfaction in the model that combined selection criteria and chairperson behaviors. In addition, the percent of variance explained by the combined regression is almost the exact same percentage solely explained by the behaviors model. Furthermore, when the selection criteria components were entered without the chairperson behaviors components, only *Collaborative Style* seemed to predict overall satisfaction; however, *Success/Reputation* seemed to predict overall satisfaction when combined with chairperson behaviors. In other words, the *Success/Reputation* component is only significant when paired with behavior components. Previous research (Smart & Conant, 1990; Zhao et al., 2007) does support selection items that are found in the component *Success/Reputation* as valuable factors to consider when selecting a chairperson. Some of these examples include: the reputation of the chairperson, number of chairpersons' previous publications, and receiving a beneficial letter of recommendation. In Zhoa et al.'s study, findings showed similar results for his factor including Reputation items. When the factor was paired with behaviors, it was significant, but when it was analyzed with solely selection factors, it

was not significant. This finding that *Success/Reputation* is only significant when paired

with behavior components could be due to the fact that the items within the

Success/Reputation component are more external behaviors, which seem to match more

consistently with component items of chairperson behaviors (providing effective

feedback; and providing a good amount of structure). In addition, the process of selecting

one's dissertation chairperson is an internalized, personal experience limited to a point in

time, whereas chairperson behaviors are an ongoing, external phenomenon that may be

more prominent and evident when determining overall satisfaction. For the findings of

the current study, the selection criteria component *Success/Reputation* only seemed to

play a significant role when combined with chairperson behavior components.

Demographic Variables and Satisfaction

Research question three addressed the demographic characteristics of the

participants in the study. Specifically, research question three examined doctoral

students' and recent graduates' age, gender, race/ethnicity and type of study as predictors

of overall satisfaction with their chairperson. Regression results indicate that none of the

demographic variables significantly predicted the dependent variable of overall

satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that most

demographic characteristics do not seem to play a significant role when determining

overall satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2007). Although the Council of Graduate Schools (2008)

Ph.D. completion project does suggest that demographic characteristics play a role in

attrition and completion rates, they do not seem to significantly contribute to overall

satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson according to the current study's findings.

Other research (Benkin et al., 2000) does suggest a difference in males and females when

assessing overall satisfaction with one's chairperson. Specifically, results from Benkin et al.'s (2000) study show that, overall, men were more likely to be satisfied with their dissertation chairperson than women, and reported more satisfaction in reference to time spent with their dissertation chairperson. Additionally, fewer than 70% of both women and men indicated that they would choose the same advisor. The results from Benkin et al.'s study were based on percentages of satisfaction ratings; therefore, the results do not suggest that the differences were significant. Results from the current study suggest that females (M = 3.65, SD = 0.50) were found to be slightly more satisfied with their dissertation chairperson overall than males (M = 3.59, SD = 0.58), although the results were not significant. Similar to Benkin et al.'s findings, fewer than 70% of participants in the current study completely agreed that they would select the same chairperson again. This finding may be influenced by participating in the current study, that is, having to go back and process what behaviors one's chairperson did display. If a doctoral student (both past and present) views items on the instrument as desirable behaviors that their chairperson did not exhibit, the student may then guess what it would have been like to have a chairperson that did provide humor, or send helpful research articles, or someone who was invested in their life outside of the dissertation process. Therefore, they may not view their selection of their chairperson as the best choice. In addition, for the post-graduate doctoral students, they may currently be a faculty member and have had to switch roles and serve as a dissertation chairperson; therefore, this participant may have been comparing their own behaviors with those of their dissertation chair and it may have skewed their overall ranking of choosing that same person. Although fewer than 70%

indicated that they would choose the same chairperson, the inverse percentage (30%) said they "completely agreed" that they would choose the same person.

Selected vs. Assigned and Satisfaction

In order to assess research question four, a MANOVA was conducted to address differences in chairperson behaviors and overall satisfaction between participants who selected their chairperson versus those who were assigned to a dissertation chairperson. For this analysis, the dependent variables included the chairperson behavior construct and overall satisfaction. The factor for the MANOVA was type of participant (selected vs. assigned). Results reveal that overall satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson, as well as chairperson behaviors, were significantly different between the two groups of participants. However, group sizes were not equal (selected n = 103; assigned n = 15); therefore, results should be interpreted with extreme caution. For both dependent variables, those who selected their chairperson had higher mean values overall than participants who were assigned a dissertation chairperson (Overall satisfaction: selected M = 3.62; assigned M = 3.05; Chairperson behaviors: selected M= 3.36; assigned M = 2.90). Previous literature (Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001; Schlosser et al.,, 2003) supports the current study's findings that those students who are able to select their chairpersons are more likely to be satisfied than those who are assigned to a dissertation chairperson. The literature also suggests that this satisfaction leads to a higher rate of completion (Willis & Carmichael, 2011). In regard to the behavior components, it is likely that if doctoral students had the capability to make their own choice regarding their chairperson, they may also have had a chance to explore and understand their selected faculty members' behaviors, thus leading them to either choose or eliminate that person based on behaviors

displayed by the potential chairperson. If, however, a doctoral student was assigned to a faculty member without having the opportunity to go through the process of choosing the best fit, the doctoral student may not have engaged in the same selecting behaviors as a student that had to narrow down and decide which faculty member would make the best chairperson.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study includes the self-constructed survey. Because the purpose of the study was not to establish the psychometric properties of the survey, it is difficult to gauge the reliability and validity of the survey with any certainty. Although both the selection criteria construct and the chairperson behavior construct revealed high alpha reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha = .79 and .94, respectively), additional research should be conducted in order to establish the overall psychometric properties of the survey. In addition, participants may have selected their chairperson based on criteria – or chairpersons may have exhibited behaviors - that were not included as part of the survey. Accordingly, the results of this study may not be fully inclusive of the selection and behavior constructs actually experienced by the doctoral student.

A second limitation of the study surrounds the participants. Although N=133 participants completed the study, which well exceeded the number of participants identified as necessary based on the a priori power test, certain groups of participants (selected vs. assigned; race/ethnicity) were severely unequal. This limitation makes it especially difficult to assume significance (research questions four) or non-significance (research questions three). It also makes the results difficult to generalize to all counselor education doctoral students because of the low number of minority students that

participated in the survey, which is not necessarily representative of the counselor education doctoral population. Although the survey was opened to both CACREP and non-CACREP students, it is unknown how many students were or were not from CACREP-accredited schools; therefore, it is difficult to assume generalizability to all counselor education doctoral students. In addition, it was unknown how many eligible participants received the request for participation. Initially, participants were to be recruited using emails sent by CACREP-accredited department chairs to past and present eligible doctoral students; however, due to a lack of responses, the survey request was opened up to CESNET, a counselor educator list-serve. Within both forms of participant recruiting, it was unknown how many eligible participants received the request for participation; therefore, the rate of return is unknown.

Lastly, the results from this study represent only the perspective of the doctoral student. Although it is invaluable to have this information from the perspective of the doctoral student, it is also equally important to understand the perspective of the advisor.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research largely address the limitations of the present study. Specifically, researchers may want to focus on replicating these findings with a larger and more diverse sample of counselor education doctoral students. In addition, future research could focus specifically on minority doctoral students and overall satisfaction. Researchers agree (Adams, 1992; Chan, 2008) that, specifically for minorities, good mentoring is a key variable when determining success or failure in completing a doctoral degree. This mentoring is believed to serve as a bridge between the student and the department. This connection increases collegiality and lessens

isolation. Examining the relationship between student-faculty mentorship (*Personal Connection/Professional Development)* as a factor contributing to minority students' success in a counseling doctoral program was beyond the scope of this study; however, it merits further attention by researchers.

Future research could also focus on understanding how selection and behaviors influence each other. Previous literature (Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001) and results from the current study show that allowing students to select their own chairperson leads to greater satisfaction, greater likelihood of completing one's degree, and a sense of empowerment and accountability that tends to extend beyond the selection process. It is uncertain, however, how ways of selection influence or predict specific chairperson behaviors. Future studies may also want to include the voice of the advisor. This would allow for a greater level of understanding concerning what constitutes a satisfactory relationship between chairperson and doctoral student. Future studies may also want to allow participants to share their own influential selection criteria or helpful chairperson behaviors that may have been inadvertently left off the list in order to construct a more robust survey. Finally, establishing the psychometric properties of this survey would prove to be beneficial in order to have a sound instrument that could assist in predicting doctoral students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

Implications

Previous literature indicates that the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chairperson is essential in determining students' successful completion and defense of the dissertation (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001). Intertwined in this process are the rising attrition rates that have an enormous effect on all individuals involved (Bair &

Haworth, 2004). Findings from the current study reveal that both how counselor education doctoral students' select their chairperson and the behaviors that the chairperson exhibits are influential in predicting overall satisfaction in the advisor-advisee relationship. This knowledge can assist in identifying best practices in the dissertation process. Specifically, findings from this study can inform doctoral students and faculty members about the criteria and behaviors that contribute to good advising relationships and positive dissertation outcomes. Faculty members might hold a collaborative meeting to suggest that doctoral students take time to get to know potential chairpersons one-on-one prior to selecting a dissertation chairperson. This step can be helping in order to assess how the student plans to go about selecting their chairperson. Providing research literature, such as this study, may assist with both a doctoral students' selection and faculty members' behaviors in order to create a satisfactory relationship.

A greater understanding by both faculty members and doctoral students of the most influential selection criteria (similar work ethic, personality match, previous relationships) and chairperson behaviors (patience, investment, advocacy, feedback) can result in greater satisfaction in the advisor-advisee relationship. This has the potential to influence both students and faculty, who may benefit from reviewing these criteria, and in turn, make decisions about selection or behaviors that may lead to a favorable dissertation outcome. Results from the current study can also inform programs of best practices in advising and facilitate critically reflective practices by dissertation chairpersons.

In a larger sense, results from this study and future studies may provide information to programs on how to decrease doctoral attrition. As this and previous

research has shown, the relationship between doctoral students and their chairperson is influential in determining the successful completion of the dissertation (Lovitts, 2001). This last hurdle then leads to completion of the doctoral degree, thus increasing completion rates and decreasing attrition rates. Overall, doctoral programs invest a remarkable number of resources in their doctoral students – advising, course work, graduate assistantships, research opportunities, and mentorship. When students do not finish their degree requirements and leave the program, it equates to a loss of this net investment.

By utilizing the current study's findings to understand which selection criteria and chairperson behaviors are most likely to influence overall satisfaction, counselor educators might intentionally display beneficial advising behaviors which may lead to greater student satisfaction and increased completion rates.

Overall Summary

The current study is the first known quantitative study to address selection criteria and chairperson behaviors as predictors of satisfaction among counselor education doctoral students. The overall results indicate that the top five selection strategies that participants rated as "Very Important" when selecting a dissertation chairperson included: Shares a similar work ethic; Matches my personality style; Previously worked with this person as a professor in class; Willing to serve as my chair; and, Has a good reputation as a dissertation chairperson. The first four on the list were included in the *Collaborative Style* component, highlighting the importance of establishing a connection with the faculty member in order to assess whether there may be a similar work style or personality match. One way this may be accomplished is through working with a

professor in class or even co-teaching with that professor. Taking into consideration other peers' evaluations of the faculty member as a suitable chairperson seems to play a role in selection as well. Results revealed the *Collaborative Style* component significantly contributed to predicting overall satisfaction. Specifically, the *Collaborative Style* component accounted for 25% of the variance in predicting overall satisfaction.

For chairperson behaviors, *Work Style* and *Personal Connection* components significantly contributed to predicting overall satisfaction. This result suggests that over 70% of overall satisfaction with one's chairperson is explained by chairperson behaviors, specific to the two components. Within those two components, the highest-rated items included: Was patient with me and the dissertation process; Personable and comfortable to be around; Invested in me as a professional; Provided effective feedback; and, Advocated for me with others. These particular items center on the importance of support and the ability to be a mentor, or role model, as key characteristics of exhibited chairperson behaviors that lead to increased satisfaction among counselor education doctoral students. Although other chairperson behaviors, such as sharing knowledge of research and providing career consultation, may prove to be beneficial to doctoral students, the mentoring and supportive chairperson behaviors significantly predicted overall satisfaction.

Research shows (Willis & Carmichael, 2011) that the number one reason doctoral students across disciplines do not complete their program is because of problematic chairperson relationships. Having a better understanding of what constitutes a satisfactory and successful advisor-advisee relationship will assist in dissertation

completion and degree completion. The results from the current study allow counselor educators to better understand how doctoral students go about selecting their dissertation chairperson, chairperson behaviors that doctoral students deem important, and the impact of these constructs on doctoral students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. This overall satisfaction between advisor and advisee is a direct link to successfully completing the dissertation(Bair & Haworth, 2004), which is the final piece of the puzzle to completing one's degree, which in turn impacts counseling doctoral program attrition rates.

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CHAPTER SIX: JOURNAL ARTICLE

Perceived satisfaction of counseling doctoral students with their dissertation chairperson: Examining selection criteria and chairperson behaviors

The relationship between doctoral students and their chairperson has been linked to students' successful completion of their dissertation and program of study (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001). This study examined factors used by students to select their dissertation chairperson and behaviors exhibited by chairpersons as predictors of students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. A sample of counselor education doctoral students ($\eta = 133$) participated in the study. Results indicate that the selection criteria component, *Collaborative Style,* and the chairperson behaviors components, *Personal Connection* and *Work Style*, were most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

The process of successfully completing a doctoral program is a multifaceted journey that depends upon a variety of factors. One key component of degree completion hinges on the dissertation process. It is well documented in the literature that multiple invested entities, including the student, faculty, department, and the university are affected by the successful completion of a doctoral degree, which stems from the successful completion of a dissertation (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Garcia, Malott, & Brethower, 1988; Gardner, 2009; Goulden, 1991; Kritsonis & Marshall, 2009; Lenz, 1997; Lovitts, 2001). In the United States, doctoral attrition rates have been measured at 57% across disciplines (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). More recently, data show that attrition rates are on

a decline for most students in Ph.D. programs; however, those in the field of humanities continue to stall (Inside Higher Ed, 2010). Studies indicate that many students fall short of completing the dissertation or take much longer than expected due to a lack of supervision or mentorship (Garcia et al., 1988). Specifically, the single most frequent finding in a meta-synthesis study addressing doctoral attrition across 118 research studies was that successful degree completion is related to the amount and quality of contact between a doctoral student and her or his advisor (Bair & Haworth, 2004). Although these findings are reflective of all disciplines, research on doctoral attrition specific to the field of counseling is lacking (Willis & Carmichael, 2011).

Mentoring Relationships

Studies indicate that many students fall short of completing the dissertation, or take much longer than expected, due to a lack of supervision or mentorship (Garcia, Malott, & Brethower, 1988). Developing mentoring relationships in doctoral programs is an essential factor in the doctoral process (Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Lovitts, 2001). In 2009, Protivnak and Foss conducted a qualitative study to assess themes that influenced the doctoral experience. Participants in the Protnivak and Foss study included 141 counselor education doctoral students whose email addresses were accessed from the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET). Participants were emailed five open-ended questions along with a demographic form. The researchers found that factors such as departmental culture, mentoring, academics, support systems, and personal issues influenced counseling doctoral students' perceptions of the doctoral experience (Protivnak & Foss, 2009). Many participants found mentoring to be the most helpful

experience in their doctoral program, suggesting that mentoring by a doctoral faculty member assisted in inducting students into the culture and profession of counselor education.

Casto, Caldwell and Salazar (2005) also examined the importance of mentoring relationships between faculty and students. Their conceptual study focused specifically on faculty and doctoral students in the field counselor education. Casto et al. discussed the benefits of having a mentor in the field of counselor education to assist with co-teaching, research activities, enhancing professional competence and identity development. Kolbert, Morgan and Brendel (2002) also commented on the unique faculty-student interaction within counselor education programs. Specifically, Kolbert et al. recognized that counselor education doctoral students interacted with facultly in multiple ways, including: supervision, teaching, administration, advising, and through graduate student employment.. In addition to these roles, students also are required to participate in process groups, where faculty members may serve as the facilitator. Accordingly, the interactions between faculty members who serve as advisors, supervisors, and mentors and the doctoral student need to be understood in order to recognize what contributes to a satisfactory advising relationship.

Selection and Behaviors

Both student selection criteria and chairpersons' behaviors are shown to impact overall satisfaction between the doctoral student and their chairperson (Goulden, 1991; Lovitts, 2001); thus influencing the students' overall degree completion. In 2001, Lovitts examined the differences between high and low Ph.D. producing faculty in relation to student satisfaction. Faculty who fell into the high Ph.D. producing category were more

likely to advise students who successfully defended their dissertations and graduated the program. Results indicated that the amount of time faculty spend with students, where they interact with students (formal vs. informal settings), the quality and quantity of their collaborative work with students on projects and papers, and their social interactions with students all influenced doctoral students' satisfaction with their chairperson or advisor (Lovitts, 2001). In addition, participants in the study who did not go on to complete their doctoral degree were six times more likely to be assigned to their advisors as opposed to having the ability to choose their advisors. Furthermore, completers were cited as feeling much more satisfied with their advisors than non-completers. Therefore, the act of choosing one's advisor and not being assigned to an advisor haphazardly was a core factor in satisfaction and completion of doctoral students in this study (Lovitts, 2001).

Wallace (2000) researched meaningful mentoring relationships and the process by which the student/chairperson relationship began or why the chairperson was selected. Participants included six female doctoral students (Wallace, 2000). Previous interactions, personality matching, and similar research interests were the three most prominent themes that emerged from the study (Wallace, 2000). All of the female students that chose female advisors (n=4) had previous interactions with their selected advisors, where females who chose males as their advisors (n=2) had not had previous interactions with them, but did have similar research interests as their advisor. Within the theme of previous interactions, the majority of students in the study commented on the fact that their selection was based on having been in a class conducted by the selected chairperson or having worked with that faculty member prior to the dissertation process. Regarding personality matching, the female students perceived that having similar personality styles

as their chairpersons would lead to similar perceptions and expectations in their relationship (Wallace, 2000).

Smart and Conant (1990) conducted a qualitative study examining faculty members' perceptions of important factors faculty believed doctoral students should consider when selecting a dissertation chairperson. They found that faculty often advise incoming to incoming doctoral students on selecting the "right" chairperson based on characteristics such as selecting someone who has similar research interests, a thriving reputation for publishing, and someone who is well educated in methodology (Smart & Conant, 2000). Although this combination can equal success for some doctoral students, there seem to be more variables involved for creating a satisfactory and successful student-chairperson relationship. For example, Bloom, Cuevas, Hall and Evans (2007), accumulated 24 letters of nomination for outstanding advisors from a variety of students enrolled in the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois. Five emergent themes were identified, and the researchers interviewed seven students who had nominated their advisors for honors for member-check confirmation (Bloom et al., 2007). The researchers identified five overarching behaviors of outstanding advisors, including: demonstration of genuine care for students, accessibility, being a role model in professional and personal matters, individually tailoring guidance, and proactively integrating students into the profession (Bloom et al., 2007). The emerging themes found in the study centered on the importance of support and nurturing characteristics of the advisor rather than the research background or reputation of the chairperson.

Zhao, Golde, and McCormick (2007) set out to examine how selection of a chairperson and chairpersons' behaviors affect doctoral student satisfaction, noting that

the process by which students and advisors, or chairpersons, come together is relatively

unexplored. Zhao et al. (2007) examined two research questions: (1) After controlling for

student characteristics, do patterns of advisor choice and advisor behavior differ by

discipline area? (2) After controlling for student characteristics and disciplinary area,

how do advisor choice and advisor behavior relate to satisfaction with the advisor

relationship? Data for this study was gathered from a previous national survey of

advanced doctoral students across 11 disciplines at 27 leading doctorate producing

universities. The sample consisted of η = 4010 students. The four broad discipline areas

included humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and biological sciences. Results

from a factor analysis of the researcher-developed survey revealed three major

dimensions under students' selection, including advisor reputation, intellectual

compatibility, and pragmatic benefits. Four factors were identified under the advisor

behavior dimension, including academic advising, personal touch, career development,

and cheap labor. Results revealed differences within disciplines for selection, behaviors

and satisfaction. For the humanities and social sciences, the academic advising

behavioral factor had the highest score, whereas cheap labor, which was more of a factor

in physical and biological sciences, had the lowest score in relation to satisfaction. In

regard to advisor choice, intellectual compatibility and advisor reputation were

mentioned most often in the humanities, while pragmatic benefit was negatively rated.

Overall, the humanities students were the most satisfied, and the biological science

students were the least satisfied in their relationship with their advisor. In addition,

student background characteristics appeared to play a limited role in predicting advisor

choice or advisor behavior, although men were found to be minimally more satisfied than

women in their relationship with their advisor. Results suggest that overall satisfaction with the advising relationship is positively correlated with advisor choice and advisor behavior factors (Zhao et al., 2007). Implications from this study can aid in assisting students (depending on discipline) in determining which factors to consider when choosing an advisor; however, information for the counseling field is lacking.

Research indicates that the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chairperson is a key element in determining the success of the student in completing their degree (Bloom et al., 2007). Much of the previous research in the area of assessing behaviors has been conducted in a qualitative manner in order to give voice to the participants and to understand their stories in a more specific tone. All of these studies have been informative across disciplines; however, there is a gap in the counseling literature concerning how counseling doctoral students select their chairperson, what potential behaviors their chairperson demonstrates, and if these variables predict overall satisfaction within the student-chairperson relationship. An available instrument to measure these constructs for counseling students is also lacking. Specifically, researchers have acknowledged in just the last year that "a limited amount of research focusing on counselor education doctoral students has been conducted" (Protivnak & Foss, 2009, p. 240). Research also shows that the interactions between faculty and students in counseling education programs seem to be unique.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. The overall question of *Which variables are most*

influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson during the dissertation process? will be assessed by the following research questions:

> **RQ1**: What selection criteria, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?
>
> **RQ2**: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

Counselor education doctoral students who had successfully proposed their dissertation study and counselor education graduates who had defended their dissertation within the past 24-months were invited to participate in the study. A survey designed by the researcher, using previous literature and a qualitative grounded theory study, was posted on SurveyMonkey. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the university's institutional review board prior to any data collection. Emails were sent out to CACREP-accredited department chairs and an invitation to participate was posted on CESNET, the counselor education listserv. The number of potential participants who fit the above criteria was unknown. A priori power analysis was conducted to determine the number of participants needed. Assuming a medium effect size of .05 at Power =.80, 91 participants were needed to complete the survey (Cohen, 1992). After an 8-week period, 133 participants completed the survey. After examining the data for complete cases, 122 participants had valid, usable data and were used for analysis.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used for this study was comprised of four sections. The informed consent appeared at the beginning of the survey and participants were required to confirm their consent in order to proceed to the overall survey. The first section of the survey included demographic items about the participant and the dissertation chairperson. The second section contained items pertaining to participants' selection criteria of their dissertation chair. The third section included items about chairpersons' behaviors. The fourth section included items about participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

Item Generation

Survey items were developed based on prominent ideas that emerged from a qualitative pilot study and a review of peer-review literature addressing chairperson behaviors, criteria used by individuals to select their chairperson, and individuals' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. The qualitative study, conducted by the researcher, examined the factors that influenced new counseling professionals' selection of their dissertation chairperson and beneficial behaviors exhibited by the chairperson during the dissertation process. Purposeful and snowball sampling were used to secure seven participants for individual interviews. Interview questions assessed how the participant went about selecting their chairperson, what they considered to be the most important factors for selection, and behaviors their chairperson exhibited that positively or negatively impacted the advising relationship. Axial coding was used for constant comparison (Patton, 1990), and nine prominent ideas were found. The survey instrument used in this study was developed based on these nine prominent ideas. At least three

survey questions were developed for each prominent idea to ensure comprehensive

coverage (DeVellis, 2003).

Content Validity

The final instrument consisted of 62 items, excluding demographic variables. As

previously noted, survey questions were developed based prominent ideas derived from a

qualitative study conducted prior to the current study, and existing literature that details

behaviors exhibited by chairpersons and overall satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2007). The

initial list of items was sent to a panel of experts for the purpose of ensuring the

appropriateness of the items for the study. This panel consisted of persons who had

recently (within the last 5 years) completed their doctoral dissertation from a CACREP-

accredited university in the field of counseling. Utilizing recent Ph.D. graduates ensured

that their own dissertation process, selection criteria, and overall satisfaction were still a

recent experience. Overall feedback was positive and minimal changes were made,

which included adding one demographic question, changing the wording on two selection

items, and removing one chairperson behavior item that was redundant.

Data Screening

All data from SurveyMonkey was downloaded into Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for screening and analyses. Eight variables were

then reverse coded and frequencies were run on all variables to assess missing responses.

Individual cases were assessed to find incomplete survey responses. Eleven participant

cases were identified and removed, leaving a total of 122 valid participant cases (N=122).

All variables showed less than 5% of missing values and therefore the Listwise default

was used. Prior to running a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), additional data

screening was conducted. Linearity and normality were examined and variables did not violate assumptions.

The final PCA for selection criteria revealed four components, with an alpha reliability of .79 and 53% variance accounted for within the four components (*Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Collaborative Style, Obligation/Cultural*). See Appendix A for selection criteria components, items and loadings within each component.

The final PCA for chairperson behaviors revealed five components, with an alpha reliability of .94 and 67% variance accounted for within the five components (*Work Style, Personal Connection, Academic Assistance, Mentoring Abilities,* and *Professional Development*). See Appendix B for chairperson behavior components, items, and loadings within each component.

Data Analysis

Separate multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction based on participants' selection criteria components and chairperson behaviors components. Research questions were analyzed as follows:

Research Question 1: Multiple regression was conducted to investigate which selection criteria were most influential in predicting participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. The predictor variables for this analysis were four selection criteria components (Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Collaborative Style, Obligation/Cultural) and the dependent variable was overall satisfaction with the participants' chairperson.

Research Question 2: Multiple regression was conducted to investigate which chairperson behavior components were most influential in predicting participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. The predictor variables for this analysis were five chairperson behavior components (Work Style, Personal Connection, Academic Assistance, Mentoring Abilities, Professional Development) and the dependent variable was overall satisfaction with the participants' chairperson.

Results

Participant Characteristics

Participants' ages ranged from 26 to 63 years, with a mean age of 37 (SD = 8.64). Ninety-one participants identified as female (n = 91), 29 as male (n = 29), and one as transgender (n = 1). The majority of participants identified as White (72 %) or African American (18%). A small percentage identified as Asian American (1.6%), Hispanic (2.5%), Native American (1.6%), and biracial (1.6%). Three participants selected "other" for race/ethnicity. Of the 122 participants, 42% were counselor education graduates and 58% were counselor education doctoral candidates. Lastly, 107 (88%) participants indicated that they selected their chairperson and 15 (12%) indicated that their chairperson was assigned to them. Participants were asked to identify their chairpersons' gender, ethnicity, and years at the university. Chairperson gender was split approximately equally between female and male (52% and 48%, respectively). Over 83% of the chairpersons were identified as White, 5% were identified as Hispanic and 3.5% were identified as African American and Asian American. Chairpersons' years at their current university ranged from 0-3 years (3%), 4-6 years (26%), 7-10 years (30%), and 10+ years (40%).

Selection Criteria

Research Question 1: What selection criteria, if any, predicts doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

H_0 1: Participants' selection criteria will not predict their overall satisfaction with their chairperson.

Research question one was addressed by conducting multiple regression, using the enter regression method. The four selection criteria components were entered in as independent variables with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable. There were 15 participants in the study that were assigned to a chairperson and did not select their dissertation chairperson, and were eliminated from this regression, leaving 107 eligible participants. Prior to the regression, grouped quantitative variables for the selection criteria items and satisfaction items were examined by testing Mahalanobis' distance to screen for multivariate outliers. Within selection criteria, three cases exceeded the chi-square critical value and were deleted prior to running the regression (n = 104). For satisfaction items, one case was found that exceeded the chi-square critical value and was deleted prior to running the regression (n = 103).

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts overall satisfaction, R^2 = .251, R^2_{adj} = .219, $F(4,98)$ = 7.87, $p \leq .001$. This model accounts for 25.1% of the variance in overall satisfaction. However, review of the regression coefficients indicates that only one component, Collaborative Style, significantly contributed to the final model, β = .445, $t(101)$ = 4.58, $p \leq .001$. See Table 1 for a summary of the components and coefficients. Based on results from the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected. One selection criteria component, Collaborative

Style, significantly contributed to the model for predicting participants' overall

satisfaction with participants' chairperson.

TABLE 1:

Coefficients Table for Selection Criteria Components

Component	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig	t	partial r
Collaborative Style	.376	.082	.445	.000	4.56	0.43
Success/Reputation	.058	.077	.084	.457	0.75	0.08
Research/Methodology	.046	.078	.060	.560	0.58	0.06
Obligation/Culture	-.027	.095	-.026	.779	-0.28	-0.03

Chairperson Behaviors

Research Question 2: What chairperson behaviors, if any, predict doctoral students' and

recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their chairperson?

$H_0 2$: Chairperson behaviors will not predict participants' overall satisfaction with their

chairperson.

Research question two was addressed by conducting multiple regression using the

enter regression method. The five chairperson behavior components were entered in as

independent variables with overall satisfaction as the dependent variable. Prior to the

regression, grouped quantitative variables for the chairperson behavior items were

examined by testing Mahalanobis' distance to screen for multivariate outliers. Within

chairperson behaviors, seven cases exceeded the chi-square critical value and were

deleted prior to running the regression (n = 115). For satisfaction items, one case was

found that exceeded the chi-square critical value and was deleted prior to running the

regression (n = 114).

Regression results indicate that the overall model significantly predicts overall

satisfaction, R^2 = .720, R^2_{adj}= .707, F(5,107) = 55.10, $p \leq$.001. This model accounts for

72 % of the variance in overall satisfaction. Review of the regression coefficients

indicates that two components, Work Style β = .390, t(111) = 4.96, $p \leq$ .001 and Personal

Connection β = .456, t(111) = 6.19, $p \leq$ .001, significantly contributed to the final model.

See Table 2 for a summary of the components and coefficients. Based on results from

the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected. Two chairperson behavior

components, Work Style and Personal Connection, significantly contributed to the overall

model for predicting participants' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson.

TABLE 2:

Coefficients Table for Chairperson Behaviors Components

Component	B	Std.Error	Beta	Sig	t	Partial r
Work Style	.327	.075	.390	.000	4.96	0.43
Personal Connection	.498	.080	.456	.000	6.19	0.51
Academic Assistance	.029	.093	.020	.757	0.31	0.03
Mentoring Abilities	.089	.082	.089	.276	1.10	0.11
Professional Development	.010	.053	.012	.856	0.18	0.02

Because both regression models in research questions one and two were

significant, a third regression was conducted in order to assess both the selection criteria

components and the behavior components in predicting overall satisfaction with the

participants' chairperson. Conducting this regression has the ability to show a possible interaction between the two separate constructs when predicting overall satisfaction. For this analysis, stepwise regression was used based on the previous regression results. Components were entered based on significant contribution by assessing each component's beta value. The components were entered in the following order: Personal Connection, Collaborative Style, Work Style, Mentoring Abilities, Success/Reputation, Research/Methodology, Obligatory, Academic Assistance, and Professional Development. Results from the regression indicate that two behavior components, Work Style and Personal Connection, and one selection component, Success/Reputation, account for 72.7% of the variance for the dependent variable overall satisfaction and contributes significantly to the model. See Table 3 for a summary of the regression models.

TABLE 3:

Chairperson Behaviors and Selection Criteria Model Summary

	R	R^2	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F_{chg}	p	df_1	df_2
Model 1	.770	.593	.589	.593	138.52	.000	1	95
Model 2	.846	.715	.709	.122	40.14	.000	1	94
Model 3	.853	.727	.719	.012	4.23	.043	1	93

Model 1 = Work Style
Model 2 = Work Style and Personal Connection
Model 3 = Work Style, Personal Connection, and Success/Reputation

Discussion

The present study was conducted in order to better understand which variables are most influential in predicting satisfaction in the relationship between counseling doctoral

students and their dissertation chairperson. Specifically, the study was designed to address the gaps in the literature regarding selection and behaviors as predictors of satisfaction among the counselor education doctoral population.

Research question one sought to understand the extent to which selection criteria used by doctoral students and recent graduates when choosing predict participants' overall satisfaction with their chairperson. Results from the regression suggest that *Collaborative Style* significantly contributed to overall satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson. There are four items within the component of *Collaborative Style*, which include: *work ethic, personality match, worked with previously as professor,* and *willing to serve.* The results from research question one suggest that doctoral students' perception of their style matching with, or being in collaboration with, one's chairperson is most influential in predicting overall satisfaction in the advisor-advising relationship. The items within this component seem to share a sense of alignment between the student and professor which focuses more on internal compatibilities, such as similar work ethic and similar personality styles, as opposed to external similarities and benefits, such as a focus on similar research interest or receiving a beneficial recommendation letter. Although there is limited research on how and why doctoral students select their dissertation chairperson, this finding supports that of Wallace (2000), who found that both previous interactions, specific to being in a class conducted by the chosen chairperson, and personality match, leading to similar perceptions and expectations, were among the top themes that emerged when assessing why doctoral students selected their dissertation chairperson. The third and final theme that was found in Wallace's qualitative research was choosing someone with similar research interests. Within the

four selection components, similar research interest fell into the *Research/Methodology* component, which did not produce significant results when predicting overall satisfaction.

In regard to Zhao et al.'s (2007) findings, Advisor Reputation and Intellectual Compatibility were found to be the most prominent selection choices for participants in the field of humanities. In terms of predicting satisfaction, Intellectual Compatibility was found to be significant in Zhao et al.'s study. Within the current study, those particular items fell most closely into the selection criteria components of *Success/Reputation* and *Research/Methodology*, which were not found to be significant predictors for satisfaction. Although Zhao's study shows differing results, his study was not specific to counselor education doctoral students nor were previous relationships and personality match options for participants to select. Therefore, findings from the current study may be more indicative of counselor education doctoral students' preferences. Finally, previous research (Smart & Conant, 1990) shows that from the perspective of the advisor, the most important consideration when selecting a chairperson should be that person's expertise and experience in the field. This concept most closely aligns with the *Success/Reputation* component. Although this component did not significantly contribute to the dependent variable of overall satisfaction from the perspective of the doctoral student solely when addressing selection criteria, this component was found to be significant in a follow-up regression analysis in which selection criteria and chairperson behaviors were combined.

Research question two explored which chairperson behaviors best predicted overall satisfaction with one's chairperson. Results from the regression suggest that two components, *Work Style* and *Personal Connection*, significantly predict overall

satisfaction and the model containing the two components contributed over 71% of variance in overall satisfaction. *Work Style* included items such as: *spoke in "we" vs. "you" statements, provided appropriate structure, held me accountable and on track, provided effective feedback,* and *discussed expectations prior to the working relationship.* Items within the *Personal Connection* component include: *personable and comfortable to be around, used humor in our interactions, advocated for me with others, was patient with my progress,* and *was invested in me as a professional.* The chairperson behavior components that were found to significantly contribute to students' overall satisfaction with their chairperson seem to center on personal, mentoring, and validating behaviors shown by chairpersons as perceived by students. The other components, which include more external assistance such as building professional relationships, assisting with career possibilities, and providing articles and tips for conducting research, did not significantly predict overall satisfaction in terms of chairperson behaviors. Previous research suggests that students feel more comfortable and more satisfied when expectations are shared and discussed up front (Friedman, 1987; Golde, 2005; Goulden, 1991), which support the current findings. In addition, previous research shows that providing genuine care and support increases student satisfaction with one's dissertation chairperson (Bloom et al., 2007), which also supports the findings of the current study. Results from the present study confirm and conflict with Zhao et al.'s findings (2007). Participants in both Humanities and Social Sciences (not specific to departments) showed the factor of Academic Advising contributing the most to satisfaction. This factor does have some items in common with the current study's component of *Work Style,* such as receiving effective feedback, which incidentally was the highest loading in Zhao's advising factor;

however, the remainder of the items matched most closely with *Professional*

Development and *Academic Assistance*, which did not significantly contribute to

predicting overall satisfaction. Other qualitative research (Bloom et al., 2007; Protivnak

& Foss, 2009) also found professional aspects, such as integrating students into the

profession, as an important theme when identifying successful behaviors demonstrated by

advisors; however, the majority of the findings centered on the nurture, mentoring, and

support of the student, as is shown in the current study's findings, as evidenced by the

Personal Connection component, which was found to be influential in predicting

satisfaction.

As a follow-up to research questions one and two, a subsequent regression was

conducted. The independent variables included the four selection criteria components

and the five chairperson behavior components. Looking back at Cohen's (1992)

calculations, 112 participants would be necessary for nine independent variables when

assuming a medium effect size at Power = .80. After removing the multivariate outliers

for all grouped variables (selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and overall

satisfaction), all of the components were entered into the analyses in order to assess

which components best predicted overall satisfaction when combined. For this

regression, the stepwise method was used based on the previous beta weights from the

results of research questions one and two, putting in the component that carried the

highest beta score (*Personal Connection*) down to the component with the lowest beta

score (*Professional Development*). Results from the regression model suggest that three

components, *Work Style, Personal Connection,* and *Success/Reputation* together

contributed to 72% of the variance explained in overall satisfaction. The same two

components from chairperson behaviors (*Work Style* and *Personal Connection)* ended up in both the combined regression and the individual regression (research question two), but their beta weights were reversed, indicating that when selection criteria and behaviors are combined, *Work Style* contributes more to overall satisfaction than *Personal Connection*. For the selection criteria component, *Success/Reputation* did not prove to be significant in the individual regression, but was significant in the combined regression. In addition, the percent of variance explained by the combined regression is almost the exact same percentage solely explained by the behaviors model. This finding could be due to the fact that the items within the *Success/Reputation* component are more closely related to external behaviors, which seem to match more consistently with the *Work Style* component items of chairperson behaviors (providing effective feedback; and providing a good amount of structure). In addition, the process of selecting one's dissertation chairperson is an internalized, personal experience limited to a point in time, whereas chairperson behaviors are an ongoing, externalized experience that may be more prominent and evident when determining overall satisfaction. Interestingly, when the selection criteria components were entered without the chairperson behaviors components, only *Collaborative Style* seemed to predict overall satisfaction; however, *Success/Reputation* seems to predict overall satisfaction when combined with chairperson behaviors. When the two construct components are combined, the results seem to change for selection criteria and what predicts overall satisfaction. Previous research (Smart & Conant, 1990; Zhao et al., 2007) does support selection items that are found in the component *Success/Reputation* as valuable factors to consider when selecting a chairperson. Some of these examples include: the reputation of the chairperson, number

of chairpersons' previous publications, and receiving a beneficial letter of recommendation; however, for the findings of the current study, these selection criteria only seem to play a significant role when combined with chairperson behavior components.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study includes the use of a researcher-developed survey instrument as the sole measure of selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and overall satisfaction. Because the purpose of the study was not to establish the psychometric properties of the survey, it is difficult to gauge the reliability and validity of the survey with any certainty. Although both selection criteria construct (.79) and the chairperson behavior construct (.94) revealed high alpha reliabilities, additional research would have to be conducted in order to establish the overall psychometric properties of the survey. Another limitation was the inclusivity of the sample. Initially, participants were to be recruited using emails sent by CACREP-accredited department chairs to past and present eligible doctoral students; however, due to a lack of responses, the survey request was opened up to CESNET, a counselor educator list-serve. Within both forms of participant recruiting, it was unknown how many eligible participants received the request for participation; therefore, the rate of return is unknown. Additionally, since the demographic composition of the counselor education doctoral student population is unknown, it is unclear whether the sample of participants who chose to complete the survey is representative of the broader population. Thus, results from this analysis may not be generalizable to the overall population of counselor education doctoral students. Lastly, the results from this study represent only the perspective of the

doctoral student and not the dissertation chairperson. It is possible that students' perspectives of behaviors displayed by the dissertation chairperson differ from perspectives held by the chairperson regarding behaviors. Although it is invaluable to have this information from the perspective of the doctoral student, it is also equally important to understand the perspective of the advisor.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may also want to include the voice of the advisor, gaining a greater level of understanding and broadening the perspective of what constitutes a satisfactory relationship between chairperson and doctoral student. Along the same lines, faculty members might suggest that doctoral students meet with faculty one-on-one prior to selecting a dissertation chairperson to assess how students plan to go about selecting their chairperson. Providing students with research literature, such as this study, may assist with both a doctoral students' selection and faculty members' behaviors in order to create a satisfactory relationship. Future studies may also want to allow participants to share their own influential selection criteria or helpful chairperson behaviors that may have been inadvertently left off the list in order to construct a more robust survey.

Implications

Previous literature states that the relationship between the doctoral student and the dissertation chairperson is essential in determining students' successful completion and defense of the dissertation (Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001). Findings from the current study reveal how counselor education doctoral students' selection of their chairperson and the behaviors that the chairperson exhibits are influential in predicting overall satisfaction in the advisor-advisee relationship. This knowledge and understanding can

assist in identifying best practices in the dissertation process. Specifically, findings from this study can inform doctoral students and faculty members about the criteria and behaviors that contribute to good advising relationships and positive dissertation outcomes. Understanding the most influential selection criteria (similar work ethic, personality match, previous relationships) and chairperson behaviors (patience, invested, advocated, feedback), can result in greater satisfaction in the advisor-advisee relationship. This has the potential to influence both students and faculty, who may benefit from reviewing these criteria, and in turn, make decisions about selection or behaviors that may lead to a favorable dissertation outcome.

Results from the current study can also inform programs of best practices in advising and facilitate critically reflective practices by dissertation chairpersons. As a larger goal, results from this study and future studies may provide information to programs on how to decrease doctoral attrition. As research has shown, the relationship between a doctoral student and their chairperson is influential in determining the successful completion of the dissertation (Lovitts, 2001). This last hurdle then leads to completion of the doctoral degree, thus increasing completion rates and decreasing attrition rates. By utilizing the current study's findings and understanding which selection criteria and chairperson behaviors are most likely to influence overall satisfaction, counselor educators can modify and enhance their advising behaviors to best meet the needs of students, thereby increasing the likelihood that students will successfully defend their dissertations and graduate from the counselor education doctoral program.

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Appendix A

Component Loadings for Selection Criteria Construct

Items	S/R	R/M	CS	O/C
Has a good reputation as a researcher	.810			
Has a good reputation as a dissertation chairperson	.801			
Recommended by other colleagues or peers	.733			
Higher chance of publishing my dissertation study	.606			
Has excellent writing skills	.586			
For a beneficial recommendation letter	.537			
Number of chairpersons' previous publications	.460			
Is doing research similar to my dissertation topic		.727		
I was approached by the faculty member		.630		
Previously worked with this person on research projects		.518		.505
Has the ability to understand my methodology		.490		
Ability to use already collected data		.473		
We share a similar work ethic			.743	
Matches my personality style			.733	
Previously worked with this person as a			.598	

professor

Willing to serve as my chair	.519	
Felt obligated to work with this person		-.684
Previously worked with this person in		.572
my assistantship		
Is the same race/ethnicity		-.493

Appendix B

Component Loadings for Behavior Construct

Items	WS	PC	AA	MA	PD
Spoke in "we" vs. "you" statements	.756				
Provided appropriate structure	.732				
Held me accountable and on track	.725				
Provided effective feedback on my dissertation work	.698				
Discussed expectations prior to the working relationship	.685				
Personable and comfortable to be around		.872			
Used humor in our interactions		.678			
Advocated for me with others		.670			
Was patient with my progress		.634			
Invested in me as a professional		.609			
*Unwilling to see others' perspectives			.711		
*Did not involve me in methodological decisions			.698		
*Did not allow for flexibility and individuality			.693		
*Did not focus on my strengths			.647		
*Did my research for me			.582		
*Was difficult to schedule appointments				.643	

Provided helpful edits	.518		.606
Was accountable and dependable	.516		.582
Was patient with me and the dissertation process		.519	.573
Sent me helpful research articles			.521
Helped me develop professional relationships in the field			.829
Assisted with career possibilities			.694
Taught me about research practices			.620

*= reverse-coded items
All loadings below .5 were suppressed

Appendix A

Department Chair Email

Dear _____,

I am writing to request your assistance in gathering research data for my dissertation study. Because of ACA's recent policy changes regarding access to participant information, I am asking the department chairs of all CACREP-accredited doctoral counselor education and supervision programs to assist in gaining access to potential participants.

My dissertation research examines which variables are most influential in predicting counseling doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Selection criteria, chairperson behaviors, and demographic information will be collected by administering a survey created by the researcher.

Qualified participants for this study include:
- Current counseling doctoral students who have successfully proposed their dissertations
- Recent graduates (up to 24 months) of your counseling doctoral program

I am requesting that you forward all qualified participants the link to my survey instrument (attached below) and copy me on the email (cneale@odu.edu) so that I may follow-up with the students and graduates.

In consideration of your efforts, I am happy to provide you with a Technical Report outlining the results of the study to assist in informing faculty of identified best practices when working with counseling doctoral students during the dissertation process.

Thank you in advance for your time,

Cheryl Neale-McFall
Doctoral Candidate & PhD Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Counseling & Human Services
Old Dominion University
110 Education Building
Norfolk, VA 23529

(Email to eligible participants attached to the department chair's email)

Dear counselor educator doctoral student or recent graduate,

It is an honor to invite you to participate in a dissertation research study. The project title is: Perceptions of counseling doctoral students overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson: Examining selection criteria and chairperson behaviors. The purpose of this

study is to understand which variables best predict doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. Participants for this study can include counseling doctoral students who have successfully proposed their dissertations and recent graduates (within 24 months) of a CACREP counseling doctoral program.

There is a link at the bottom of this email that will take you to the survey if you are interested in participating. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to fill out and your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thanks in advance,

Cheryl Neale-McFall
Doctoral Candidate & PhD Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Counseling & Human Services
Old Dominion University
110 Education Building
Norfolk, VA 23529

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Age: _____

Gender: Female   Male   Transgender

Race/Ethnicity:

African American   Asian American   Hispanic   Native American

White/European American   Biracial/Multiracial   Other not

specified:_____

Current Status: Doctoral Student   Recent PhD Graduate

Have you completed your proposal for dissertation?   Yes   No

Was your dissertation chairperson: Selected by you   Assigned to you

Did you switch dissertation chairpersons during your process?   Yes   No

Number of months working with dissertation chairperson: _____

Gender of dissertation chairperson: Female   Male   Transgender

Race/Ethnicity of chairperson:

African American   Asian American   Hispanic   Native American

White/European American   Biracial/Multiracial   Other not

specified:_____

How many years has your selected chair-person been at the university?

0-2   3-5   6-10   10+

Dissertation Type: Qualitative   Quantitative   Mixed-Methods   Meta-Analysis

Delphi

At any point during your doctoral degree were/are you working in an assistantship position?   Yes   No

Dissertation Survey Instrument

*Note: Please focus on your final chairperson (if you had more than one) or, in the case of co-chairs, the person who may have served the primary role, when filling out this survey.

Selection Criteria

The reason(s) I selected my dissertation chairperson was because:

1= Not at all an important   **2**= Somewhat important   **3**= Important   **4**= Very important

1. Is doing research similar to my dissertation topic
2. Is the same gender
3. Is a different gender
4. Was approached by the faculty member
5. Has the ability and experience to understand my methodology
6. Have previously worked with this person through:
    a. Professor in class
    b. Supervision
    c. Research projects
    d. Incoming advisor
    e. Assistantship
    f. Other
7. Recommended by other colleagues or peers
8. Has a good reputation as a researcher
9. Has a good reputation as a dissertation chairperson
10. Matches my personality style
11. Share a similar work ethic
12. Number of chairpersons' previous publications
13. For a beneficial recommendation letter
14. Willing to serve as my chair
15. Will assist with my future career goals
16. Out of obligation
17. Has excellent writing skills
18. Ability to use already collected data
19. Higher chance of publishing my dissertation study

20. Same theoretical alignment

Chairperson Behaviors

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your chairperson's behavior during the dissertation process:

1=Completely Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Completely Agree

1. Provided mentorship and support
2. Assisted with career possibilities
3. Provided effective feedback on my dissertation work
4. Provided appropriate structure
5. Used humor in our interactions
6. Was patient with me and the dissertation process
7. Was not timely with feedback
8. Personable and comfortable to be around
9. Invested in me as a professional
10. Assisted in access to research data
11. Made time for me
12. Was accountable and dependable
13. Spoke in "we" vs. "you" statements
14. Discussed expectations prior to the working relationship
15. Was timely with deadlines
16. Did not allow for flexibility and individuality
17. Treated my ideas with respect
18. I respected him/her
19. Did not focus on my strengths
20. Gave me confidence in my research abilities
21. Was difficult to schedule appointments
22. Provided helpful edits in my dissertation drafts
23. Was patient with my progress
24. Held me accountable and on track
25. Was intimidating
26. Sent me encouraging emails
27. Sent me helpful research articles
28. Took an interest in my life
29. Unwilling to see other's perspectives
30. Helped me develop professional relationships in the field
31. Taught me about research practices
32. Advocated for me with others
33. Did not involve me in methodology decisions

34. Did my research for me

Overall Satisfaction

Please rate your agreement or disagreement on the following statements:

1=Completely Disagree   **2**=Disagree   **3**=Agree   **4**=Completely Agree

1. Overall, I am very satisfied with my dissertation chairperson
2. I would choose the same dissertation chairperson again
3. I am confident that my dissertation chairperson will help/helped me successfully defend my dissertation
4. I am satisfied with the amount of time spent with my dissertation chair

Appendix C

Informed Consent

Dear counselor educator doctoral student or recent graduate,

It is an honor to invite you to participate in a dissertation research study. The project title is: Perceptions of counseling doctoral students overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson: Examining selection criteria and chairperson behaviors. Participants for this study include counseling doctoral students who have successfully proposed their dissertations and recent graduates (within 24 months) of a CACREP counseling doctoral program.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information on the study so that you can decide to participate or decline involvement. The proposed study will examine the perceptions of counseling doctoral students and recent graduates in their overall satisfaction with their selected chairperson for the dissertation process. This survey is being sent out to all CACREP accredited comprehensive universities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to further the knowledge and understanding of what variables influence doctoral students' and recent graduates' overall satisfaction with their dissertation chairperson. This is not an evaluation of your university and your comments will not be shared with your program.

There is no penalty for declining participation. There are minimal foreseeable risks for involvement. You may experience some discomfort when disclosing information about your doctoral dissertation experience. In addition, feelings of anxiety may surface when discussing your dissertation chairperson. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish to take advantage of this opportunity, please

click on the link provided at the end of this informed consent. Choosing to click on the link will serve as confirmation of your consent.

The research study will involve participation in completing a survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and no identifying information will be requested.

You may withdraw from participating at any time with no penalty. All information for this study will be kept confidential. The results of the study may be used in reports, presentations, and publication.

The investigator for this study is Cheryl Neale-McFall, MS, MSEd, NCC, a doctoral student in the Department of Counseling and Human Services in the College of Education at Old Dominion University, under the direction of Dr. Christine Ward. Feel free to contact me or my research advisor with any questions or concerns related to this study (IRB approval # 201002068) at cneale@odu.edu or caward@odu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration!

Cheryl Neale-McFall
Doctoral Student & PhD Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Counseling & Human Services
Old Dominion University
110 Education Building
Norfolk, VA 23529

Cheryl W. Neale-McFall

1160 Bedford Ave • Norfolk, VA 23508
4111 Monarch Way • Research Park 1 • Norfolk, VA 23508
cneal008@odu.edu or cneale@odu.edu
757-575-7064

EDUCATION

December 2011	**Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision (CACREP Accredited)** Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA; GPA: 4.0 **Dissertation**: Perceived satisfaction of counseling doctoral students with their dissertation chair-person: Examining selection and behaviors
August, 2009	**Master of Education in Counselor Education (CACREP Accredited)** Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA; GPA: 4.0
December, 2003	**Master of Science in Child and Family Development** University of Georgia – Athens, GA; GPA: 3.95 **Thesis**: Perceived Sibling Compatibility and Personality Characteristics
May, 2000	**Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Family Issues** James Madison University – Harrisonburg, VA

EXPERIENCE

Professional Experience

August 2009 to Present	**Doctoral Research Assistant** Old Dominion University, Darden College of Education, The Center for Educational Partnerships (TCEP)

- Assistant to the Program Evaluator: $3.6M, 6-year Newport News GEAR-UP grant
- Analyze and report data for multiple grants
- Write peer-reviewed articles
- Assist with writing grant proposals
- Conduct needs assessments
- Write program evaluations and executive reports
- Assessment and instrument development
- Conduct interviews, focus groups, and administer surveys
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data

- Assist with the following projects: GEAR-UP, CARE NOW, For Kids, Troops To Teachers, After School Programs, Supplemental Educational Services, National Institute for School Leadership, and Teaching Education and Awareness for Military Students (TEAMS)

August 2010 to
December 2010 **Counseling Consultant**
Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS)
- Led individual counseling sessions focused on depression, anxiety and nutrition
- Facilitated groups on cultural competence and effective communication with safety personnel for EVMS
- Collaborated with medical doctors and behavioral therapists on patient wellness

May 2008 to
August 2009 **Academic Advisor**
Old Dominion University, Center for Major Exploration
- Advised over 40 students in selection of majors and courses
- Advised students in time management, study skills and career opportunities
- Assessed and evaluated study skills and career inventories
- Facilitated over 30 decision-making workshops and psychoeducational groups
- Presented 10 orientation sessions for parents and students

August 2004 to
May 2005 **Licensing Child Care Evaluator**
The Planning Council, Human Services Planning
- Counseled and Supervised over 30 Child Care Program providers
- Participated in 12 trainings for Effective Teamwork Strategies, Child Abuse and Neglect, and Substance Abuse at Home and in the Workplace

August 2001 to
December 2003 **Research Assistant**
University of Georgia, McPhaul Center
- Assisted with grant-funded personality measure research projects
- Entered and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data
- Trained and mentored five fellow graduate students in micro-coding

- Taped, coded and analyzed data to prepare research papers
- Attended conferences to report on prepared research

Teaching Experience

Facilitator

Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA

- UNIV 110 – Academic Success
- UNIV 120 – Major and Career Exploration
- COUN 655 – Social and Cultural Issues in Counseling (Graduate course)
- COUN 670 – Counseling Supervision (Graduate course)
- COUN 676 – Counseling Children and Adolescents in School Settings (Graduate course, distance learning video-streamed)
- COUN 644 – Group Counseling and Psychotherapy (Graduate course)

Virginia Commonwealth University – Richmond, VA

- CLED 672 – Internship for College Student Development and Counseling (Graduate course)

Guest Lecturer

Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA

- COUN 655 – Social and Cultural Issues in Counseling
- COUN 644 – Group Counseling and Psychotherapy
- COUN 650 – Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy
- COUN 835 – Program Evaluation

Group Leader Experience

Growth Group Leader

Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA

- Fall 2009
- Spring 2010
- Summer 2011

Supervision Experience

Individual and Triadic Coach, Spring 2009, Fall 2009

Old Dominion University – Norfolk, VA

- COUN 633 – Counseling and Psychotherapy Techniques
- COUN 634 – Advanced Counseling and Psychotherapy Techniques

Group and Individual Supervisor

- Summer 2010 – Practicum Group Supervisor
- Fall 2010 – Individual Practicum and Internship Supervisor
- Spring 2011 – Internship Group Supervisor
- Fall 2011 – Internship Facilitator and Supervisor at Virginia Commonwealth University

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Accepted Foundation Grant: Association for Specialist of Group Work, 2010 *Counseling Masters Student's Personal Growth Group Experience* – **Primary Recipient**

Recipient of the 2011 VACES Graduate Student Grant

Recipient of the 2011 Chi Sigma Iota Academic Excellence Award

ACCEPTED PROPOSALS AND PRESENTATIONS

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: American Psychological Association, 2000. *Pre-school children's perceptions of healthy behaviors*

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: International Interdisciplinary Conference on Clinical Supervision, 2010: *The Impact of Temperament on Satisfaction in the Supervisory Relationship* – **Primary Presenter**

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2010: *Using "The Big Five" to Improve Relationships in Supervision* – **Primary Presenter**

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2010: *The Impact of Temperament on Satisfaction in the Supervisory Relationship*

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: American Counseling Association, 2011: *Experience is the Only Teacher: Expanding Future Counselors' Worldviews through Constructivist Education* –**Primary Presenter**

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: A Counselor's View of Italy, Tuscany, 2011: *Life as a doctoral student: Panel presentation*

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2011: *Multicultural competencies in counseling: Exploring meanings and experiences* – **Primary Presenter**

Accepted Proposal and Presentation: Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2011: *Counseling masters students' experiences in growth group* – **Primary Presenter**

Submitted Proposal: American Educational Research Association, 2012: *Resiliency and gender in an Urban middle school: An evaluation of an in-school and after-school program* – **Primary Presenter**

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Neale-McFall, C. (2009). Handling dual relationships among graduate students. SACES Newsletter, 5.3.

Ward, C. & Neale-McFall, C. (March, 2010). 2009-2010 Newport News GEAR UP Evaluation Report.

Nunnery, J., Byrd-Poller, L. D. & Neale-McFall, C. (December, 2010). Technical Report: After school program participation: A longitudinal look at the effects on promotion.

Nunnery, J., Pribesh, S., Byrd-Poller, L. D., & Neale-McFall, C. (January, 2011). Troops to Teachers (T3): A Synthesis of Three Empirical Studies.

Neale-McFall, C. & Byrd, R. (2011). Counseling Masters Student's Personal Growth Group Experiences (Under Review).

Miliken, T., Neale-McFall, C. & Garner, J. The effect of an integrated in-school and after-school program: Assessing resilience and gender effects (In Progress).

Neuer, A., Neale-McFall, C., Michel, B., & Bayne, H. Impact of temperament on satisfaction in the supervisory relationship (In Progress).

Neale-McFall, C., Bell, T., & Hamilton, T. Collaboration within a university-community mental-health clinic: A needs assessment (Submitted).

Arnold, P., Garner, J., Neale-McFall, C., & Nunnery, J. (2011). Needs of military-connected school divisions in Southeastern Virginia. A technical report submitted to CNA.

Neale-McFall, C. (2011). Perceived satisfaction of counseling doctoral students with their dissertation chairperson: Examining selection criteria and chairperson behaviors (In Progress)

IRB-exempt research: An examination of factors influencing doctoral counseling students' selection of their dissertation chair (In Progress)

Co-contributor for book chapters in N. Brown (Ed). *Psychoeducational Groups: Process and Practice*, 3rd edition, 2011.

CERTIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

Certifications
National Certified Counselor (NCC) # 254249
2009 National Board of Certified Counselors

Academic Associations
Gamma Sigma Delta – University of Georgia, 2001-2003
Phi Kappa Phi – University of Georgia, 2001-2003
Phi Kappa Phi – Old Dominion University, 2010
Chi Sigma Iota – Old Dominion University, 2008-2010

Professional Associations
American Counseling Association, 2008 -current
Association for Specialist of Group Work, 2009-current
Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2009-current
Virginia Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2011- current
Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2010-current
National Board for Certified Counselors, 2009-current
Eastern Psychological Association, 1999-2001

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Volunteer: AACE Conference, Old Dominion University, 2009
Mentor: Chi Sigma Iota, Old Dominion University, 2009, 2010, 2011
Assistant Fundraising Chair: Chi Sigma Iota, Old Dominion University, 2009-2010
Public Relations Chair: Chi Sigma Iota, Old Dominion University, 2010-2011