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## Motivations to Pursue the Doctoral Degree in Counselor Education and Supervision

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## Abstract

Pursuing a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) requires a significant commitment. Although there is research on motivations to pursue a doctorate in general, there has not been a specific examination of motivations among those who have pursued a doctorate in CES, which warrants investigation given the diversity of training and potential career paths offered by the degree. In this Q methodology study, 35 students, counselor educators, and practitioners sorted statements pertaining to their motivation for doctoral studies in CES. The sorted statements were correlated and factor analyzed, resulted in four distinct motivations. The motivations are described and implications for CES are discussed.

## Keywords

Counselor Education and Supervision doctorate, motivation, doctoral students, mentorship

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Pursuing a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) requires a significant commitment. Although there is research on motivations to pursue a doctorate in general, there has not been a specific examination of motivations among those who have pursued a doctorate in CES, which warrants investigation given the diversity of training and potential career paths offered by the degree. In this Q methodology study, 35 students, counselor educators, and practitioners sorted statements pertaining to their motivation for doctoral studies in CES. The sorted statements were correlated and factor analyzed, resulting in four distinct motivations. The motivations are described and implications for CES are discussed.

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The pursuit of a doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) is a commitment that requires years of persistent dedication. Often, this work necessitates students' personal and professional sacrifices. The motivations of those who undertake this educational journey have been unexplored. A closer examination of these motivations can help inform counselor educators about the diverse reasons students enter CES programs. This information can be used to consider academic fit between potential students and programs, as well as to provide intentional mentorship to students.

## **Motivations to Pursue Doctoral Work**

Previous literature suggested a confluence of factors that motivate an individual to pursue a doctoral degree. Intrinsic incentives influence both the decision to pursue a doctoral degree and the ability to persevere to its completion (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). Some individuals may find the intellectual challenge and stimulation of doctoral work rewarding (Scott, Brown, Lunt, & Thorne, 2004); others seek out the personal challenge, have a love for learning, or want to experience a new learning environment (Ivankova & Stick, 2007). Other motivations are to achieve a personal goal, find pleasure in learning, prove one's abilities to others, and gain confidence (Jablonski, 2001; Leonard, Becker, & Coate, 2005). Many students are driven by the external rewards that can occur upon completion of the doctorate in the form of professional gain, such as to enter or advance in a career (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jablonski, 2001; Scott, et al., 2004) and to remain viable in a profession (Laurent, Steffey, & Serdlik, 2008;

Scott et al., 2004). Professional motivations include gaining prestige, professional respect, and an increased salary (Laurent et al., 2008). The doctorate is also considered the necessary training for a profession in academia (Basalla & Debelius, 2007).

### **Motivations to Obtain the Counselor Education and Supervision Doctoral Degree**

Although there is no research found regarding the reasons individuals choose to pursue a doctorate specifically in CES, the historical purposes of the degree, accreditation standards, and the work sought by graduates may suggest motivations. Adkison-Bradley (2013) summarized the initial goals of CES programs to “train students to be leaders in all areas of the counseling discipline,” including counselor education, and to gain competencies in advanced clinical work, supervision, research, teaching, and leadership (p. 45). This suggests that students with the motivations of furthering their competencies and becoming leaders in the field could have their goals met in CES programs. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009) Standards advise CES doctoral programs to prepare students “to work as counselor educators, supervisors, researchers, and practitioners in academic and clinical settings” (p. 52). Further, the required CES internship can include an array of experiences such as clinical practice, research, teaching, supervision, and leadership activities (CACREP, 2009). These CACREP requirements indicate that a professional who wants training and experience in the professorate (e.g., teaching; research), as well as in clinical settings can find a good match in a CES program.

Upon graduation, CES students have various career path options suggesting that they have diverse motivations for pursuing the degree. Graduates of CES programs are prepared for positions in clinical practice and academia (Schweiger, Henderson, McCaskill, Clawson, & Collins, 2011; Sweeney, 1992) and leadership roles within the profession (Sears & Davis, 2003). In this study, we sought to investigate the motivations of CES students and graduates to help inform CES programs and educators about the reasons students enter their programs, thus helping with academic match and mentorship.

### **Benefits of Addressing CES Students’ Motivations**

Given the diverse areas of the counseling profession included in a CES degree, a further look at students’ motivations may benefit CES students and faculty in the areas of academic match and degree persistence. Hoskins and Goldberg (2005) reported that *academic match*, the degree of fit between students’ reasons for pursuing the doctorate and the program focus and curriculum, is an important factor in students’ decisions to persist or prematurely leave their doctoral program. Hoskins and Goldberg found that if CES programs were not congruent with students’ motivations to seek the degree, students subsequently experienced *academic mismatch*, leading them to consider premature termination—or, in some cases, actually withdraw—from their program. For example, if students entered a CES program with the goal of further improving their clinical and supervisory skills to prepare for leadership roles at a community mental health agency, they might experience academic mismatch should they enter a program that emphasizes teaching and research skills with little flexibility to hone skills in counseling practice and supervision.

Opportunities for faculty mentorship seem more likely when a strong academic match is present. Researchers have noted that feeling connected to faculty through mentorship has positive influences on CES students' persistence and success in their doctoral programs (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005; Protivnak & Foss, 2009). In their qualitative study, Protivnak and Foss (2009) found that CES students were more successful when they had mentoring relationships with faculty members with whom they had shared interests, motivations, and professional endeavors. Although mentorship practices have been addressed in the literature pertaining to students who aspire to be counselor educators and researchers (Borders, Wester, Granello, Chang, Hays, Pepperell, & Spurgeon, 2012; Borders, Young, Wester, Murray, Villalba, Lewis, & Mobley, 2011), mentorship for students who aim to be clinicians appears to be less prevalent (Walker, 2006). Protivnak and Foss (2009) also determined that departmental culture influenced CES doctoral students' successful completion of their program and cited examples of collaborative environments where faculty invited students to teach or write, were responsive to students' needs, and generally made students feel included. These activities can be useful for increasing student involvement and gaining a sense of purpose within their program, which are helpful factors in finding self-assuredness and belonging for first-semester doctoral students (Hughes & Kleist, 2005).

Although previous studies provided information about student motivations in general, due to the various preparatory experiences and career paths afforded by the CES degree and the implications for academic match and mentorship, a greater understanding of the motivations of CES students is warranted. Thus, the current study sought to inform the question, "What motivates students to pursue a doctorate in CES?"

## **Methods**

This study utilized Q methodology, which employs statistical and qualitative tools to elucidate subjectivities in order to assess motivations for pursuing a doctorate in CES. Q methodology typically follows five steps or phases of research (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). First, researchers assess the discourse around a topic, termed the *concourse*, through interviews, the literature, or related means. Second, the *concourse* is sampled for representative statements or stimuli around the topic of interest. Third, the sample of statements is sorted by a group of participants who provide additional qualitative information about their views. Fourth, the sorts are correlated with one another and factor analyzed. Finally, resultant factors are interpreted with the aid of the qualitative data provided by participants.

## **Instrumentation**

In Q methodology, the instrument is commonly constructed anew for each research study. The researchers assessed the *concourse* through conducting telephone interviews with six individuals (male,  $n=2$ ; female,  $n=4$ ). Of the participants, four held the PhD degree in CES and two were doctoral students in CES (one male between the ages of 30-34 and one female between the ages of 25-29). Of those who held a doctorate, two identified as Counselor Educators (one male over 40 and one female between the ages of 30 and 24), one as an administrator (female who was over 40), and one who identified as a clinician and an administrator (female who was

over 40). All identified as Caucasian. The research team purposefully chose these individuals as they reflected an array of professional roles associated with the doctorate in CES.

The interviews utilized the following set of questions: (a) When in your life did you decide to pursue a doctorate in CES? Why did you choose a doctorate in this area? (b) What do you believe were the most influential experiences that led you to this decision? How did this motivate you? (c) What were the main things you hoped to get from your doctorate studies? (d) What does having a doctorate in CES mean to you? (e) Is there anything else that you wish for us to know about your decision to pursue doctoral work in CES? During the interviews, researchers noted statements that depicted desires, reasons, and needs (Miller & Rollnick, 2013) in seeking the doctoral degree to review as a group and come to a consensus of each interviewee's motivations.

With no comprehensive theories about motivations to pursue a doctoral degree in CES from which to structure the sample, the Q sample was unstructured and did not follow any a priori theories about motivations for pursuing a doctorate in CES (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Therefore, researchers independently reviewed interview notes, noted the motivational themes, and compiled examples of the motivations from the data. Researchers discussed the themes and selected representative statements for inclusion in the study until saturation of the data was achieved. Upon completion of this process, 43 statements were selected, each reflecting a different motivation for pursuing a doctorate in CES. These statements, which were transposed onto cards to facilitate the Q sort process, are listed in the Appendix.

The researchers were first year doctoral students pursuing a CES degree with the goal to become counselor educators. Under the supervision of a full professor who served as a mentor, the investigators discussed their own unique motivations for seeking the degree. In an effort to remain transparent and reduce bias, the researchers reflected on and documented their motivations as a group, a practice common in qualitative research to manage subjectivity (Morrow, 2005).

## **Participants**

Participants were solicited using a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling (Polkinghorne, 2005). The former entailed contacting individuals known to the research team who completed their doctorate in CES or who were attending school for a doctorate in CES. These individuals assisted with recruitment by recommending other potential participants for inclusion in the study (i.e., snowball). The individuals were contacted about participation through email, telephone, or face-to-face contact. When an individual agreed to take part in the study, the person was provided with the sort, a response sheet, and a return envelope. Some participants who were previously contacted received response packets at an American Counseling Association conference. Additional participants were recruited at the conference. Participants with a range of professional focus and experience (i.e., students, clinicians, educators) were solicited to reflect the diversity of roles in the CES field. As the research examined motivations to pursue doctoral work in CES rather than factors of successful completion, it was acceptable for participants to be students or graduates of a CES doctoral program.

Thirty-five participants completed the sort and accompanying post-sort questionnaire, which is an appropriate number for Q studies (Brown, 1980). Age was reported through ranges, with nine aged 29 years or younger, 18 aged 30-39, three aged 40-49, and five aged 50 or older.

They identified their professional roles as Counselor Educator ( $n = 14$ ), Counselor Educator/clinician ( $n = 9$ ), student ( $n = 8$ ), student/clinician ( $n = 3$ ), and clinician ( $n = 1$ ). Participants included 25 females and 10 males. In the sample, 25 identified as Caucasian, five African American, three Latino, one American Indian, and one Italian. The participants completed or were enrolled in doctoral work at 15 different universities across the United States, 16 from Southern, 16 from North Central, two from North Atlantic, and one from Rocky Mountain regions of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

## Procedure

Participants sorted the 43 statements on a semi-normal distribution ranging from 4 (*Most like my motivations for pursuing a doctorate in CES*) to -4 (*Most unlike my motivations for pursuing a doctorate in CES*). The distribution was a forced sort requiring participants to place a certain number of cards in each ranking. This simplified the sorting process for both the researcher and the participants, while having virtually no impact upon the data (Brown, 1980). Once the sort was completed, participants recorded their sort in a response grid and answered five open-ended post-sort questions. These questions assessed the meaning individuals ascribed to the statements: (a) ranked as *most like*, (b) ranked as *most unlike*, (c) that were helpful in defining their views, (d) that were particularly confusing, and (e) any other information about their motivations not reflected in the other questions.

## Analysis

The response grids of the sorted statements were entered into PQMethod 2.11 (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2002), a Q specific analysis program. The Q sorts were correlated and factor analyzed using a principal components analysis. Factors with eigenvalues of 1.00 or greater were selected for further examination, as a common starting point in Q studies (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Eight factors met this criterion that were then extracted and subjected to varimax rotation.

Factors were chosen for inclusion in the results if they contained two or more sorts with significant loadings. This criterion ensured that the factors were culminations of shared perspectives among a group of participants (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Each sort had a factor loading on every factor; however, significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) factor loadings were computed by using the equation,  $SE = 1/(\sqrt{N}) \times 1.98$ , where  $N$  is the number of statements (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p.50). Therefore, individual factor loadings were considered significant at  $\pm 0.302$ . This resulted in a final four-factor solution interpreted as the emergent motivations.

Six responses were mixed cases loading significantly on more than one factor (Watts & Stenner, 2005). These cases were excluded from the factor interpretation because of their mixed motivations. The rankings of the statements for each of the four factors (i.e., factor arrays), statistically significant rankings (i.e., distinguishing statements), and demographic information for each of the factors are listed in the Appendix.

## Results

Interpretation utilized the factor arrays, distinguishing statements, and the post-sort written responses provided by participants. The factor arrays and distinguishing statements are

identified in the Appendix. The goal of Q methodology is not to identify the majority, but rather to emphasize various possibilities and give “voice” to the perspectives less often heard (Brown, 2006). As a result, it is acceptable for factors to have minimal number of participants loading, as the existence of the perspective is more important than the quantity of the participants in each factor. In total, the analysis yielded four motivations for pursuing a doctorate in CES.

### **Motivation I: To be a Professor**

The first motivation reflected a desire to be a professor in Counselor Education. This entailed an emphasis on teaching and the various academic roles that accompany a professorship. Twenty-two respondents loaded significantly on this factor, identifying as current students or counselor educators, with 10 of the respondents indicating that they also engaged in clinical work. The respondents represented five ethnic groups and ranged in age from mid-20’s to over 50.

Highly ranked statements suggested that respondents were motivated by a dedication to training counselors and the flexibility of the academic position. This latter motivation referred to both the flexibility of an academic schedule as well as the variability in professional roles. These statements included (a) I wanted to teach future counselors, (b) I wanted to have the possibility of having multiple roles as a professional, such as supervisor, researcher, clinician, administrator, (c) I wanted flexibility in how I used my time professionally and personally, and (d) I wanted to provide counselors with guidance, increase their enthusiasm, and improve their skills.

Written responses to these statements supported the interpretation by highlighting student contact, academic freedom, and the versatility of the professorate. One respondent noted the importance of working with students: “I love connecting with counseling material and students at the same time.” Others highlighted the freedom in the position: “I want some freedom in my weekly schedule” and “I like flexibility with my time.” Although these statements might be evident in other academic positions, the versatility of the CES doctorate was endorsed in the following statements: “I love that our CES degree gives us so many career pathways to choose from” and “I wanted flexibility to do many different tasks/roles within our profession.” From this, it is evident that the uniqueness of the CES degree through its preparation to take on different roles within the counseling field aids those individuals who not only want to pursue a faculty position but also want to maintain active in other roles (e.g., counseling, supervision).

Negatively ranked statements indicated that status and wealth did not influence the pursuit of their doctorates. Those statements *most unlike* their motivation included (a) I wanted to increase my wealth, (b) I enjoyed the power and attention I got while teaching, (c) I wanted the title of “doctor,” and (d) With a doctorate, people will take me more seriously. Post-sort responses emphasized that obtaining a doctorate in CES was not motivated by wealth. One respondent noted: “I didn’t expect to become wealthy as a faculty member.” Others supported this by writing: “I found this question preposterous—I lost income to be a counselor educator,” and “I left a higher paying job to pursue my graduate work—money isn’t as important to me as satisfying work.”



## **Motivation II: A Self-Guided Journey to be a Respected Professional with Job Security**

The second motivation indicated a desire to prove oneself and work towards a secure professional future. Two respondents loaded significantly on this factor; both were counselor educators, completed their doctorates at ages 25 and 26, respectively, and were women. This was the only motivation that was solely populated by Caucasian respondents.

Highly ranked statements reflected an orientation towards the future and towards creating job security. These included statements such as: (a) I wanted to be a stronger professional, (b) I wanted... a greater sense of job security, (c) With a doctorate, people will take me more seriously, and (d) I wanted to challenge and prove myself. Participants' response to the open ended questions emphasized this increase in job security, with one respondent stating: "I applied to grad school and wasn't sure where I was headed. I thought getting any PhD would provide job security—wherever I wound up working." Additionally, participants responded with: "I thought the PhD would make me a stronger professional," and "I wanted to continue my development." These responses depict an emphasis on professionalism and job placement. This motivating factor is not specific to the CES doctorate.

Statements that were most unlike this motivation suggested a lack of modeling or support from others. These included: (a) Education is an important value in my family, (b) People in my life pushed me/wanted me to pursue a doctorate, and (c) I watched someone close to me pursue a doctorate, and I admired the process. Those who endorsed this motivation used statements to emphasize their own self-motivation, such as: "No one in my family had education higher than a high school diploma" and "I did not have support to get a PhD, which caused struggles for me."

## **Motivation III: To Become a Clinical Leader**

Participants who loaded on this factor had passionate feelings about counseling and identified strongly as clinicians. Two respondents, a Counselor Educator and a CES student, loaded significantly on this factor. They differed in race and gender; both were in the age range of 30-39. Statements highlighted their motivation to shape the profession by training counselors, with their counselor identity superseding a professor identity.

Highly ranked statements reflected a passion for their identity as counselors, either in enhancing it or in preserving it. These statements included: (a) I wanted to be a leader for future generations of practitioners, (b) I was worried that I would 'burn out', (c) I wanted to increase my professional identity as a counselor, (d) I wanted to put myself in a position to influence counseling, and (e) I wanted to help students be prepared to practice counseling. A respondent noted: "I was being worked to death and in the beginning stages of burnout . . . I was losing passion for a job I once loved . . . I knew it could be better." Another indicated: "Identity as a counselor is the most important to me." This theme suggested that individuals were motivated by their passion for counseling. One statement was helpful in differentiating this perspective of becoming a clinical leader from others. The statement, I wanted a faculty position, was ranked at 0 (*Neutral/Unimportant*). The other three factor arrays ranked this statement in the positive region of 2 or higher. Because this statement was less important, the motivation appeared to deemphasize the professorate. In doing so, the identity as a clinician became stronger.

Statements dissimilar to the motivation of becoming a clinical leader reflected distaste for the research portion of the profession. These were: (a) I wanted to go through the dissertation

process, and (b) Research was appealing to me. The post-sort responses emphasized this distaste for research by responding: “Who liked dissertation? Really?” and “Research (the act of doing it) is not appealing to me.” In doing so, they emphasized a clinical perspective that shaped their motivation. This suggests that students may be clearly motivated by the clinical aspect of the CES degree and seek to enhance professional identity as counselors.

#### **Motivation IV: To Succeed for Family and Community Amid Obstacles**

This motivation emerged from a dedication to family, community, and societal values. Three respondents loaded significantly on this factor; two were Counselor Educators and one was a student. Two of the respondents identified as African American and one identified as Latino. The statements that were most like this motivation reflected an emphasis on family and community: (a) Education is an important value in my family and (b) I had a desire to help others and give back to the community. The respondents who loaded significantly on this factor responded: “My mother has taught me the value of education and made me aware of the importance of it,” and “My ultimate goal has always been to find a way to help out disadvantaged people in my community or helping in developing new opportunities for people.” In responses, they noted the important role that family and community play in motivating their pursuit of the degree, which may not be unique to the CES terminal degree.

Low ranked statements reflected obstacles that students needed to overcome in order to achieve their goals. These were: (a) I wanted to go through the dissertation process and (b) I wanted a continuous role of a student. The post-sort responses indicated how these were barriers to their success, but they were able to overcome them. One noted: “The dissertation process was the one thing that I dreaded when I started the program. This was actually one of the factors that almost kept me from applying to the PhD program.” Another stated: “I didn’t really have time for the demands of being a full-time student, but I had to do it.” Overall, this perspective reflected a motivation to achieve their goals for family and community, no matter what the difficulties were. This factor is not specific to the CES doctorate versus doctoral study in general.

#### **Areas of Consensus**

Analysis revealed “consensus statements” highlighting areas of agreement, with no statistically significant difference in how these statements were sorted between factors (Brown, 1980, p.306). The more consensus statements shared between factors, the more similar the overall factors. The limited number of consensus statements suggested that the emergent motivations were distinct from one another.

There were two neutral consensus statements: (a) I wanted to be a better supervisor, and (b) I believed that by preparing counseling students to be qualified counselors I could help more of the public than by counseling alone. A neutral consensus ranking suggests that the respondents viewed these motivations as no more or less reflective of their motivations. This may be due to the concepts reflected in the statements. The first statement reflects a service (i.e., supervision) that many counselors provide with their master’s degree. A respondent noted this by stating: “I could be a supervisor without my doctorate.” Therefore, this aspect of motivation may not be as salient for pursuing a doctorate. The second statement, which addressed making a larger impact than counseling, may be neutral as a result of tone and phrasing.

The negatively ranked consensus statement was: I watched someone close to me pursue a doctorate, and I admired the process. One respondent noted: “I did not know anyone who has done this process.” There were no other supporting statements for this negative ranking. However, that this statement was negatively ranked across all the factors suggested it was not a salient motivation for any respondent. In sum, the limited number of consensus statements ( $n = 3$ ) and their rankings in neutral or negative areas suggested that the emergent motivations were distinctly different from one another.

## Discussion

The goal of this research study was to identify motivations in pursuing a doctoral degree in CES. Several overlapping motivations between the CES degree and other disciplines were identified, such as to become a professor (Basalla & Debelius, 2007) and to advance one’s career and have job security (Ivankova & Stick, 2007; Jablonski, 2001; Leonard et al., 2005; Scott et al., 2004; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). Respondents who specifically reported motivations of proving professional worth and attaining job security were all Caucasian women who noted they did not have encouragement or role models in education. This might reflect desires for breaking the glass ceiling in employment (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009). Opposed to specifying a particular job path or outcome, some participants cited motivations of personal achievement and self-determination, similar to previous higher education research (Jablonski, 2001; Leonard et al., 2005; Scott et al., 2004; Wellington & Sikes, 2006). Although many shared motivations were identified in this study and cross discipline literature on the pursuit of doctoral degrees, a closer look at the CES specific components of the factors suggests that individuals have motivations in line with the developmental roots of the degree, trends in potential career paths, and ideas similar to the philosophies and competencies of CES.

Earning a terminal degree in CES in order to attain professional goals was the most commonly cited motivation in the research. The majority of participants indicated their ultimate ambition of becoming a Counselor Educator as their main motivating factor, which is aligned with the historical development of the degree (Adkison-Bradley, 2013), and job placement upon graduation (Schweiger et al., 2011). The difference, however, was the emphasis on career options and the perception that although counselor educators may be working in academia, they may also supplement their time in other professional roles outside of the professorate. This is congruent with the emphasis on various preparatory experiences and study with the degree (Adkison-Bradley, 2013; CACREP, 2009).

Clinical leadership, including advanced professional identity, was also noted as an important factor in pursuing the CES degree. This factor suggests that professional leadership is important to many, while research and teaching might be deemphasized. This motivation supports the idea Sears and Davis (2003) stressed of leadership training being a foundational aspect in CES. Additionally, participants’ desire to strengthen professional identity is associated with literature that has encouraged professional identity development in doctoral education (Adkinson-Bradley, 2013; Gazzola, DeStefano, Audet, & Theriault, 2011; Rasanen & Korpiaho, 2011).

External factors of family and community were also identified as motivating in the pursuit of a CES degree, particularly for participants of color. This is consistent with the literature that addresses the importance of family and community collectivism for both Latinos

(Torres-Rivera, 2004) and African Americans (Pack-Brown & Fleming, 2004). Participants who emphasized family and community also reported a desire to make societal impacts with the opportunities afforded by the degree. The motivating factor of wanting to be influential in society coincides with the emphasis on the integration of social justice in counseling pedagogy and the expectation of counselors to be social advocates for marginalized groups (Bemak & Chung, 2007; Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 2011; Ratts & Wood, 2011).

## **Implications for CES**

Awareness of students' motivations may foster student success by helping them match with relevant programs and faculty interests. Hoskins and Goldberg (2005) noted that students who experience an academic mismatch between their educational goals and their CES doctoral program will, in some cases, discontinue doctoral pursuit, or relocate to different CES programs. By eliciting information about students' motivations to pursue a CES degree by using professional goal statements in the doctoral program application process (Nelson, Canada, & Lancaster, 2003), counselor educators can assess for academic match and use this information to inform decisions about program admissions. Through talking with students about the motivations that have influenced their decisions to begin doctoral work in CES, Counselor Educators can help them find programs that will match their needs. For example, should master's students seek advisement on applying to doctoral programs, their program advisors can initiate a conversation about desires in seeking the degree. Once students are able to articulate motivations, they might feel more confident in the questions to ask and components to seek as they research a doctoral program. Further, if students have family and social support but lack interest in research (i.e., dissertation), they may benefit from a doctoral program that offers explicit and concrete support through the dissertation process, and a program closer to their support systems.

Peer and faculty support has been identified as a factor that positively influences the experiences of CES doctoral students (Protivnak & Foss, 2009), specifically for African Americans (Henfield, Owens, & Witherspoon, 2011) and women (Casto, Caldwell, & Salazar, 2005). Examination of student motivations may be beneficial when considering mentorship, since students are more successful when they are mentored by someone with shared interests and motivations (Protivnak & Foss, 2009). Borders and her colleagues (2011) shared that mentorship practices used with junior faculty should be extended to CES doctoral students who intend to seek Counselor Education positions. Although literature guides faculty in mentoring future Counselor Educators (Borders et al., 2011), Walker (2006) noted CES students who aspire to be practitioners lack mentorship. This area warrants further attention as the findings of the current study suggest some students might be motivated to pursue CES degrees to become clinical leaders.

By attempting to consider the diverse needs of students while balancing the needs of the profession, counselor educators may foster students' academic achievement and help them to seek related opportunities specific to their motivations and interest. This involvement can help students to acclimate to their first year of doctoral studies (Hughes & Kleist, 2005), and it may create an environment in which students feel that their voices are being heard and their goals are valued. Further, when provided a forum to verbalize motivations, students may better articulate needs.

## **Limitations**

There are limitations to this study. Participants were either current students or graduates, and as such, they relied on memory for initial drives for the degree, and original motivations may have been diluted by experience. Additionally, the lack of diversity among this sample failed to capture the motivations of CES doctoral students and graduates who are ethnically and racially diverse. The sample also lacked sufficient representation from individuals who solely identify as clinicians and/or administrators. While it is understood that counseling professionals often have multiple roles, more pure motivations might be difficult to identify. Finally, as a number of participants were solicited at a national counseling conference, types of perceptions may have emerged in this environment, skewing the sample.

## **Future Research**

Considering the numerous opportunities for CES doctoral graduates, the motivations revealed in this study can be researched further to identify their influence in academic program match, student involvement, and persistence to degree completion. Studies can also explore how students' motivations and the interests of their faculty mentors influence student-faculty relationships. Specifically, mentorship for doctoral level individuals with a motivation to be clinical leaders and continue their work as counselors can also be investigated to determine differences in clinical mentoring at the master's level. Future research might seek out a larger sample size of CES graduates who are working solely in research, clinical, or administrative settings, as these work environments were not fully represented in the present sample and may result in varied or additional motivations.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the motivations of students in and graduates of doctoral CES programs through a Q methodological study. Four motivations emerged from the sort that reflected different purposes for working towards the degree. The results have the potential to inform the work of the professorate by providing an understanding of the experiences of doctoral students in CES in terms of academic match and mentorship between faculty and student.

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## Appendix

### Factor Arrays and Distinguishing Statements by Factor

Factor	1	2	3	4
1. I wanted to work in a more desirable environment.	-1	2	0	-1
2. Education is an important valued in my family.	1	-4**	0	4**
3. I wanted to be a better supervisor.	0	0	1	0
4. Achieving a doctorate in CES is a personal accomplishment and goal for myself.	2	2	0	0
5. With a doctorate, people will take me more seriously.	-3**	3	0*	3
6. I enjoyed the power and attention I got while I taught.	-4	-4	1	0
7. I believed that by preparing counseling students to be qualified counselors I could help more of the public than by simply counseling.	-1	1	-1	0
8. I wanted to be more productive in society.	-1	1	-1	0
9. I wanted to be a more effective clinician.	0**	2	-2**	2
10. I wanted to teach future counselors.	4*	0	2	2
11. With a doctoral degree, I will be able to contribute to the field.	0	0	1	-1
12. People in my life pushed me/wanted me to pursue a doctorate.	-2	-3	-1	-2
13. The strength based focus of counselor education fit with me.	1	-1	0	1
14. I had support from faculty to pursue a doctorate.	1	-1	-2	1
15. I had a desire to help others and give back to the community.	2**	0	0	3**
16. I wanted to increase my wealth.	-4**	1	-1**	1
17. I wanted to be a leader for future generations of practitioners.	2	0	3	1
18. I wanted a faculty position.	2	3	0*	2
19. I was worried that I would "burn out" if I spent my whole career as a counselor.	-2	2**	4**	-3**
20. I wanted to talk to people about the core issues of their lives.	0	-1	-1	-1
21. I wanted to work with college level students.	-1	1	0	4**
22. I wanted to be a stronger professional.	3	4	-3**	3
23. I wanted to go through the dissertation process.	-2	-3	-4*	-3
24. I wanted to help students be prepared to practice their counseling in a legal and ethical manner.	0	0	3**	-1
25. I wanted the title of "doctor."	-3	1	-3	1
26. I received positive feedback from peers about my teaching skills.	-1	0	1	0
27. I watched someone close to me pursue a doctorate and I admired the process.	-3	-3	-1	-2
28. I wanted to provide counselors with guidance,	3	-1	2	-2

increase their enthusiasm, and improve their skills.				
29. I wanted to put myself in a position to influence counseling legislation.	-2	-2	4**	-1
30. I wanted to provide myself with a greater sense of job security.	-1	4**	-2	2**
31. I wanted a continuous role of a student.	-2	1	-1	-4**
32. I wanted to influence students to explore alternative perspectives.	0	0	2	0
33. I want to help future counselors see the nobility of what they are doing.	0	-2	1	-3
34. A doctoral program provided me with time self-reflection while continuing to feel productive.	0	-1	-2	-4*
35. I desired flexibility in pursuing my research interests.	-1	-2	-4*	-2
36. I desired flexibility in how I used my time, professionally and personally.	3*	1	1	-1*
37. I wanted to stay up to date in the counseling field.	-1	0	2	0
38. I wanted to have the possibility of having multiple roles as a professional, e.g., supervisor, researcher, clinician, administrator.	4	3	2	1
39. I wanted to increase my professional identity as a counselor.	1	-2**	3	1
40. Research was appealing to me, and I wanted to increase my research skills.	0	-2	-3	2**
41. I wanted to be prepared to increase the competence of future counselors (“a hand in future generations.”)	1	-1	-1	-2
42. I wanted to challenge and prove myself.	1	2	-2	0
43. I wanted to surround myself with other students and professionals who had a passion for the counseling profession.	2	-1	1	-1

\*Distinguishing Statement  $p < 0.05$

\*\*Distinguishing Statement  $p < 0.01$