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Academic Job Negotiation Experiences, Reflections, and Biases in Counselor Education: A Descriptive Study

Abstract

This descriptive study explored the job negotiation experiences of 93 counselor educators through an embedded survey design to examine their negotiation experiences, reflections, and potential hiring biases. The most common negotiation preparation strategy was consulting a mentor (80%) and while salary was most regularly negotiated (76%), a list of other benefits was included. Although a majority of participants regretted not making a request (53%), most reported overall positive experiences (63%). These findings support implications for counselor educators including preparing early, using successful negotiation strategies, exploring all potential benefits, and articulating requests for a more positive negotiation experience.

Keywords

academic job negotiation experiences, negotiation preparation, negotiation practices, salary negotiation, employment benefits

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Introduction

Successfully negotiating a job offer can have a significant effect on one's income and benefits over the course of a career as salary increases are often calculated based on a percentage of the initial salary (Golde, 1999; Kelsky, 2014a). Negotiating can put one in a place of empowerment and mutual respect if done positively and professionally; however, it can lead to a rescinded offer if done poorly (Kelly, 2014; Kelsky, 2014b). While negotiations can feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable, institutional leaders often expect and may even encourage individuals to negotiate as this could allow the university to offer one-time concessions when they cannot offer an increased salary or other costly requests (Kjaer & Leo, 2015). Due to the long-term financial impact of job negotiations, it is important that both counselor educators and doctoral students better understand the intricacies around academic job negotiation such as the importance of seeking mentorship and gaining support in locating job openings, negotiating advantageous packages, making final decisions, and transitioning into new roles as counselor educators (Borders et al., 2011; Vick et al., 2016). Throughout this process, mentors are vital as they can provide additional guidance, role-play negotiations, identify key contacts, assist with researching the university or position, and other support. They can also serve as a protective factor against burnout or attrition and support the career success of new faculty (Turban et al., 2017; Woo et al., 2019).

While some research has been conducted on academic job negotiation experiences, much of the research is either dated or published in non-peer reviewed sources (Golde, 1999; Kelly, 2014; Kelsky, 2014a, b, c). There is limited research specifically in counselor education to address useful negotiation strategies including mentor support, hiring and negotiation practices, or negotiable salary and benefits as well as common practices and experiences during the job search and negotiation process. For current faculty members who mentor new counselor educators, they

often have to use literature from other disciplines, draw from their own experiences, and follow common business practices due to the lack of research. Therefore, this study begins to fill gaps in the literature by providing insight focused on counselor educators' negotiation experiences including preparation strategies, negotiation practices, and requested benefits; reflections such as regrets, overall experiences, satisfaction, and fairness; and potential hiring biases based on demographic group differences. To place negotiations within the context of the job search, a brief description of the counselor educator job search process is provided before examining the current literature and methodology specific to negotiation and potential hiring biases within counselor education.

Academic Job Search Process

Although negotiations often take place toward the end of the interview process, the preparation begins much earlier. Understanding the entire process may give mentors, transitioning counselor educators, and doctoral students a clearer idea of what to expect. This process is not specific to counselor educators but can apply across academic disciplines. Transitioning faculty and doctoral students embarking on the job search can find academic job postings through websites, listservs, and conferences that host career events aimed at connecting candidates with potential employers. Unlike other job opportunities outside of academia, most candidates plan to apply one year in advance; typical application due dates run from fall to early spring (Zackal, 2014). Interested candidates should expect to submit a detailed application package including a curriculum vitae (CV), cover letter, letters of recommendation, and a formal application (Ford, 2018; Kjaer & Leo, 2015). Additional application requirements may include a written teaching philosophy, work samples, or other items that can help a search committee determine the best fit for their institution.

If the search committee is interested in a candidate, an invitation to participate in the interview process will be extended. While the process varies by institution, it is often conducted in multiple stages across several days (Chuang & Sackett, 2005; Ramirez, 2016). Candidates may be asked to complete a presentation of their research, teach a class, or complete another form of a presentation to assist in determining the candidates' abilities. They may also be evaluated during informal discussions to determine the potential collegiality and cultural fit when meeting faculty or committee members, exploring the community, or interacting throughout the campus visit (Ramirez, 2016). If selected, the candidate is provided a verbal or written job offer which begins the negotiation process. Although there is disagreement around whether negotiations should be done by phone or email/writing, if an initial offer is made verbally, a candidate can capture the details in an email and forward it to the institution for confirmation. This can be a viable substitute for a written offer (Kelly, 2014; Kelsky 2014b, 2016; Ramirez, 2016).

Negotiation Experiences

Negotiations can begin during any part of the process; however, they typically occur during the final stages after the job offer has been extended. This is the most advantageous time to obtain the best package as the balance of power shifts in the applicant's favor (Golde, 1999; Kelsky, 2014c; Ramirez, 2016). Many candidates prepare in advance by reviewing job responsibilities, research expectations, expected time allocation, performance criteria, and more (Kjaer & Leo, 2015; Ramirez, 2016). It is also helpful to know personal financial numbers and research the salary and benefits that are standard and what may be negotiated (Ramirez, 2016). While salary is important in considering an offer, candidates can also negotiate tangible and intangible benefits that may impact their careers (Ford, 2018; Ramirez, 2016). Negotiating standard university benefits such as medical, dental, and vision insurance may not be necessary. Yet, where institutions

face budget cuts and limited salary negotiations, institutional leaders may be able to offer other one-time or short-term financial benefits. These can reduce out-of-pocket expenditures for candidates such as house-hunting, moving expenses, and research stipends (Kjaer & Leo, 2015). Additionally, even though they may not be a part of the negotiation, it can be useful to identify intangible benefits (e.g., office or parking location, commute time, social fit, community resources) since these factors can affect the value or long-term experiences of a job and ultimately impact the decision to accept a position (Magnuson et al., 2009).

Ultimately, successful negotiations can help individuals begin their new jobs positively and demonstrate professionalism and collegiality. Responding to an offer too quickly or feeling pressured to do so may leave an individual with regrets. Warnke et al. (1999) recommends not accepting a position in less than seven days. Using this time to consult with a mentor, trusted advisor, or family members can be useful; it can provide time to craft an appropriate response including all requests, and ensure the response is professionally delivered. The response deadlines vary based on the needs of the departmental faculty and institution.

Potential Biases in Hiring

In addition to the typical stressors during the job negotiation process, a candidate may perceive biases that impact their experiences. In a transcendental phenomenology study examining the responses from nine faculty of color, Cartwright et al. (2018) found that underrepresented tenure-track applicants generally had supportive experiences during their interview processes. However, they also experienced disappointments related to discrepancies around the university's support of diversity, expectations placed on faculty of color to be the experts in diversity, internal conflicts between their desire to be authentic versus fitting in with the dominant culture, and their need to overcompensate for self-doubts or disadvantages. While all participants in that study

experienced microaggressions during their interviews, no participant reported them to the department chair or search committee.

Furthermore, despite the qualifications and preparation of an applicant, Higdon (2013) suggested that possible biases can affect a candidate's hireability. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) discovered a significant racial inequality between African American and White participants applying for jobs based primarily on the sound of the applicant’s name. Ndobo et al. (2018) determined that native-born applicants were preferred over immigrant applicants for positions that were considered prestigious. Milkman et al. (2015) noted gender discrimination was greater in higher-paid occupations. Similarly, Crothers et al. (2010) found that women have fewer options regarding salary, benefits, and promotion opportunities. Borders et al. (2011) reported that women and African American junior faculty members lacked mentoring which could impact their success as well.

While biases may be present within the job search process, additional research is needed to examine this further. Moreover, while the academic job search process is not new for counselor educators, the lack of research around job negotiation can impact the experiences of new and transitioning counselor educators and limit their mentorship and preparation support throughout the process. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide guidance and practical implications for new or transitioning counselor educators and their mentors to better understand the expectations and experiences around the job search, negotiation process, possible challenges or opportunities, and potential biases.

Methods

A mixed-methods study was designed to examine three key areas: counselor educators’ academic job negotiation experiences, participant reflections, and potential hiring biases. These

three areas included a total of nine research questions. The first set of questions examined participant negotiation experiences: (a) What negotiation preparation strategies are most common? (b) What negotiation practices are typically used? and (c) What salary and benefits are most frequently negotiated? The next set of research questions addressed participants' reflections: (d) Did participants experience regrets during negotiations? (e) What were the participants' overall negotiation experiences? (f) Were participants satisfied with their final negotiated packages? (g) Did participants believe their negotiated package was comparable to other faculty at their institution and rank? and (h) Is there a relationship between the reflection variables? The final category explored potential hiring biases through a single research question: (i) Are there potential biases in hiring practices based on demographic group differences?

Participants

After receiving institutional review board approval, recruitment was conducted through email posts to counseling faculty across the nation through a national counselor education listserv with hopes of reaching many counselor educators. The total population of counselor educators is estimated at approximately 3,000 full-time counselor educators based on the latest CACREP Annual Report (2018) reporting 2,817 full-time faculty from CACREP programs plus a margin for additional faculty at non-CACREP programs. After one initial and two follow-up email requests for participation, a convenience sample of 93 participants was obtained yielding a 10% margin of error with a 95% confidence interval. The email invitation recruited all those who had been offered a faculty position in counselor education regardless of whether or not they negotiated salary and benefits for their positions. Initially, 110 individuals clicked the invitation link, agreed to the informed consent, and began the survey; 93 participants completed the full survey in an average of 10 minutes and were included in the data analysis. Listserv recruitment does not allow for

calculating an accurate overall response rate based on the individuals who saw the invitation; however, 84% of the individuals who clicked the invitation link to review the informed consent did complete the survey in full (3% of the estimated total population of counselor educators). Although a convenience sample and listserv recruitment limit the generalizability of the study, the survey responses allow for an initial exploration of this topic within counselor education.

Of the 93 counselor educators who responded to the survey, there were 48 participants from the Southern region (SACES; 52%), 18 from the North Atlantic region (NARACES; 19%), 16 from North Central (NCACES; 17%), 8 from Western (WACES; 9%), and 3 from Rocky Mountain (RMACES; 3%). The distribution of regions is similar to the ACES membership distributions across the five regions with slight variations up to 5%. It was also comparable to the number of full-time CACREP faculty reported in each region in the CACREP Vital Statistics Report (2014) within 11% (N = 1,964): SACES (41%), NARACES (18%), NCACES (25%), WACES (9%), and RMACES (7%). Additionally, 77 participants identified as female (84%), 15 identified as male (16%); none identified as transgender. Racial backgrounds included 68 participants who identified as White (73%), 8 as Latinx (9%), 6 as African American (6.5%), 5 as Asian (5%), 5 as bi- or multi-racial (5%), and 1 as other (1%). This sample was somewhat representative of the full-time faculty gender reported by CACREP (2014) which also included more women (60%) than men (40%) and comparable racial background distributions: White (75%), Latinx (5%), African American (12%), Asian (4%), multi-racial (1.5%), and other (2.5%).

Furthermore, 50 participants were in public institutions (54%), 37 were in private (40%), 5 were in religiously affiliated (5%), and 1 reported being in another type of institution (1%). This is relatively comparable with the reported CACREP (2014) institution distributions (N = 284) of public (68%) or private institutions (32% including for-profit, non-profit, and religiously

affiliated). CACREP statistics for the remaining participant and program demographics were not available in the report. With respect to institutional classification, 49 participants were from a master's college or university (53%), with the remaining 43 from doctorate-granting research universities (46%), and 1 from a baccalaureate college (1%). The most frequent counseling faculty size, when accounting for department faculty in all counseling programs within the institution, was 5-9 (n = 47; 51%) followed by 1-4 (n = 17; 18%), 10-15 (n = 16; 17%), over 20 (n = 9; 10%), and 15-19 (n = 4; 4%). Faculty ranks included 65 assistant professors (70%), 8 associate professors (9%), 5 full professors (5%), 1 clinical professor (1%), and 14 reporting other titles (15%; i.e., adjunct, instructor, core faculty, lecturer, post-doctoral associate, visiting professor). Furthermore, 60 participants were in a tenure-track position (74%), 27 were in a non-tenure track position (29%), and the remaining 6 did not respond (6%). The academic year contracts included 60 participants on a 9-month contract or less (65%), 23 on a 12-month contract (25%), and 7 on a 10-11-month contract (7.5%); 3 did not answer (3%). The time participants spent in their current organizations varied; 45 participants spent one year or less (49%), 25 spent 2 to 3 years (27%), 11 spent 4 to 6 years (12%), 8 spent 7 to 12 years (9%), and 3 spent 13 or more years in their current organizations (3%). The years in *all* counselor education faculty positions included 27 participants who spent one year or less (29%), 20 who spent 2 to 3 years (22%), 25 who spent 4 to 6 years (27%), 20 who spent 7 to 12 years (22%), and 7 who spent 13 or more years in all faculty positions (8%).

Research Design and Procedures

Upon completion of the initial literature review and development of an online descriptive survey, the survey was reviewed for face and content validity by three counselor educators experienced with academic job negotiation and updated based on feedback before receiving institutional review board approval and sending it to participants via the listserv with adherence to

the research standards published in the 2014 American Counseling Association Code of Ethics. This study used a mixed method embedded survey design. The primary data collection was the quantitative survey; the embedded qualitative elements were included to support and help clarify the primary data (Sheperis & Heiselt, 2017). This allowed participants to elaborate on their responses and add additional clarity to help interpret the research findings further through content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017).

Instrument

Relevant literature was limited on. academic job negotiations, with no existing instrument describing the experiences of job negotiation within counselor education. Therefore, a survey was developed for this study which focused on three areas: counselor educators' job negotiation experiences, reflections, and potential hiring biases. This survey was not developed as a formal assessment but rather a series of descriptive questions needed to better explore and understand this under-researched area. The questions developed were based on limited literature (Ford, 2018; Kelsky, 2014a, 2014b, 2016; Kjaer & Leo, 2015; Ramirez, 2016) and personal experiences with the negotiation process. To address the 9 research questions, the survey consisted of a total of 34 items that included 21 questions regarding participants' experiences with academic job negotiations and 13 demographic questions to help clarify their professional context and background. Some questions had multiple response items.

Negotiation Experiences

To examine participants' job negotiation experiences, one multi-select question addressed research question (a) asking what negotiation preparation strategies are most common among participants. Participants were asked to indicate if they prepared in advance of the negotiation by checking strategies used from a list of 13 items ranging from researching the department to

practicing negotiation discussions with a mentor, colleague, or friend. Participants could also write in their own preparation activities. The next set of eight questions addressed research question (b) examining what negotiation practices are typically used. Several closed-ended items with a yes or no response inquired if participants negotiated salary or benefits for any academic job or their current job, if they ever negotiated with two or more institutions at the same time, if simultaneous negotiations resulted in an improved package, or if they began the negotiation process and then not taken the job; a follow-up question asked them to describe why they did not take the position. Two multiple-choice questions included the earliest the negotiation discussions began, ranging from before the initial interview to after the written job offer, and the primary negotiator for the institution which varied from a program coordinator to the provost. Another multi-select question addressed research question (c) exploring what salary and benefits are most frequently negotiated. The survey included a table of 31 salary and benefits (e.g., moving expenses, computer equipment, professional development, etc.) drawn from literature and faculty experiences. Participants indicated if each benefit was offered by the institution; if a change was requested (e.g., salary increase or teaching load decrease); and if their request was received in full, in part, or not at all. They were also able to add two additional benefits not listed. Finally, participants were asked what benefits were most important when considering if they would accept a position.

Participant Reflections

To address participants' reflections of their job negotiation experiences (research questions d-g), one multiple choice and three Likert-scale questions were used to quantify their responses. Qualitative questions were also asked to obtain narrative explanations of their quantitative responses. More specifically, for research question (d), participants responded to a multiple-choice question asking if they experienced regrets. Response options included: I should have made a

request but did not, I should have requested more than I did, I should not have made a request, I am satisfied with my list of requests, and I did not make a request but I am fine with that. Participants were also asked "if you experienced any regrets please describe them" and a text box was provided. Additionally, a series of 5-point Likert scales were used to explore research questions (e) overall negotiation experiences; (f) satisfaction with the final negotiated package; and (g) if participants believed their negotiated packages were comparable to other faculty at their institution and rank. Following these questions, participants were asked to elaborate using a qualitative response: "Please describe why you had the positive or negative experiences you marked above," "please describe the reason you marked your satisfaction/dissatisfaction above," and "do you have other comments that impacted your experiences related to the job offer and/or job negotiation that would be helpful to know?" Research question (h) regarding the relationship between these reflection variables was analyzed using the responses to the questions above. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the three Likert-scale items was 0.72, indicating acceptable internal consistency reliability for these three items exploring participants' negotiation experiences.

Hiring Biases

The final research question (i) explored potential hiring biases by examining demographic group differences. Questions included 13 demographic characteristics related to the individuals and their work environments. Participants were asked their gender, race, age, regional location, institution classification and type, number of counseling faculty within their department, current rank, the rank they entered their organization, tenure track status, length of their academic year contract, years in their current organization, and years in all counselor education positions.

Data Analysis

The initial data was screened for completeness and the data analyses addressed the research questions. Although missing data was rare, a pair-wise deletion was used for missing data points on variables being analyzed. Descriptive statistics helped examine the demographics of participants and responses to multiple-choice questions. The negotiation experiences were analyzed using frequency analysis to identify the number and percentage of participants who used the listed preparation strategies, negotiation practices, or negotiated salary and benefits. Participant reflections were analyzed using frequency analysis for the multiple-choice and Likert-scale quantitative responses. Supporting narrative responses were examined and quantified using content analysis. Content analysis is an empirically grounded method for analyzing text data to provide meaning, understanding, and insight to researchers; it helps further clarify the quantitative data (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017). The available narrative content was consensus-coded and categorized by themes by both researchers to ensure high intercoder reliability; those categories were then quantified by summarizing and counting the frequency of participant responses. Although a narrative question was asked related to levels of satisfaction, that question and related data were unavailable due to a technical issue with the survey software. A Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between the Likert-scale reflective experience variables as the responses were not normally distributed. Finally, to identify potential hiring biases, chi-square and nonparametric t-tests were used to explore demographic group differences in negotiation experiences and participant reflections. Effect sizes using Cohen's d identified strong or meaningfully significant differences (above 0.8), moderate effects (above 0.5), or small effects (above 0.2; Grissom & Kim, 2005).

Results

Negotiation Experiences

Preparation Strategies

Frequency analysis of yes/no responses or multi-select options were used to determine the common preparation practices of participants (*N* = 93). When preparing for their negotiations, 74 participants consulted with a mentor (80%); however, only 40 researched potential negotiation strategies (43%), and 22 practiced the negotiation discussions with a mentor, colleague, or friend (24%). Additionally, 59 identified their minimum and ideal salaries in advance (63%) and 28 determined their minimum and ideal benefits including any that might be deal-breakers for them (30%). While 64 researched faculty salaries specific to that department, college, or institution (69%), 59 explored salaries using a general salary survey or website (63%). Furthermore, 39 researched benefits provided by the department or college (e.g., research and conference funding; 42%); and 49 explored benefits provided by the university (e.g., insurance, tuition waivers; 53%). Finally, 56 examined the cost of living for the area (60%); 53 identified the university needs and expectations regarding teaching, research, and service (57%); 43 visited the departmental, college, and/or university website to learn about opportunities (46%); and 11 visited a community website or resources to learn about off-campus benefits (12%). In the open comment box at the end of the survey, several participants responded to their positive preparation experiences. One participant noted, "I had an amazing mentor who helped me through the process. She told me what I should request and encouraged me to ask for more money. Without her, I probably would not have gotten as much as I did." Another participant shared,

> Discussing the negotiation process with my mentor (from my doctoral program) was extremely helpful to calm my anxiety. She was able to tell me what her

university offered to incoming assistant professors, and how flexible they were in negotiation. This helped me compare my offer and consider what may be an appropriate counter-offer for the position I was hoping to accept.

Although several other participants mentioned the importance and impact of formal support from mentors in their doctoral programs, others highlighted the challenges of not having the support or mentors/peers who were so forthcoming with their experiences. One participant noted: "I hope this process could become one that is discussed more openly and honestly. Even some of my closest colleagues are reluctant to discuss their negotiation experiences. I think this leads to a sense of secrecy and uncertainty."

Negotiation Practices

When asked about specific negotiation practices, 73 participants reported negotiating salary or benefits for their current academic job (79%), and 86 negotiated for any academic job (93%). Furthermore, 16 respondents negotiated with two or more institutions at the same time (17%); this could include a current institution where they renegotiated an existing position. Of these 16 participants, 12 responded that simultaneously negotiating with more than one institution did aid in their negotiation process and resulted in receiving an improved package (75%); the remaining 4 did not believe it affected their final package (25%). When exploring the earliest the negotiation process began for participants in their current jobs, 61 responded that they began negotiations after the verbal job offer (66%), followed by 8 who began negotiating after the written job offer (9%), 7 during the on-campus interview (8%), 5 during the initial interview (5%), 3 before the initial interview (3%), and 2 at another time (2%); 7 did not answer (8%). Furthermore, 33 negotiated with a department chair (35%), 32 with a college dean (34%), 6 with a provost (6%), 4 with a program coordinator (4%), 4 with a human resource representative (4%), and 6 with another

individual (vice president of academic affairs, university president, associate dean, or director; 6%); 7 did not answer (8%).

Salary and Benefits Negotiated

A frequency analysis was used to identify the most negotiated salary and benefits. Although salary and many benefits were offered initially by their institutions, participants reported whether they requested a change during their negotiation process. The most requested changes included 71 who requested a change in salary (76%); 33 in moving expenses (35%); 29 in computer equipment, printer, or peripherals (31%); 28 in professional development opportunities and funding (30%); 27 in graduate assistant support (29%); 27 in computer software (29%); 25 in initial course releases (27%); and 25 conference travel funding (27%). There were 24 other listed benefits where less than 25% of participants requested a change. Some of those benefits were standard university benefits that may not be negotiable; others were negotiable items that went unrequested. Table 1 includes a list of salary and benefits ordered by the number of participants requesting a change for each item. The table also includes the salary and benefits offered by the institution and whether the requested salary or benefits were received in full, in part, or not at all. Not included in the table were items where five percent or fewer participants requested a change in additional benefits. They included (percentage initially offered by the institution): personal medical insurance (96%), personal dental insurance (90%), personal vision insurance (88%), personal life insurance (87%), spousal medical, dental, vision, and life insurance (69%), tuition waiver for self (58%), tuition waivers for spouse or children (53%), wellness benefits (gym access, trainers, massage; 40%), parking privileges near the office (32%), teaching abroad funding support (11%), and childcare support (1%).

Table 1

Requested Benefits Ordered by Number and Percentage of Participants Requesting a Change

Academic Job Benefits	Offered by institution		Requested change		Request received in full		Request received in part		Request not received	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Salary	72	77	71	76	19	20	32	34	20	22
Moving expenses	52	56	33	35	10	11	11	12	12	13
Computer equipment, printer, etc.	71	76	29	31	15	16	5	5	9	10
Prof development and funding	79	85	28	30	9	10	8	9	11	12
Graduate assistant support	33	35	27	29	6	6	10	11	11	12
Computer software	64	69	27	29	15	16	8	9	4	4
Initial course release(s)	40	43	25	27	13	14	4	4	8	9
Conference travel funding	70	75	25	27	4	4	11	12	10	11
Time towards tenure	27	29	22	24	7	8	5	5	10	11
Research time, support, and funding	42	45	21	23	3	3	7	8	11	12
Promotion and tenure opportunities	66	71	20	22	5	5	8	9	7	8
Specific long-term teaching load	56	60	18	19	5	5	4	4	9	10
House-hunting expenses	13	13	17	18	5	5	1	1	11	12
Office location, view, or furnishings	38	41	14	15	6	6	4	4	4	4
Summer/winter teaching	69	74	13	14	9	10	1	1	3	3
Job duties or assignments	33	35	12	13	2	2	5	5	5	5
Formal mentorship	44	47	10	11	2	2	3	3	5	5
Spousal support	7	8	9	10	0	0	3	3	6	6
Delayed start date	11	12	7	8	2	2	1	1	4	4
Retirement benefits with employer contributions	83	89	6	6	2	2	0	0	4	4

Note. Although the salary was likely offered by all institutions, those who did not indicate it was offered did indicate they made a salary request ($N = 93$).

Participant Reflections

Prior to beginning their negotiations, 64 participants in this study indicated that they experienced anxiety or fear about the negotiation process (69%), and only 21 experienced confidence in preparing for their negotiations (23%). While it was common for participants to experience anxiety, fear, and/or lack of confidence, some felt it was exaggerated by pressure from advisors or others. For example, one participant shared “My advisor always admonished us to take the first job offered to us. I'd have liked to have had other models to choose from.” Another shared “I was pressured to find a position which limited my choices. Even though the position and the institution wasn't ideal, I couldn't walk away. I do believe this impacted my experience.”

Regrets

When participants were asked about regrets, 53% of the participants indicated they did have regrets, which included 16 stating they should have made a request but did not (17%) and 33 regretting that they should have requested more than they did (35%). Conversely, 38 were satisfied with their requests (41%), 5 did not make a request but were content with not doing so (5%), and 1 did not answer (1%). None of the participants regretted making a request and two participants added a comment that they were just happy to be offered a job. Utilizing a content analysis to quantify participant comments, the most expressed regrets were not asking for a higher salary ($n = 14$) or specific benefits ($n = 10$) and not obtaining the offer in writing ($n = 5$). Other participant regrets included being unprepared for the negotiations ($n = 3$), being told nothing was negotiable ($n = 3$), not inquiring about specific responsibilities or tenure requirements ($n = 2$), and not making it clear they were interviewing between institutions and needed more decision time ($n = 2$).

Overall Negotiation Experiences

Participants' overall experiences of the negotiations were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very positive*) to 5 (*very negative*) with a mean of 2.17 (SD = 1.01). A majority had positive experiences including 26 who rated their experiences as very positive (28%) and 35 as somewhat positive (38%). While 23 experienced both positive and negative aspects (25%), only 5 reported their negotiation experiences as somewhat negative (5%) or 3 as very negative (3%); 1 participant did not answer (1%). Content analysis of the qualitative responses revealed that those who felt the experience was positive shared that they received a fair offer based on their requests (n = 23), negotiated easily with supportive leaders (n = 22), felt prepared and empowered (n = 5), were happy to get the job offer (n = 5), felt valued and supported (n = 4), enjoyed engaging with faculty (n = 1), gained clarity about job expectations (n = 1), and learned from the experience (n = 1). One participant shared a positive experience that she felt reassured during the negotiation process: "When I started my conversation with the Provost, I told her that I was very nervous about the process. She was wonderful and stated that women in general don't do this and that they need to do it more." Another participant indicated the value of communicating in writing: "negotiations primarily took place over e-mail. This was helpful to me because I find it easier to advocate for my needs when it is not instantaneous communication such as in person or over the phone." Participants also reported negative aspects including feeling nervous and/or unprepared to negotiate (n = 10), disappointed in not receiving the requested salary or benefits (n = 8); pressured to make a quick decision and/or move (n = 5), conflicted by miscommunication issues (n = 5), disempowered or undervalued by leaders (n = 4), deceived by not getting what was verbally promised (n = 4), limited with a non-negotiable offer (n = 3), and stressed from an annual appointment rather than longer-term contract (n = 1).

Satisfaction with the Negotiated Job Package

The levels of satisfaction with the final negotiated job package corresponded similarly. On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very satisfied*) to 5 (*very unsatisfied*), the mean was 2.05 (*SD* = 0.93). Most were satisfied with 24 participants reporting feeling very satisfied (26%), 51 somewhat satisfied (55%), 10 neutral (11%), 5 somewhat unsatisfied (5%), and 3 very unsatisfied (3%). Participant qualitative responses to satisfaction were unavailable due to a technical issue with the survey software. However, in the final comments, one participant shared:

> IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY! I interviewed at places that offered a LOT more money than where I am at. But they did not accept the fact that I am a professional hybrid of a school counselor, play therapist and MFT.... So I took the lowest offer at a school where I was hired BECAUSE I was a hybrid…. I can hear some folks saying you can't raise a family on good feelings, but for me, it's worth it. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY.

Perceptions of Negotiated Job Package Compared to Other Faculty

When asked if they believed their negotiated job package was comparable to other faculty at their same rank, participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*much better than others*) to 5 (*much less than others*) with a mean of 2.93 (*SD* = 1.01). Responses included 7 participants who felt their final package was much better than others (8%); 23 felt it was somewhat better (25%), 37 felt it was equivalent (40%), 19 felt it was somewhat less comparable (20%), 6 felt it was much less compared to others (6%), and 1 did not answer (1%). One participant's favorable experience was noted in his final comments when he admitted he needed to "balance 'not appearing greedy' with 'getting what I wanted and perceived as my worth'…. I feel really lucky and blessed to be where I am, doing my 'dream job', and being fairly compensated." However, another participant believed the process was unfair when he shared,

> Some items were told to me as being absolutely non-negotiable. This was very discouraging. Even more discouraging was later learning that others who [were] hired at the same time as me were able to negotiate. This made me wonder if perhaps there were personal variables within me that made me less willing or able to negotiate, or if perhaps I was being treated unfairly by administration.

Relationships between Reflective Experiences

As expected, Spearman correlations revealed moderate positive correlations between participants' satisfaction with their final negotiated job package and their overall positive experiences ($r_s = .48$, $p < 0.001$); between their levels of satisfaction and beliefs that their package was comparable to others at their rank ($r_s = .50$, $p < 0.001$); and between participants overall favorable experiences and beliefs their package was comparable to others ($r_s = .39$, $p < 0.001$).

Potential Hiring Biases

Finally, potential hiring biases were explored through examining demographic group differences. A dichotomous scale was created for the demographic independent grouping variables (i.e., gender, race, years in counselor education, tenure-track, institution type, and institution classification) maintaining a sample size for each group that would yield reliable results. Chi-square analyses were run for categorical dependent variables (i.e., fear/anxiety, confidence, consulted a mentor, practiced negotiating, requested a salary increase, or received a requested salary change in part or in full). There were no significant mean differences noted with a significance cutoff of $p = .05$. Mann-Whitney U non-parametric independent t-tests were run for each dependent variable measuring participant reflections using Likert-type responses as they were not normally distributed. There were significant group differences in only one variable with a moderate effect size: the levels of satisfaction between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty

($U = 721$, $p = .017$, $d = .58$). Although both groups had a median score of 2 (somewhat satisfied), tenure-track faculty experienced statistically higher levels of satisfaction ($n = 60$, $M = 1.87$, $SD = 0.79$) than non-tenure-track faculty ($n = 33$, $M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.09$) with the salary and benefits packages they received. One participant stated, "I got a higher starting salary, but the stress of an annual appointment was terrible" which highlights one substantial difference in the experiences of tenure and non-tenure-track faculty.

Discussion and Implications for Counselor Educators

New and transitioning counselor educators can make the most of their experiences during the job negotiation process in several ways. Preparing early, practicing successful negotiation strategies, and exploring all the benefits of a job can be critical to taking advantage of their negotiation positions. These tactics can aid in a positive experience and satisfying negotiation without regrets.

Negotiation Preparation Strategies and Practices

At a time when applicants have the most leverage, research and practice appear to be helpful in preparing for successful negotiations (Kelsky, 2014c; Kjaer & Leo, 2015). Many participants consulted with a mentor and found that support valuable. However, fewer researched or practiced the other strategies examined in this study. Therefore, exploring the additional preparations and practices described in this study may serve as a guide in preparing transitioning faculty and doctoral students even further. Moreover, several participants suggested they would have preferred increased transparency, formal guidance, open discussions, and support from their mentors or peers. This suggests that counselor educators can enhance their roles to offer support across a variety of ways. For instance, within curricular offerings, they can include guest speakers, CV and job search material reviews, useful literature reviews, and other course activities or

assignments that prepare their doctoral students for the job search process during the final years in their program. Additionally, counselor educators can host co-curricular programs such as workshops or informal events where they discuss job search and negotiation experiences or offer tips and suggestions about the process. Counselor educators can also serve as individual mentors to review materials, provide guidance, serve as references, assist with networking, or role-play negotiations to assist the candidate in gaining confidence, experience, and comfort with the process. They can also encourage doctoral students and recent alumni to share information with one another, providing more transparency and understanding around the process. Doctoral peers can even share job opportunities when they view others as a better fit.

Although nearly two-thirds of participants knew their minimum and ideal salaries in advance, for those who did not, knowing personal numbers and researching what institutions may be able to offer can be critical in the negotiating process (Ramirez, 2016). Public universities provide salary information on their websites which can give candidates a better idea of what to expect and request at that institution. While on the campus interview, candidates can gain information through informal conversations with current faculty. Although several participants expressed disappointment at not receiving their requests in full or part, many benefits were not requested. This suggests many candidates missed opportunities to negotiate for additional financial support or benefits that an institution could have offered as a one-time or short-term benefit (Kjaer & Leo, 2015). Identifying benefits important to them in advance and seeking support to ensure they include these requests in their negotiations can be helpful, especially since none of the participants regretted making a request and more than half indicated regrets for not making a request or not asking for more than they did.

Preparing early is also critical in successful negotiations as discussions can occur earlier than anticipated. Although most negotiations began after the verbal or written job offer, nearly 20% of participants began their discussions before the job offer was presented. Gaining a clear understanding of the process, practicing key strategies, researching unknowns, and consulting mentors and peers before the negotiations begin is likely to result in higher satisfaction with fewer regrets. Consulting a mentor and gaining the awareness that negotiations are acceptable and even expected is helpful as most participants in this study did negotiate salary and/or benefits. This may offer the needed push for uncertain job seekers to make a request even if they are just happy to receive a job offer. In addition, while less than 20% of participants reported negotiating with two or more institutions at the same time, the majority of those who did negotiate with multiple institutions believed it helped obtain an enhanced job package and two participants indicated their regret in not making the institution aware they were interviewing elsewhere when they believe it could have helped. Candidates may appear more desirable if multiple universities are vying for them; therefore, multiple offers appear to provide additional leverage during the negotiation process when mentioned.

Salary appeared to be the primary focus of negotiations for most participants. While salary is important and can lead to long-term benefits, candidates are encouraged to consider other tangible benefits as well such as those examined in this study. Intangible benefits such as workplace climate, collaborative colleagues, commute time, faculty fit, mentorship support, general expectations, and community opportunities should also be considered in the decision process. Even though they may not be a part of the formal negotiation, intangible benefits can increase or decrease the value and positive experiences for a candidate which can impact their decision to accept a position (Magnuson et al., 2009). While a majority of participants in this study

researched faculty salaries and the cost of living in an area, less than half explored potential benefits, which can add up to significant value for faculty members when a college or university is unable to increase a salary. Visiting the departmental, college, university, and community websites to learn about the opportunities and benefits can be informative, but less than half of all participants took the time to do so during their preparations. Since none of the participants in this study regretted asking for something in their negotiation and more than half of the participants regretted not making a request or wished they requested more than they did, participants with a prepared list of requests may be more likely to request and receive desired salary or benefits once the negotiations start. Several participants admitted that they did not know what benefits to consider but researching those in advance could have provided that knowledge. The results of this study provide transitioning counselor educators and doctoral students a list of potential benefits that may be helpful to consider for future job negotiations. Candidates are encouraged to identify and rank the benefits most important to them before they get started with the job search process, to ensure they are prepared when the negotiations begin.

Several participants also suggested that ensuring they had time to consult with a mentor, advisor, or family members after receiving the offer was helpful in ensuring their response was reasonable, included their intended requests, and was professionally delivered. Therefore, seeking support throughout the process can be valuable in helping a candidate avoid unnecessary regrets and missed opportunities. Finally, it is also vital to know the faculty and program needs (Kelly, 2014). When candidates research institutional needs, offerings, and opportunities, they are better prepared to identify the salary and benefits for which they can ask and what would be appropriate. For example, visiting the departmental website and closely reviewing the job posting provides a candidate the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the classes being taught as well as faculty

specialties and research interests. If an applicant is filling a vacant position due to retirement or transition, it would be helpful to know what courses the retired faculty member taught and any other roles since those vacancies may need to be filled. Not only is it important to understand the program and university to perform better in an interview, but it is also useful when negotiating and understanding if the offer is fair and comparable to others at the same rank.

Avoiding Regrets and Increasing Satisfaction

Responding to an offer too quickly or feeling pressured to accept offered terms without negotiating can leave candidates with regrets or dissatisfaction as several participants reported in this study. Therefore, taking the time or requesting more time as necessary to consult with a mentor can be critical to successful negotiation. There is disagreement around whether negotiations should be done by phone, email, or writing for a new faculty member (Kelly, 2014; Kelsky 2014b). However, there were several regrets around not obtaining an offer in writing when participants did not receive what was verbally promised. Therefore, negotiating over email may provide the space to consult with mentors and peers without feeling pressured to provide an immediate response. It may also help obtain the details in writing. Regardless of how an individual delivers the response, it is helpful to create a written list of requests from which to work (Kelsky, 2014a; Ramirez, 2016). If agreed upon verbally, it can be followed up with a written summary to confirm the offer or request. In addition, it is important to make sure the final contract that is signed has all of the agreed-upon terms. This may be useful in the future if there is a leadership change or there is ever a disagreement about benefits offered such as yearly professional development funds or course releases.

Potential Hiring Biases

Significant mean differences regarding race and gender were expected in this study based on earlier research (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Borders et al., 2011; Crothers et al., 2010; Higdon, 2013; Ndobo et al., 2018). However, no demographic group differences were significantly supported other than notable differences in satisfaction among tenure-track versus non-tenure-track positions with one participant suggesting the lack of stability and stress of an annual appointment as a significant reason for dissatisfaction. No participant comments included concerns with perceived bias based on the other personal demographic differences. Yet, previous research indicated that it is worth further exploration to understand how there may be potential hiring biases in counselor education based on the variables in this study and additional ones as well. Therefore, it can be helpful for candidates to be aware of the potential for biases, gain necessary support, and articulate their concerns if any arise.

Limitations

As with any research study, there are limitations. The size of the sample, sampling method, and descriptive study research design limit the generalizability of this study. This design used a convenience sample of participants who were interested in participating in a study on job negotiation; consequently, most participants reported experience negotiating. It is difficult to determine if this result is generalizable to all academics or if a larger percentage of counselor educators who had experience with negotiating responded to the survey, and those without that experience declined to participate. Anecdotal discussions that inspired this research indicated that there was a sample of faculty members who did not negotiate their current or previous academic jobs and expressed concern about knowing how to negotiate effectively. However, it is difficult to determine if that is indicative of other counselor educator participants that would have been

captured using a different sampling method. Therefore, using inferential statistics with a larger sample and random sampling of the total population of counselor educators could have improved the generalizability of this study. Additionally, while participants' current and initial rank upon entering their positions was obtained, their job titles were not. This would have been helpful to clarify responses to some questions such as with whom they discussed their negotiations. For example, if they negotiated a job offer for a college dean position, it would be more likely that they discussed negotiations directly with the university provost or president than someone applying for an assistant faculty position. Also, one participant noted in the final comments that the list of gender identities (e.g., male, female, transgender) was limited and an "other" box should have been included for participants to accurately identify themselves. This adjustment would have provided more inclusivity.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this survey did examine demographic group differences, questions that addressed perceived bias during the job search or negotiation process were not examined and could have been a helpful addition. Therefore, future research related to gender, racial, ethnic, or other group identities (e.g., LGBT, disability) could be beneficial to understanding and improving job search strategies, negotiation preparation, hiring practices, and perceived bias in academia. Considering current global political concerns and the spotlight on racial inequities, further research could be conducted to specifically examine women, immigrant, and African American faculty members as current research indicates that there is bias within the hiring process, promotion, and tenure for those populations (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Borders et al., 2011; Crothers et al., 2010; Higdon, 2013; Milkman et al., 2005; Ndobo et al., 2018).

Since this study primarily focused on academic negotiation experiences, future research could examine the entire academic job search process, including challenges encountered by transitioning counselor educators and doctoral students when beginning the job search. In addition, the current study did not consider the status or ranking of each institution from which a candidate graduated or if campuses were unionized. Literature beyond the field of counseling (Finch et al., 2016; Higdon, 2013) suggested a search committee may prefer hiring graduates from top-tier schools. Therefore, it could be beneficial to determine if such biases occur within counselor education pertaining to an institution's status as a research or teaching university and whether faculty graduated from a face-to-face, online, or hybrid program. Although graduating from a full-time top tier program may be considered an advantage for candidates as it provides the potential for more personalized faculty mentorship, it may not always be feasible or affordable for a working counselor to obtain their doctorate at that type of institution. Furthermore, examining other institutional differences such as comparing experiences at unionized versus non-unionized institutions and the impact that has on the hiring and negotiation process could add to the current literature in this field. It may also serve as a guide for prospective doctoral students as they plan the trajectory of their doctoral work and careers in academia.

Conclusion

The findings of this study illustrated that most participants did engage in some preparation strategies and many appeared to negotiate during their job search process. However, there are many opportunities that were missed around negotiating benefits. The list of benefits used in this study could expand the options for transitioning counselor educators and doctoral students, especially where salary increases are limited. Additional intangible benefits that may not be included in a job negotiation but offer significant value to faculty members should also be

considered. Mentorship to support candidates, especially those from diverse backgrounds, may be critical to negotiation success and satisfaction. Ultimately, individuals are encouraged to seek support; conduct advanced research; and be prepared, adaptable, and open to negotiating beyond salary to avoid regrets, have a positive negotiation experience, and feel their final negotiated package is comparable with others at their rank and institution.

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