A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
AND CAREER PATHS OF DOCTORAL STUDENT COMPLETERS
IN ONE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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SUBMITTED TO
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

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by

Tammy Louise Wagner

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The Degree

Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

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The purpose of this exploratory, phenomenological study was to uncover the common experiences of doctoral student completers in one leadership program. It was conducted using qualitative methodology in a bound, case study format. Survey and interview data were collected and analyzed for common themes based upon the predetermined themes of leadership identity development and job and career paths. Sub-themes for leadership identity development included the following: (a) increased confidence, (b) identity affirmation, (c) personal learning and self-development, and (d) emphasis on collaborative relationships. Sub-themes related to job and career paths were as follows: (a) perceived expansion of field of work, (b) emphasis on collaborative relationships, and (c) goal attainment. One additional, separate theme identified was pride and self-fulfillment. Findings provided a voice to the doctoral students and added to current research on leadership identity development, graduate student career paths, and assessment of doctoral programs. Further exploration into the sub-themes uncovered in this study may offer insight into adult development as well as the concepts of human and social capital. Additional research into perceptions of leadership identity and career paths
of non-completers as well as the impact of specific doctoral program components such as advisor relationships, cohort models, and mentorship projects may be of value.

Keywords: doctoral student completers, leadership identity, career paths
I dedicate this study to my children, Garmon and Garrett, who sacrificed much that I might have the opportunity to attend school and develop my abilities. I can only hope that one day they, too, will learn to value education.

I give them all my love.

I also want to thank my family for their patience and for listening to early drafts. I also want to thank my special friend, Christopher Ziegler, for his love, support, and unwavering belief that I would complete what I began in a moment of unparalleled ambition.
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CHAPTER I

“The trouble with measurement is its seeming simplicity.” Author Unknown

Introduction

The quest for accountability in higher education is one of those intriguing challenges that continue to captivate scholars even after decades of experimentation. This complex issue presents particular challenges for researchers as it is linked to a multitude of higher education concerns related to governance, affordability, access, and performance. Educational leaders still search for the optimal approach to accountability that will address this multifaceted issue once and for all. Meanwhile, colleges and universities implement whatever new approach seems to promise amelioration while at the same time pacifying critics.

Competition over scarce public dollars in the past few decades has sparked controversy over the role of higher education in America. Proponents of accountability insist that the quality of higher education today is declining on all fronts. With regards to student knowledge and performance, Neal (2008) argued that core programs in literature and history traditionally provided a general education in basic fields of knowledge for college students. He faulted the erosion of such programs and their replacement by trendy, new, narrow interest courses for the current decline in adult literacy. On the access front, Lovitts (2001) noted that although students are enrolling, they are not graduating. In fact, studies have measured that across disciplines over 50 percent of students who begin doctoral programs are non-completers (Bowen & Rudenstine, 1992; Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; Gardner, 2008). Lovitts posited that this may be a
fault of the current structure of accountability systems for graduate institutions that base funding on the basis of enrolled students and the number of new recruits rather than on retention.

Across the United States public funding for higher education based sole on enrollment is under scrutiny. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2013) more than thirty states have transitioned to or are holding formal discussions on performance based funding for higher education. One example is the Complete College Act in Tennessee that bases government funding for higher education on factors such as graduation and course completion rates rather than enrollment. Kelderman (2012) observed how the College Completion Act in Tennessee has re-prioritized student services aimed at retention, recruitment, and remedial education within the context of university planning and school budget decision-making. Similar legislation has been passed in Ohio, shifting funding away from enrollment and increasing state funding tied to graduation from 20 to 50 percent for four-year colleges (Ohio Office of Budget Management, 2013).

Today, institutions of higher education in the United States are at a crossroads, caught between a new “market-driven, consumer-based approach” and the historic mission of higher learning (Burke, 2005; Hulsey, 2012; Leveille, 2005). Critics argue that overreliance on performance based measures may result in social promotion, easing requirements, and graduating students who have not fully earned their degree (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2013). They worry that colleges will be turned into degree granting factories producing watered-down degrees with little or no accountability standards for quality. In his article entitled, “How (Not) to Grade a College Education,” Hulsey (2012) disputed
that there is any big problem in accountability within the American higher education system that needs addressing. He made the case that selective data analysis is being used to justify performance outcomes as well as cuts to colleges and universities during scarce economic times. In defending his position he asserted that despite rising tuition and student-loan debt levels, the long-term payoff from finishing a college degree in terms of earnings continues to grow. Keeley’s (2007) research confirmed this claim and extended the benefits of a college education into areas of health and social welfare.

Given the well-documented benefits of a college education, it is arguably in the public’s best interest to increase graduation rates for all students, particularly those pursuing a terminal degree for they will be the researchers, scholars, and leaders of tomorrow. Similarly, in light of the concerns for and against performance outcomes, it seems prudent to develop systems to ensure quality programming. Graduation rates for doctoral students can be measured and ascertained with relatively simple calculations. However, assessing the rigor and quality of individual programs of study is significantly more difficult to quantify. The challenge is to recast doctoral education in the terms of an outcomes-based framework.

This dissertation is a report of an exploratory, phenomenological study of leadership development in doctoral graduate student completers. This study was based primarily upon a survey and interviews of graduate students who had completed a program of study in leadership studies at one private university in northeastern Ohio. The first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, specifies the problem of the study, describes its significance, and presents an overview of the
methodology used. The chapter concludes by noting the delimitations of the study and defining some special terms used.

**Background of the Study**

Students pursuing doctoral studies seek the development of specific knowledge, skills, and habits of the mind particular to their specific field of study. Over the last thirty years research has emerged specific to the psychosocial development of doctoral students. This research is rooted in adult development theories related to psychosocial, identity and cognitive development, as well as that of transitions, adult learning, and life review. The theoretical framework for this study pulls from the areas of leadership theory, adult development theory, and life review.

Northouse (2007) explained that leadership can be viewed as both a trait and a process. The trait perspective conceptualizes leadership as a set of innate, inborn characteristics possessed by individuals. The process viewpoint defines leadership as a process or phenomenon between a leader and followers. The process definition of leadership suggests that leadership resides in the context of situations and relationships. When defined as a process, leadership becomes a skill that can be observed, learned, and developed by individuals (Jago, 1982).

Transformational leadership is a process approach to leadership that seeks to change and transform people by treating them as full human beings (Northouse, 2007). The transformational approach to leadership has been the focus of much research since the 1980s. Transformational leadership emphasizes the charismatic and affective elements of leadership. Burns (1978) and House (1976) attempted to link the roles of leaders and followers. Burns proposed that transformational leaders were able to raise the
levels of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. House made similar
claims in his theory of charismatic leadership.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) argued that a leader’s primary tool or instrument is the
self. Therefore, Kouzes and Posner contended that leadership is primarily a process of
self-development. The first step in self-development, according to Kouzes and Posner, is
self-reflection. Leaders must first know who they are as a leader in order to develop an
awareness of strengths and weaknesses. From that conscious reflection, leaders can then
develop a plan to take concrete steps toward becoming a better leader.

Adult development theory assumes that growth occurs over adulthood along
cognitive, emotional, and behavioral lines (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock,
2012). Development over the adult life course is shaped by anticipated and unanticipated
life events. It consists of periods of stability as well as periods of change and transition.
How one deals with life events form the basis for the stages described by Erikson (1950)
and Levinson (1990) as well as the vectors explained by Chickering and Reisser (1993),

Gardner (2009) posited that engaging in a doctoral program of study constitutes
an important developmental period for adults. As such, it can be viewed as a turning
point or life-changing event as it relates to adult development. Having doctoral students
consciously engage in remembering their experiences during this time is, in effect, a
modified form of what Butler termed a “life review” (Lemme, 2006). This form of
remembering can be a major process through which adults can integrate their previous
experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of self (Pasupathi, Weeks, & Rice,
2006).
Two commonalities among leadership theory, adult development theory, and life review are the themes of reflection and integration of experiences. These themes are helpful in building a framework for understanding how doctoral students in leadership programs develop throughout the life course, during and post graduation. This framework, may, in turn, help educators to design programs that are responsive to the needs of this particular student group (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Such understanding represents a different approach to program evaluation and accountability.

**Statement of the Problem**

Literature over the past few decades has been filled with studies of accountability as it relates to higher education. Much of the accountability research in higher education has focused on graduation rates and the accreditation process. Additional research can be found analyzing student satisfaction as well as faculty scholarship, service, and teaching. In the past decade, there has been a surge in studies on graduate students. The majority of these studies on graduate students have emphasized concerns over the high rates of attrition among doctoral programs in the United States and rising time-to-completion (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). Other studies have explored the socialization process of doctoral students, advising roles and relationships, graduate student development, and the dissertation process (Gardner, 2009). However, there are currently few studies that evaluate doctoral programs in relationship to adding value to students’ core competencies.

Leadership has many different meanings and definitions. Fleishman et al. (1991) noted that as many as 65 different systems for conceptualizing leadership have been developed over the past several decades. Despite the wide variations in leadership theory,
common components have emerged relating to process, influence, group interaction, and goal attainment (Northouse, 2007). Defining leadership in this way means that it is not a trait but a transactional event between leaders and followers. As such, leadership becomes accessible as a skill that can be learned and developed. Identifying ways in which this process can be facilitated through higher education programs is of immediate use to growing practitioners.

Leadership preparation is a complex process that requires learning a new set of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Kouzes and Posner (2003) argued that leadership is primarily a process of self-development. In their studies they found a positive correlation between learning and leading. Through their research they identified that learning could occur through experience, example, and education. More specifically, they noted that learning could occur through trial and error, by observing others, and through formal training. Evaluating doctoral programs of leadership in relationship to these three criteria seems a logical next step.

**Research Questions**

To truly link accountability, programs, and student performance outcomes, the research problem that emerges is one attempting to quantify the college experience and its impact upon students’ lives. Yet this problem, crossing all disciplines and students, is too broad in scope. A narrower study focusing on a single program and discipline is warranted.

The research setting for this study, henceforth to be known by the pseudonym “Midland University,” was a mid-sized regional teaching university, historically related to a conservative, traditional church. This private, not-for-profit university offers a
Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies program that boasts a graduation rate of eighty percent. The setting is more fully described in Chapter III.

If we look at the doctoral program in leadership studies at Midland University, the emphasis is on performance outcomes of increased leadership knowledge, skills, and practice. In this context, the primary research question that arises is a retrospective one: In what ways did the doctoral program at Midland University influence your leadership identity and career development? More specifically, I am studying the overall impact of the doctoral program upon leadership identity development among successful graduate student completers at Midland University through the use of the Choicemap interview tool. My goal is to determine whether the program impacted these individuals’ career path in order to further understand how doctoral studies influence job decisions.

The discovery of similarities or significant differences that exist between successful graduate student completers of doctoral programs in education in regards to leadership careers might suggest factors which influence student persistence and degree completion. By providing an understanding of the common dynamics inherent among the fifteen participants of this study, postsecondary practitioners may be better informed about student performance outcomes for this population of students.

**Significance of the Study**

The results of this study may be important on several levels. First, it is hoped that this proposed phenomenological study of doctoral students’ experiences will make a contribution to the knowledge of alternative methods of assessment of doctoral education. Research into doctoral students and educational programs is gaining momentum. More and more studies are beginning to emerge with regards to completion rates, time to
degree, and attrition patterns for doctoral students. For example, a national data set now exists that can be drawn upon to answer the question of how well doctoral programs are doing to ensure that talented and able students are completing doctoral programs of study (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008; Maki & Borkowski, 2006). In addition, studies of doctoral students and programs have begun to emerge that cover other aspects of doctoral student development. Nerad and Cerny (1999) conducted a retrospective study that examined Ph.D. holders’ perceptions of the relevance and value of their doctoral education ten years after completion. Inspired by this study, Golde and Dore (2001) conducted a survey of current doctoral students that adds insight into the relationship between doctoral education and Ph.D. career paths. The value of such research, particularly that of Nerad and Cerny as well as Gold and Dore, has led the National Research Council to recommend that student perspectives be included in future doctoral program assessments (Ostriker & Kuh, 2003).

Both Gardner (2009) and Nyquist et al. (1999) have explored the development of doctoral students, both Ph.D. and Ed.D. candidates, throughout their programs of study using qualitative research methods to good effect. Therefore, collecting and analyzing data from students verbatim through alternate means seems fruitful and may provide additional insight into doctoral programs and their efficacy. It follows that the graduate school as well as individual departments may experience organizational growth from the exposure to explicit and detailed data collection of individuals’ lived experiences. This is particularly true in light of the shift in the demographic makeup of doctoral students and the broadening career paths of Ed.D and Ph.D. recipients (Aenerud, Homer, Nerad, & Cerny, 2006).
On a secondary level, it is hoped that this study will yield some useful methodological findings to guide future research. The primary application of the Choicemap interview tool has been as a clinical tool and research instrument for facilitating midlife review (Lewchanin & Zubrod, 2001). Although the Choicemap interview tool has not been previously used in studies of doctoral student development, the potential for its application is clear. The exploration and application of this tool for students at the doctoral level may provide additional insight into adult development at an important turning point in their lives.

The third and final area of importance for this study relates to society as a whole. The relationship between higher education and increased wages is well established in the literature (Cohen & Ibrahim, 2008; Keeley, 2007). However, at this time, few researchers can answer the question to any degree of specificity regarding how well doctoral programs of study are preparing students to succeed in their subsequent careers as scholars, leaders, and researchers in either academic or nonacademic settings (Maki & Borkowski, 2006). Despite such a paucity of research in this area, growing accountability demands and increased competition on a global basis have augmented the need to transfer schooling to the workplace. This study may provide some additional information about the relationship between successful doctoral completers and career paths.

**Overview of the Research Methodology**

According to Merriam (2009) a phenomenological study seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon. From a philosophical standpoint, phenomenological studies focus on the experience itself and how that experience is consciously interpreted. The
task of the researcher is to depict the basic structure of the phenomenon as it is commonly lived. Such an approach is consistent with an interpretive research perspective that contends that knowledge is socially constructed from a complexity of views. The focus is on how participants perceive the experience and the meaning they derive from it.

This study is particularly suited to a phenomenological approach as it seeks to understand the leadership development of doctoral students in one setting. Leadership development in this context plays into the human experience. It is a form of goal directed behavior that spans the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains (Northouse, 2007). The purpose of this study is to explore individuals’ lived experiences and to understand how the doctoral study program at Midland University influenced students’ leadership and career paths. The study used convenience sampling. It was conducted via a questionnaire and survey instrument (See Appendix C for Demographic Questionnaire and Choicemap Survey). A qualitative analysis of the data was carried out using a grounded theory approach. Data was initially read and sorted based upon the demographic questionnaire. Data was then explored and reduced. Descriptive coding was employed to identify initial themes in addition to memo-ing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). This was followed by a semi-structured interview six months later (See Appendix D for Interview Protocol). The interview included a series of open-ended questions designed to generate learning and understanding from participants. The procedure of field notes and partial transcriptions was used.
Delimitations

There are several delimitations to be considered for this study. The population for this research was limited to those successfully completing doctoral degrees in leadership studies from Midland University, a private not-for-profit college in northeastern Ohio. This setting is unique in that over eighty percent of students who enroll in the doctoral program in leadership studies at Midland University graduate. It is also important to note that the program uses a cohort-based model. Data collection took place over a one-year period at the start of the summer semester, 2013. Participants were invited to participate via an email request to respond and complete a demographic survey. A follow-up email was sent one week later encouraging those who had not submitted the survey to do so. A voluntary, representative sample of fifteen participants was identified for the study. Volunteers that maximized the range of the sample were identified for the time-delayed interview.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined in order to clarify their use in this study.

Cohort model. A program of study that that has a defined membership within a long-term group of learners, is focused upon a common goal that can best be achieved when members are academically and emotionally supportive of one another, is highly structured with an intense meeting schedule, and provides a network of synergistic learning relationships (Saltiel & Russo, 2001).

Email survey. The use of an email system to collect data in response to specific questions.
Human capital. The relationship of peoples’ abilities, knowledge, and competence to economic growth (Keeley, 2007).

Participant. An individual who answers questions in a survey or interview.

Respondent. An individual who answers questions in a survey or interview (Vogt, 1999).

Successful completer. An individual who has earned and received their doctoral degree.

Validity. The quality of actually measuring the behaviors which the instrument is designed to measure (Newman & Newman, 1994).

Summary

This first, introductory chapter begins with a brief glimpse into the current challenge of accountability in regards to governance, affordability, access, and performance that face higher education today. The background of the study is then introduced along with the specific problem, its significance, and the primary research questions framing this study. Next, an overview of the methodology is presented. A section explaining the delimitations of the study follows. The chapter concludes with a list of terms and their definitions for readers who may be unfamiliar with this type of research.

The second chapter provides a review of research and literature pertinent to this topic. Chapter III outlines the methodology used for the study. Chapter IV details the results. Chapter V is the final chapter and it consists of a discussion of the study’s findings as well as recommendations and implications for further study.
CHAPTER II

This review of literature is structured into five sections. Section one gives an overview of doctoral degree types and classifications. In addition it gives a brief history of the development of Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs in America, including the emergence of cohorts as a model for graduate school education. Section two provides a history and discussion of the movement towards accountability in higher education in the United States and abroad. Section three presents the theoretical framework for the study. The theoretical framework draws from leadership theory, adult development theory, and life review. In section four a review of recent research focused specifically on doctoral students is presented. This section considers studies on attrition and factors contributing to time to completion for doctoral students. The fifth and final section reviews the existing literature on accreditation.

Doctoral Degrees and The Ed.D

In the late 1800s, Yale, followed by the Johns Hopkins University developed the first doctoral degree programs in the United States (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2008). Given the college populations of the time, the first doctoral students were White, affluent, Protestant, and male (Gardner, 2009). Since that time, graduate education has continued to grow and become increasingly more diverse. In recent years the total number of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States rose from 44,077 in 1998-99 to 63,712 in 2007-2008. Doctoral programs have seen enrollment increases across all races and for women (Snyder, & Dillow, 2010).
Degree Types and Classifications

In the Survey of Earned Doctorates in the United States twenty-three research doctorate designations were identified (Hoffer, Hess, Welch, & Williams, 2007). These degrees can be grouped into three general categories. The first category is the professional doctorate or first professional degree for such fields as medicine, veterinary, pharmacology, dentistry, psychology, and optometry. The second is the professional research doctorate such as the executive doctorate or the doctor of education, Ed.D. These degrees typically include a research component but can also be used in the professional realm. The final type of doctoral degree is the research doctorate commonly held to be the doctor of philosophy, Ph.D. Included under this umbrella are the doctor of fine arts, D.F.A., and the doctor of theology, Th.D.

Doctoral degrees are viewed as terminal degrees, the highest academic degree offered in the United States. The Council of Graduate Schools (2005) explained the purpose of the doctorate in terms of preparing scholars to “discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as to communicate and disseminate it” (p. 1). Shulman (2005), however, has written that the purpose of such a degree is to educate future practitioners for their new professions. Shulman envisaged doctoral preparation in terms of three signature pedagogies needed for professional work: thinking, performing, and acting with integrity. He asserted that professional education at the doctoral level involved learning vast amounts of theory and knowledge in order to both understand and act in the service of others.
History of the Ed.D.

The controversy over doctoral programs that juxtapose scholar and researcher with action and service holds historical significance in the field of education. Henry Holmes, dean of Harvard’s newly established Graduate School of Education, created the education doctorate in 1921 (Powell, 1980). His purpose in establishing the degree was to help train leaders and to create a degree that was separate from the faculty of Arts and Sciences. The degree, however, closely mirrored the Ph.D. with a heavy emphasis on statistics and research. In 1934, Dean William Fletcher Russell at Teachers College of Columbia University also began offering an Ed.D. His version of the Ed.D included coursework in educational issues with final project reports that went beyond the dissertation and covered investigations into curriculum, administration, and institutional reform (Perry, 2012). Then, between 1925 and 1940, many institutions of higher education began establishing schools of education and offering both the Ed.D. and the Ph.D. In some cases the Ed.D. competed with Arts and Sciences research doctorates in loosely affiliated education areas such as philosophy and economics. By the mid 1900s there were many schools and colleges of education that sought to establish themselves as professional schools within the universities. At some institutions the Ed.D was promoted as a professional preparation credential for school administrators seeking to climb the professional ladder. At other institutions, it was a degree granting entrance into the ivy halls of academia.
The Debate

Historically, there has been a lack of consensus and clarity among institutions of higher education as to the purpose and scope of the Ed.D. From its inception, some schools of higher education have identified it as a research degree while others have constructed it as a professional degree. From 1979 to 2008, the number of institutions offering both Ed.D and Ph.D degrees in education has risen over ten percentage points, while the number of institutions offering only the Ed.D. has increased over fifteen percentage points (Goldring & Schuermann, 2009). Now, more than 142 graduate schools of education award both degrees, with little differentiation between them (Perry & Imig, 2008).

Having two degrees exist with dual purposes has raised doubts about the quality of both degrees (Perry & Imig, 2008). Levine (2005) argued in the report, Educating School Leaders, for the elimination of the Ed.D. He judged that none of the twenty-eight programs he evaluated adequately prepared school administrators for leadership. He proposed replacement of the Ed.D. with a degree closely paralleling the M.B.A. in the business sector. Such a shift, he suggested would incorporate theory as well as management and educational practices. Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, and Garabedian (2006) also weighed in on the debate and have argued that the degrees should remain separate with one reserved for practitioners and the other for researchers.

In 2007 the debate had become so hotly contested, a consortium of twenty-five schools of education came together to form the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) (Walker et al., 2008). The consortium spent three years examining the Ed.D. with the goal to redesign the degree and provide guidelines to make it a gold
standard for professional practitioners. Its work emphasized the definition of the Ed.D as preparing graduates for a “stewardship of practice.” Echoing Shulman (2005), the CPED’s definition underscored the pedagogies of hand, heart, and mind linked to both theory and practice. It identified six principles to guide the design or redesign of Ed.D. programs. These principles include framing practice for educational leaders in terms of (a) questions of equity, ethics, and social justice; (b) making a positive difference for individuals and communities; (c) collaboration and partnerships with diverse populations; (d) field based problem solving; (e) links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry; and (f) the generation, transformation, and use of professional knowledge (Walker et al., 2008).

**Cohort Models**

Most students experience higher education in isolation from their peers, selecting from a menu of individual courses. Beginning in the 1940s, however, cohort models in higher education sought to transcend such isolation in lieu of a more collaborative and interactive model of education, particularly in schools of law, medicine, and in the military (Maher, 2004). With regard to the education profession, the Danforth Foundation funded a redesign of more than twenty principal preparation programs in the mid-1980s. All used cohort formats as a significant part of their redesign efforts (Bason, Yerkes, Norris, & Barnett, 1995).

Cohort programs generally consist of a defined, long-term membership with a highly structured schedule based upon the completion of a common goal. Today, cohort formats are widespread in higher education programs. Maher (2004) has indicated that such a format may have particular appeal to students exhibiting certain characteristics.
For example, she has observed that non-traditional students, those aged twenty-five and over, may be attracted to such a format. These students often attend college part-time while being employed full-time. They must juggle work, family, and personal responsibilities. Cohort programs, with their regular schedule and collective learning experience, appear to be a good fit for them.

A growing body of research on cohorts has documented positive outcomes including: improved academic performance, greater satisfaction with the college experience, and increased retention rates (Reynolds & Hebert, 1998; Saltiel & Russo, 2001; Tinto, 1997). Reynolds and Hebert used a survey to compare students from cohort and non-cohort groups. They found significant learning gains in the affective domain related to attitudes, self-concepts, and values. Positive outcomes in the affective domain were also identified in an electronic survey of 20 participants in the University of Minnesota Duluth Masters of Education cohort of Extension Educators (Chairs, McDonald, Shroyer, Urbanski, & Vertin, 2002). Furthermore, Tinto, Goodsell-Love, and Russo (1994) studied students at Seattle Central Community College. They indicated that students involved in a coordinated studies program had higher academic achievement and lower attrition rates compared to students enrolled in traditional, independent coursework.

**Accountability in Higher Education**

Throughout history, accountability has cycled up and down, manifesting itself in many forms. Over the past few decades the call for accountability in higher education has been on the rise. Increasingly, higher education institutions are responsible to a wide array of constituencies for both service and performance (Berdahl & McConnell, 1994).
The evolving nature of accountability and the relationship between public higher education and its stakeholders is well chronicled in higher education literature. There is also a wide body of literature that addresses accountability in higher education as it relates to the governance and structure of colleges and universities. More recent research has sought definitions for post-secondary accountability in terms of performance outcomes. The literature reviewed here is that which pertains to the historical development, governance and structure, and performance outcomes of accountability.

**Historical Overview**

**European roots.** In medieval times Europe’s universities were established to prepare men for the professions of medicine, law, theology, and, to a lesser extent, philosophy (Marchand & Stoner, 2012). Instructors were typically clergy who were paid by endowments, student fees, or work outside of the classroom. Instructors were considered masters of their craft and the members generally policed themselves. Accountability was a matter for the faculty guild. Endowments for professors declined in the 1500s as Reformation movements swept across Europe. State and church support replaced endowments as the main source of instructor wages. In return for this investment, these bodies required regular reporting by professors regarding instructional content. Such reports were the precursor to the course catalogs we have today and represented an additional form of accountability in higher education (Clark, 2006). As accountability and monetary aid increased from states and nations for European institutions of higher education, German universities emerged as centers of enlightenment during the eighteenth century. Wilhelm von Humboldt contributed greatly to the
formation of the German research university. His main principles of academic freedom and the duality of research and teaching served as a model for higher education throughout the world (Goztepe-Celebi, Stallman, & Zimmer, 2002).

**Early America.** Higher education in early America got its start with the establishment of Harvard University and the College of William and Mary in the early seventeenth century (Duryea, 1991). For many early American colleges, the mission was to educate the sons of colonial English settlers to become clergymen. Over time, these institutions expanded their mission to include additional areas of study.

At that time, chartering and building colleges was a matter for the state and colonial governments through charters granted by crown, papacy, or emperor (Thelin, 1994). Accountability was tied to the structure of governance for each university. For example, charters outlined elaborate statues and by-laws that spelled out institutional rights and obligations. Instead of the European tradition in medieval times of governance by a faculty guild, many colonial colleges vested governance power in an external board, a feature transplanted from Scottish universities. In these colonial models, a strong president who reported directly to an external board of lay citizens executed administration and governance.

In the young United States two models of higher education advanced: self-governing private schools and state-supported institutions (Marchand & Stoner, 2012). The landmark Supreme Court, *Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819) guaranteed Dartmouth College’s status as a self-governing, private institution. In that case the Supreme Court upheld the Contract Clause, setting the precedent that private corporations and charters were protected from state guardianship even if their purpose
was of public interest. By contrast, state-supported institutions got a boost from former U.S. President Thomas Jefferson. In his 1818 Report of the Commissioners for the planned University of Virginia, he advocated for public patronage for building and equipping universities. Supporting such higher learning, he argued, would help “to form the statesmen, legislators and judges, on whom public prosperity and individual happiness are so much to depend” (Jefferson, 1818, p. 1).

The federal role. As the nation grew and expanded westward in the post-Civil War period, the purpose and scope of American higher education changed. Both industrialization and urbanization created a demand for more technical and scientific knowledge. The federal government passed the first Morrill Act of 1862. The Morrill Act established land grant colleges in each state with the mission of supporting study in agricultural sciences, military tactics, and the mechanical arts (NASULG, 1995). Another significant development at this time was the founding of Johns Hopkins University in 1876. It was modeled after the German research universities and was dedicated entirely to graduate studies (Gruber, 1997). As more universities that were American adopted this model, schools became increasingly secular even when formal religious affiliations were maintained (Marchand & Stoner, 2012). At the same time, the link between research and higher education formed a strong tie between the federal government and state universities (Trow, 1993).

In America, higher education became closely bound to the needs of both state and federal governments. The federal government passed the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the G.I. Bill (Olsen, 1973). This act served the dual purpose of giving tribute to serviceman while reducing unemployment in a post-World
War II staggering economy. After World War II, the federal government passed the National Defense Education Act in 1954. This act substantially increased the federal government’s investment in research grants to faculty as well as financial aid to students. The Higher Education Act of 1965 also provided enhanced resources for colleges and universities and boosted access for low-income students by creating scholarships and low-interest loans (Brubacher & Rudy, 2007). These federal programs directly acknowledged universities’ productive contributions to states and the nation.

The need for accountability during the 1940s through the 1960s was often limited to a concern for stewardship for public funds balanced with trust that administrators and faculty acted in good faith (Kallison & Cohen, 2010). College administrators and faculty were viewed as professionals who were capable of implementing accreditation, a system of peer evaluation for reviewing academic programs. In the 1940s, Congress linked the accreditation process to the distribution of federal dollars (Neal, 2008). Accreditation, begun as a voluntary system of accountability, became virtually mandatory. Three consequences of increased federal involvement in higher education during this period included: expanded access to higher education, the addition of scientific and accountable curricula, and the incorporation of job training as a function of colleges and universities (Arif & Smiley, 2003).

Higher Education Today

It has been a distinctive feature of American higher education that colleges and universities are expected to provide public service to their states, industry, and citizens (Bogue & Aper, 2000). Nevertheless, the concept of higher education as a public good has been steadily eroded over the past few decades in a competition for scarce state
dollars (Kallison & Cohen, 2010). Numerous factors have contributed to the decline in public appropriations including: population growth; increased spending on health care, primary and secondary education, and the criminal justice system; and economic conditions such as growing budget deficits, repeated tax-cutting, and recessions.

With the publication of *A Time for Results* by the National Governors Association, states began to require that colleges and universities assess and report performance (Carey, 2007). Congress then passed the Student-Right-To-Know Act in 1990 mandating that higher education institutions publicize information on graduation rates and school safety. As a result of this public disclosure of information, the performance of American public colleges and universities has become a topic of great concern (Conner & Rabovsky, 2011).

Lagging graduation rates and dramatic increases in tuition have raised alarm about access, affordability, and the ability of U.S. institutions of higher learning to generate a highly-skilled labor force that will advance economic opportunity and racial progress (Bowen, Chingos, McPherson, & Tobin, 2009; Heller, 2001; Hess, Schneider, Kelly, & Carey, 2009; Mumper, 2003; Schneider, 2008; St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005; Titus, 2006). A host of significant publications, notably *The Closing of the American Mind* (Bloom, 1987), *Leaving the Ivory Tower* (Lovitts, 2001), *Honoring the Trust* (Massy, 2003), and *A Test of Leadership* (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), elaborated upon many of these concerns. Legislative policy makers and other scholars in higher education have also expressed alarm. They point to the lower emphasis on undergraduate teaching, costs increasing faster than the consumer price index, the growing number of foreign students in competition for American jobs, and relatively low
retention and graduation rates. These realities have also made it more difficult for low-
and moderate-income college-qualified high school graduates to access higher education
(Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2006). The result is a growing
dichotomy in the purpose and focus of higher education between serving the public or the
private good.

More recently, the Spellings Commission of the Future of Higher Education
issued a report in 2006 that spurred a nationwide dialogue about the pressing issues in
higher education (Derthick & Dunn, 2009). It cited a long list of educational failures in
both preparation and teaching. It called for standardized, comparable measures of student
performance and an overhaul of the accreditation system. This report stimulated a
renewed wave of systems of accountability related to performance-based assessments and
student learning outcomes. A new debate in the literature has since arisen as to the
effectiveness of regulatory mandates to aid in the advancement of student learning.

**Governance and Structure**

The literature clearly documents the rise and fall of shared governance in higher
education (American Association of University Professors/American Council on
Education/Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1966;
MacTaggart & Associates, 1998; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978; Taira, 2004). In the
early twentieth century shared governance among faculty, administrators, and the board
of trustees emerged as an ideal form of governance. Presidents and faculty influence in
governance grew as campus organizational structure became more complex with the
growth of departments, divisions, schools, and colleges within universities. This changed
with the advent of mounting federal oversight in the 1970s and environmental factors
such as budget cuts, student protests, and the formation of faculty unions. External
groups, such as labor organizations and state and federal governments, focused increasing
attention on the procedural realm of the academy. Concerns with cost and efficiency led
to questions of faculty productivity. Economic measures of financial efficiency surfaced
in terms of the average number of credits taught by faculty and the total number of
degrees awarded by institutions (Carey, 2007; Hearn, 1999; Milem, Berger, & Dey,
2000). More recently, budgetary constraints have seen a trend toward the increase in part-
time faculty positions and the decline of tenure track positions for faculty on college
campuses (Clawson, 2009; Wood & DesJarlais, 2006).

As state and federal oversight in higher education grew into the 1980s and 1990s,
states considered structural changes to higher education governance. Across states, the
active involvement of external stakeholders, primarily in the form of government entities,
emerged as a common component of this restructuring (McGuinness, 1997). Richardson
and Martinez (2009) employed an institutional analysis framework to determine how
state governance and policy might impact performance in higher education. Richardson
and Martinez found that states could positively influence higher education outcomes by:
increasing funding, supporting need-based financial aid programs, centralizing planning,
and including private universities in state-wide initiatives.

Performance funding policies directly link institutional funding to student
achievement outcomes using a variety of benchmarks (Conner & Rabovsky, 2011).
Scholars have written extensively in the past fifteen years on these policies which reward
improvement and impose penalties upon poor student outcomes (Alexander, 2000; Burke,
2002, 2005; Burke & Minassians, 2003; Herbst, 2007; McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton,
Central to these writings has been the serious examination of the changing relationship in governance between institutions and their internal and external stakeholders. This examination has sparked an important debate about the proper balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability (Alexander, 2000; Dunn, 2003; Huisman & Currie, 2004; Lane, 2007). The diversity of higher education institutions in the United States, ranging from those with a high degree of government control to ones that enjoy market-like freedom, complicates the debate (Hauptman, 2008).

Much of the scholarship on accountability and governance reforms has emphasized the policy process that resulted in change (McLendon & Ness, 2003; McLendon et al., 2006; McLendon, Heller, & Young, 2005). To date, the majority of research that has been conducted on institutions and the impact of accountability policies and governance reform measures has been limited to case study analysis and qualitative work (Burke, 2002, 2005; Zumeta, 2001). Volkwin and Tandberg (2008) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship of performance to accountability policies and governance reforms. They found no relationship between stronger accountability policies and better performance. This research is supported, in part, by a review of federal regulations for higher education. In 2001, the American Council on Education reported “federal regulation of higher education had grown exponentially in recent years, sending institutional costs and liability soaring” (Freeland & Hartle, 2001, p. 24). Much of this regulation has little to do with student learning but instead is designed to provide educational equality with a focus on financial need, civil rights, and protection of the disabled (Derthick & Dunn, 2009).
Measures of Accountability

Since World War II, universities and colleges have generally been expected to maintain self-imposed standards of professional accountability according to a set of internal standards (Shin, 2010). This process has been aided by regional accrediting agencies that monitor and uphold standards across all institutions. Since the 1980s, more and more political pressure has been exerted on higher education for additional forms of accountability. These additional forms of accountability have included the following items: statewide data systems, better transition planning for the move from high school to college, improved teaching, monitoring results, assessing learning, and a national system to track student data (Webber & Boehmer, 2008). Most of these items emphasize external accountability for the sake of politics rather than the professional accountability of old.

Keeley (2007) definitively linked the attainment of a college degree to positive economic consequences. Explicit in this argument is that government has a responsibility to protect citizens from fraud (Hauptman, 2008). Consequently, quality assurance systems to prevent market abuses of taxpayer dollars and private consumers are needed.

Performance indicators were developed in response to increasing pressures for institutions of higher education to demonstrate results for resources provided (Cleary, 2001; Gaither, Nedwek, & Neal, 1994). Cleary recognized that constructing a common set of indicators to measure institutional quality and effectiveness presented challenges with regard to the subjectivity of different stakeholder groups. Volkwein, Lattuca, Caffrey, and Reindl (2003) further defined the difficulty arguing that a prescriptive set of standards could not be applied to the wide variety of academic programs offered in higher education institutions. As a proponent of outcomes assessments, Carey (2007) argued that
people work best when their motivations are both internal and external. Carey claimed that although people come with a certain, innate desire to do well in their chosen profession, the addition of an outside force, typically in the form of governmental or institutional oversight, is needed to achieve excellence and efficiency. Thus, Carey noted the need for outcomes assessments focused on discipline specific-outcomes as well as general college-level skills.

Those opposing performance outcomes for accountability contend that they are a false premise. First, proponents of this position assert that the products of a college education are not readily measurable and may not be readily attributable to actions of collegiate institutions (Derthick & Dunn, 2009; Wilson, 1989). Rather, they argue that accountability and any subsequent measures should be shared by stakeholders, not just schools, but the general citizenry, parents, and even students. They also argue that the increasing diversity of institutions, including the emergence of for-profit institutions worldwide, means that measures must apply to institutions embracing vastly differing motives and character (Toma, 2008). Second, they argue that accountability within the current trend towards the massification of higher education is in opposition to higher educations’ original purpose. Originally built for purposes of knowledge production and application, colleges and universities historically recruited academic and social elites (Arum & Roska, 2011). Institutions of higher education were not designed with the capacity to transform the intellectual characteristics of the students who enroll (Pallas, 2011). Pressure to adopt a business model that reflects a market-driven approach to higher education, emphasizing graduation outputs and customer satisfaction, distorts the intent and nature of education (Hulsey, 2012; Labaree, 2000). Finally, extreme supporters
of this position caution that “college for all” decouples genuine learning and creates a market for credentials which can be exchanged for social and economic advantage.

One component in building accountability measures revolves around the construction of common data systems and student unit record systems. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) ensures that colleges and universities receiving federal financial aid handle such funds in a lawful manner (Bennett, 2008). IPEDS data is collected in accordance with explicit, common standards but it was not set up to judge the success of student learning. The Economic Diversity of Colleges site provides economic and ethnic or racial diversity. College Results Online focuses on the graduation rates of colleges and universities. Since 1995 many institutions of higher education have also cooperated in the Common Data Set, a system of common data definitions that publishers can access. Student experiences and perceptions are reported through one of four mandated, professionally designed, and administered instruments. These include: the National Survey of Student Engagement, the College Student Experiences Questionnaire, the College Senior Survey, and the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey. Finally, student learning outcomes are evaluated through the administration of one of three measures: the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency, or the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress.

With the plethora of data available today it is no wonder that many colleges and universities feel aggrieved both by criticisms of failure to disclose data, and calls for additional accountability (Bennett, 2008). In response to such criticisms, higher education institutions have undertaken two new efforts targeted at expanding transparency and
access to such information. These include the University and College Accountability Network (U-CAN), sponsored by the National Association of Colleges and Universities; and the College Portrait, called the Voluntary System of Accountability, a joint effort by the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (Ewell, 2011). Recently, some scholars are urging states to invest more heavily in building such systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Hearn, McLendon, and Mokher (2008) used event history analysis and found that states constructing these costly data systems were able to mobilize liberal bases of political support that effectively dissuaded concerns about potential threats to student privacy.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study pulls from the areas of leadership theory, adult development theory, and life review. Students pursuing doctoral studies seek the development of specific knowledge, skills, and habits of the mind particular to their specific field of study. For example, students engaged in a doctoral program for leadership expect to develop knowledge, skills, and practices related to leadership. Over the last thirty years, research has emerged specific to transformational leadership theory. This research emphasizes the process approach to leadership and is concerned with intrinsic motivation and follower development. In the same time span, another body of research has been written on the psychosocial development of doctoral students. This research is rooted in adult development theories related to psychosocial, identity, and cognitive development, as well as that of transitions, adult learning, and life review.
Reflecting upon theory is helpful in that it allows educators to design and develop programs that are responsive to the needs of particular student groups (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

**Leadership Theory**

Leadership preparation is a complex process that requires learning a new set of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Northouse (2007) explained that leadership can be viewed as both a trait and a process. The trait perspective conceptualizes leadership as a set of innate, inborn characteristics possessed by individuals. The process viewpoint defines leadership as a process or phenomenon between a leader and followers. The process definition of leadership suggests that leadership resides in the context of situations and relationships. When defined as a process, leadership becomes accessible to everyone. It can be observed, learned, and developed (Jago, 1982).

Transformational leadership is a process approach to leadership that seeks to change and transform people by treating them as full human beings (Northouse, 2007). The transformational approach to leadership has been the focus of much research since the 1980s. Transformational leadership emphasizes the charismatic and affective elements of leadership. Burns (1978) and House (1976) attempted to link the roles of leaders and followers. Burns proposed that transformational leaders were able to raise the levels of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. House made similar claims in his theory of charismatic leadership.

Building upon the work of Burns (1978) and House (1976), Bass (1985) developed a model for visualizing leadership as a single continuum. This continuum ranged from transformational leadership on one side to laissez-faire leadership on the
other. As part of his model, Bass identified seven different factors that leaders leveraged depending upon where they operated within the continuum. Transformational leaders, according to Bass, leveraged four of the factors: idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

The work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) also contributed to our current understanding of transformational leadership. These two scholars conducted interviews with a number of middle and senior-level leaders using open-ended, semi-structured questionnaires. Through their research, Bennis and Nanus identified four common strategies used by transformation leaders to change their organizations: establishing a clear vision, becoming a social architect, creating trust, and positive self-regard with a clear emphasis on learning.

Kouzes and Posner (2003) also conducted interviews with leaders. They interviewed more than 1,300 middle and senior-level managers and asked them to describe their best leadership experiences. Based upon their research, Kouzes and Posner identified five leadership practices of exemplary leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. In their research, they found a positive correlation between learning and leading. Kouzes and Posner subsequently identified three methods that leaders could use to develop good leadership practices: experience, example, and education. More specifically, Kouzes and Posner noted that learning could occur through trial and error, by observing others, and through formal training.
Overall, Kouzes and Posner (2003) argued that a leader’s primary tool or instrument is the self. Therefore, Kouzes and Posner contended that leadership is primarily a process of self-development. The first step in self-development, according to Kouzes and Posner, is self-reflection. Leaders must first know who they are as a leader in order to develop an awareness of strengths and weaknesses. From that conscious reflection, leaders can then develop a plan to take concrete steps toward becoming a better leader.

**Adult Development**

Development, as we now know, extends throughout an individual’s life-span (Erikson, 1950, 1959, 1968; Kuh & Thomas, 1983; Levinson, 1990; Merriam, 1984; Merriam & Clark, 2006). Erikson was the first to conceptualize life-span development. His research emphasized the interaction between the individual and society as it related to personality development. Using a hierarchical model, Erikson’s theory outlined a chronological series of eight developmental stages occurring over an individual’s life-span, from birth to old age. He asserted that each stage was characterized by a crisis or turning point. These turning points represented both danger and opportunity (Lemme, 2006). Individuals needed to resolve the issues in order to develop as individuals. However, each stage could be resolved in one of two ways, one adaptive, and one maladaptive. He believed that success in resolving the critical issues at each stage, such as intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus self-absorption, or integrity versus despair, depended upon integrating past experiences with new challenges. Nevertheless,
he cautioned that issues at one developmental stage might continue to remerge throughout later stages, causing an individual’s identity to be refined and reformulated many times throughout the lifespan.

Sanford’s work (1962) built upon Erikson’s thesis (1950, 1959, 1968) but focused narrowly on the college years. Sanford identified the college years as a significant turning point in an individual’s life development. He postulated that individual development occurred when the conditions of both challenge and support were present. Challenges, he argued, created opportunities for individuals to develop new coping mechanisms, promoting growth. Faced with too many challenges, however, he contended that an individual might be overwhelmed by anxiety and stress, resulting in dysfunction. A level of support would be needed for individuals in order to positively resolve challenges.

Chickering, McDowell, and Campagna, (1969) also focused on college student development, although primarily at the undergraduate level. His more recent work with Reisser (1993) delineated seven vectors of identity development that integrated elements of emotional, interpersonal, ethical, and intellectual development. Although not rigidly sequential, Chickering and Reisser claimed that the vectors interacted and built upon one another, allowing individuals to function with greater stability and intellectual capacity. The seven vectors included: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

One of the best-known models of adult development is Levinson’s (1990). He and his colleagues (Levinson & Levinson, 1996; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978) used the term life structure to refer to the underlying foundation of an
individual’s life that was impacted by cycles of change and stability. He described the life structure as developmental periods that are interrelated, but did not elevate any one period as representing a more advanced level than the others. He simply suggested that they were different. In so doing, he recognized that changes in an individual’s life structure were shaped by both biological and psychological needs as well as by social expectations (Merriam, 2005). He was concerned primarily with the social roles and activities that encompassed how an individual related to society. Such roles might include marriage, family, and work as well as religious affiliations and ethnicity. As these social roles change, Levinson hypothesized that life structures that were adequate in one period of life might become less appropriate over time.

Adult development theory, then, assumes that growth occurs over adulthood along cognitive, emotional, and behavioral lines (Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012). Development over the adult life course is shaped by anticipated and unanticipated life events. It consists of periods of stability as well as periods of change and transition. How one deals with life events form the basis for the stages described by Erikson (1950) and Levinson (1990) as well as the vectors explained by Chickering and Reisser (1993).

**Transitions**

Transitions, as they relate to adult development, are those periods of change in an individual’s life cycle tied to a critical event or challenge (Merriam, 2005). Transitions are a fundamental part of adult development and are key to gaining a deeper understanding of the aging process. One reason for this is that aging, itself, is change. Aging causes not only biological changes such reductions in bone mass and the proliferation of joint aches; but it also causes psychological and emotional changes as
well as changes in social expectations. For example, healthy relationships and positive feelings of well-being may be replaced by unhealthy relationships and negative emotions over time. Such changes in social and emotional functioning may be linked to choices made as we age and progress or fail to progress in different developmental periods in life.

Transitions can be anticipated or unanticipated. However, within a particular culture, major life events generally follow a normative and socially prescribed timetable (Neugarten, 1976). For example, finishing school, going to work, getting married, and having children are major life events that occur in an ordered way, albeit, with some variation in experience. Engaging in a doctoral program of study can be deemed to be a major life event as it relates to adult development. It involves an individual intentionally applying to a program of study and requires the investment of significant time and monetary resources. As such, it is one that could be classified as a planned transition.

Bridges (1980, 1991) put forth a model for moving through the process of transition itself. In that model, he stressed that the first step was to separate oneself from previous routines, roles, relationships, assumptions, or views of self. In this way individuals could end one role and then move into a new stage, a neutral zone where the old way is gone and the new one has not yet been integrated. The final phase was termed “new beginnings,” whereby an individual consciously chose to engage in a new way of doing or being (p. 5).

Bee and Bjorklund (2004) pointed out that life events or transitions are neutral phenomena. They noted that although these events are accompanied by stress, it is the meaning assigned to the event by the individual that determines its development and learning potential. Learning from a life event begins with attending to it and reflecting on
it (Merriam, 2005). Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) proposed a three-step model for engaging in reflection. The first step is to return to the experience by recalling salient events. The second step is to connect with feelings, keeping positive emotions and discarding negative ones. The third step is to evaluate the experience by re-examining the experience in terms of one’s original intent and existing knowledge. The goal is to integrate the new knowledge into an individual’s conceptual framework.

Life Review

Butler (1968) outlined a process for older adults called the life review. He saw it as a period of purposeful reminiscence in which previous experiences and their meanings were reconsidered, often accompanied by revised and expanded understanding. Butler viewed life review as a normal and universal part of the aging process experienced among older adults and prompted by the immediacy of death. In researching reminiscing, Haight (1991) found evidence that life review could have positive therapeutic effects in the treatment of depression among older adults. This form of remembering can be a major process through which adults can integrate their previous experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of self (Pasupathi, Weeks, & Rice, 2006).

Lewchanin and Zubrod (2001) developed a clinical tool for assisting adults in reviewing their life that they termed a “Choicemap.” Through a process of increased introspection, the individual uses the tool to consciously acknowledge the parts of oneself that were kept and abandoned, paths taken and not taken. Both Kegan (1994) and Skar (2004) suggested that for life events to result in learning and development, an individual must actively engage in the event. These scholars posited that examination and reflection
of such events, as painful as it might be, could promote change in an individual’s developmental trajectory. Individuals could then develop a new and more appropriate life structure to serve them in future years.

**Attrition and Retention of Doctoral Students**

Doctoral students represent approximately eighteen percent of the total graduate student population (Walker et al., 2008). These students invest a significant amount of time and money in their education and represent the promise of tomorrow’s scholars, researchers, leaders, and educators. In the past decade there has been increased attention on graduate education and the doctoral student experience in higher education (Gardner, 2009). Much of this attention has centered upon the high rates of attrition among doctoral programs in the United States. The Council of Graduate Schools (2008) noted that only a little over fifty percent of all doctoral students completed their degrees. Given the economic, social, and personal costs to attrition, this rate is alarming (Lovitts, 2001).

Doctoral student attrition is a growing concern, particularly, in the context of the current national climate of diminishing resources and increased competition for those same resources in higher education. There are three main reasons for this. First, doctoral student attrition is expensive for institutions. Lau (2003) found that recruiting new students was much more costly than retaining students in terms of faculty time, materials and resources, and assistantships. Second, the United States needs leaders, researchers, scholars, and educators in order to remain competitive in the larger world. Currently, a large percentage of the doctorates produced here in the United States are conferred to graduate students from other countries (Hoffer et al., 2007). Finally, the personal consequences for individuals leaving programs should also be a cause for concern.
Lovitts (2001) noted that many graduate student non-completers leave the programs feeling like failures. Intelligent, successful, capable individuals are, perhaps, negatively affected for the rest of their lives.

The Lovitts study (2001) on attrition at the doctoral level in higher education explored the academic and social components of success or failure for students engaged in doctoral programs. The Lovitts study has proven a milestone in the study of graduate education (Morgan, 2003). In terms of entering qualifications for graduate students, Lovitts’s research demonstrated that there was virtually no difference between completers and non-completers. Lovitts’s research, instead, explored the academic and social components of success and failure for graduate students. Lovitts used an analytic tool called the “cognitive map” to identify disparities between the student’s assumptions and expectations about graduate study and those of the faculty advisor. In explaining the nature of the departure phenomenon, Lovitts argued that graduate student attrition is related to organizational factors that encourage or retard graduate students’ academic and social integration. To address attrition, Lovitts proposed that institutions should do three things: spend more time orientating doctoral students; pair doctoral students with high producing faculty with regards to publishing, conferences, and research; and create opportunities for students to be part of the learning community through a range of activities, for example, the organization of social hours, attendance at scholarly conferences, or participation in on-going research.

Bowen and Rudenstine (1992) found that time to degree and completion rate are related. For example, they found that for programs with high completion rates, students completed the degrees in a relatively short time. Their research also indicated that
graduate students in the hard sciences typically finish their dissertations more quickly than those in the humanities and social sciences. The main reason for this is that science students often work in their advisers’ labs on closely related research. Overall, research on time to doctoral degree completion has indicated that, despite variations by field, the median time graduate students spent enrolled continues to rise (Thurgood & Clarke, 1995). However, the literature is not clear about whether time to degree completion could be used as a predictor of completion.

Ferrer de Valero (2001) conducted a mixed method study to identify what departmental factors positively or negatively affected degree progress rates and completion at one university. Ferrer de Valero found that across different departments two factors were consistently identified as positively affecting completion: (a) the relationship between the student and the advisor and (b) peer support. Only one factor, changing advisor, was identified across all departments as negatively impacting degree attainment.

Ferrer de Valero’s study (2001) echoed Lovitts (2001) in the recommendations it proposed to departments within institutions of higher education. Specifically, Ferrer de Valero counseled that in order to stem the attrition of doctoral students, institutional departments should attend to quality of life policies. In particular, Ferrer de Valero advised that departments create formal orientation and advising programs that span from the beginning to the end of graduate studies. Such programs might include orientation programs, periodic seminars, dissertation workshops, and at least two socialization activities each semester. Ferrer de Valero also suggested that departments consider how research policies and evaluation policies impact graduate student attrition. Ferrer de
Valero reasoned that regularly evaluating course content, selecting the research topic and major advisor no later than the second semester, formulating guidelines for candidacy examinations and research work, and continuously monitoring departmental performance would all improve the success rates for graduate students.

Accreditation

As accountability has become an integral part of reforms in higher education, many institutions are undergoing the accreditation process (Wood, 2006). With more universities and colleges participating in accreditation, a number of articles have been written decrying the increase in state and federal control in higher education (Alhquist, 2003; Berlak, 2003; Sleeter, 2003). Another body of literature has emerged offering case studies of different institutions relating individual “accreditation stories” (Conn, 1999; Thayer, 2000; Vaughn, Everhart, Sharpe, & Schimmel, 2000). This literature is helpful in looking at the history of accreditation as it applies to individual institutions, but is limited when comparing accreditation experiences across institutions.

Beginning in the late 1940s, accreditation took on its present role as a “gatekeeper for federal dollars” (Neal, 2008, p. 25). There are two general types of accreditation: institutional and programmatic (Head & Johnson, 2011). Institutional accreditation, as it implies, evaluates the institution as a whole, appraising the extent to which the individual parts of an institution complement the whole. Programmatic accreditation focuses on programs and individual courses of study. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation currently recognizes six regional accrediting agencies. Schools must be accredited by one of these regional agencies in order to receive federal dollars. Today accreditation is also viewed as a way of assessing and guaranteeing quality of services
Attaining regional accreditation status confers legitimacy upon schools and institutions. Graduates of accredited schools are able to use their degrees and coursework to obtain professional licenses, advance on salary schedules, and update and maintain certification.

Accreditation is a nongovernmental system of self-study and peer review (Neal, 2008; Wood, 2006). There are five criterion or standards in the accreditation process: (a) mission; (b) integrity, ethical and responsible conduct; (c) teaching and learning, quality, resources, and support; (d) teaching and learning, evaluation and improvement; and (e) resources, planning, and institutional effectiveness. Each criterion is defined by a series of core components (The Higher Learning Commission, 2012). Regional agencies require institutions to conduct a self-analysis of program effectiveness based upon the criterion and core components. The regional agency then checks the work by reviewing paperwork submissions and conducting on-site visits. Critics of the accreditation process assert that accreditation is often merely an exercise in compliance as standards are set at a minimum that most institutions far exceed (Carey, 2007). The process has also been criticized for its closed system of regionalization and failure to consider student achievement as part of its evaluation standards (Neal, 2008).

Somewhat analogous to the accreditation process in the United States is the Bologna Process in Europe. In European higher education, forty-six countries have all voluntarily adopted the Bologna Process, a quality process and framework aimed to facilitate the understanding and transfer of programs and qualifications among the various European nations (European University Association, 2013). The framework of the Bologna Process includes a three-degree cycle composed of bachelor, master, and
doctoral degrees. Qualifications for the degrees are defined by learning outcomes signifying a major shift from teacher to student-centered learning. One of the ten goals of the Bologna Process is the development of comparable quality assurance systems. Policy changes regarding quality assurance in general and accreditation in particular have been implemented in all forty-six countries, albeit with different terminology and procedures executed. For this reason, the Bologna Process has been lauded as one of the most far-reaching policy reforms in recent years (Saarinen & Ala-Vahala, 2007; Toens, 2009).

Summary

This literature review began with a general overview of doctoral degree types, a review of the historic development of doctoral degree programs, and a review of literature related to new models for teaching graduate students involving cohorts. The second section looked at how today’s culture of accountability within higher education has evolved. The third section contained a discussion on leadership theory, adult development theory, and life review. The fourth section presented information on doctoral students in regards to the issues of attrition and time to degree completion. The fifth and final section provided a review of the existing literature on accreditation.

The information compiled through this literature review informed this study in a number of ways. First, in order to properly comprehend the challenges doctoral students face, it is beneficial to understand the history of the degree and issues surrounding doctoral student attrition. Examination of the literature aided my ability to understand the culture within doctoral programs and how it differs from undergraduate and master’s degree programs.
Second, I found that tracing the history of the accountability movement aided me in identifying underlying causal factors that have contributed to the prominence of this topic in higher education today. Reviewing measures of accountability that currently exist in the form of learning outcomes and accreditation helped me discern where and why controversy regarding accountability measures has arisen.

Finally, the literature on leadership theory, adult development, and life review increased my comprehension of how leaders develop as well as the various psychosocial stages individuals complete over the life course. A parallel was found between leadership theory as self-development and the process of adult life review. The significance of processes such as Butler’s life review or a tool such as the Choicemap helped me realize the importance of retrospective analysis and its potential benefits when used with adult learners such as doctoral students.
CHAPTER III

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discern, analyze, and report emerging themes and experiences from doctoral student completers in one university’s doctor of education in leadership studies program. In this study, data analysis was exploratory in nature and rooted in qualitative research methodologies. Data was collected using the Choicemap interview tool. Initially, the study was framed by the identification of a main research question and two sub-questions. These questions provided an initial focus for the study as recommended by Seidman (2006). This section details the main research question and sub-questions, explains the design of the study and rationale behind the design strategies, clarifies the researcher’s lens, describes the collection and analysis of data, and discusses the strengths and limitations of the method.

Research Question

The overall purpose of this study was to better understand doctoral student experiences in leadership development and changes in career paths. One main research question and two sub-questions were identified as follows:

1. What are the common themes and experiences of doctoral student completers?
   1a. What evidence supports an influence upon leadership identity development?
   1b. What evidence supports an impact upon job and career paths?

Prior to conducting the research study, consent was sought from Lewchanin and Zubrod (2001) to use the Choicemap tool (See Appendix B). The Human Subject Review Board at Ashland University was also consulted to ensure research conditions were permissible and aligned with guidelines for ethical practice (See Appendix A).
Research Design

According to Merriam (2009) a phenomenological study seeks to understand the essence of a phenomenon. From a philosophical standpoint, phenomenological studies focus on the experience itself and how that experience is consciously interpreted. The task of the researcher is to depict the basic structure of the phenomenon as it is commonly experienced.

This study is particularly suited to a phenomenological approach as it seeks to understand the leadership development of doctoral students. The purpose of this study is to explore individuals’ lived experiences and to understand how the doctoral study program at Midland University influenced students’ leadership skills, abilities, and self-perceptions. The study was conducted via a combined questionnaire and survey using a adapted version of the Choicemap tool (See Appendix C) and one semi-structured interview (See Appendix D for Interview Protocol). The interview included a series of open-ended questions designed to generate learning and understanding from participants. It was conducted six months after the initial survey as both a member-check of initial themes and source of additional data. The procedure of field notes and partial transcriptions was used.

Researcher Lens

The importance of the researcher’s lens cannot be overstated in qualitative research. In qualitative studies as a whole, the main instrument used to engage in research is the researcher (Merriam, 2009). This means that the researcher must be supremely aware of biases, prior beliefs, and interests in order to understand and set such assumptions aside so as not to interfere with the research at hand. In general, all
qualitative studies are interpretive. The specific lens used by the researcher to interpret information gleaned through observation, interviews, and document analysis is unique to the researcher. And it can be influenced by both the researcher’s ontological and epistemological viewpoints. Consciously and openly acknowledging and sharing these biases is one step that researchers can take to reduce the effect of such biases and establish trust with their study participants and readers.

To the reader, then, I offer a clearer depiction of my roles in this study. I am not only a researcher, but also a current doctoral student in leadership studies who is “all but dissertation.” I grew up in the Midwest and have been in education both as a teacher and elementary principal for the past 20 years. Having just celebrated my 43rd birthday, I entered the program two years after a divorce from my husband of 14 years while still caring for two sons, ages 11 and 13. I carefully selected this doctoral program from a pool of four different ones based upon a variety of reasons. These reasons included the following: face-to-face class offerings, a cohort model, student diversity, proximity, short-term residency requirements, faculty mentors, and an evening class schedule. I have a personal attachment to this program having spent the last three years of my life associating with a cohort of 13 peers and seven professors in a challenging and, paradoxically, stressful and supportive environment. For me, personally, the program was an excellent “fit.”

As a researcher who is also closely involved as a current participant in the program, a certain amount of “overlap” regarding the boundaries of researcher and participant may occur. Handel (2000), in reference to the telling of a life history, explains this overlap as follows:
As a researcher (1) I try to recognize implicit meanings and make them explicit; and (2) I reframe both implicit and explicit meaning by considering them in terms of categories and questions that are important for efforts to arrive at understandings of the life course and human development. I try to understand meanings by which [a participant] lives his [or her] life but am likely to express them in ways that he cannot because of the background that I bring to the task and the questions that I am addressing. (p.101)

I feel Handel’s explanation may have applications to this phenomenological study as well, given the nature of the research into doctoral students’ life experiences.

In phenomenological studies the process by which the researcher sets aside personal beliefs, viewpoints, and biases is called *epoche*, a Greek term for withholding judgment (Merriam, 2009). This is the first step in a phenomenological research study. As is detailed in the previous paragraph, the researcher conducts a self-analysis of his or her experiences with the phenomenon, in this case, leadership studies. Once analyzed and understood, these prejudices are *bracketed* or put to one side in order to better focus on the experiences of others. One method researchers can use for bracketing is memo writing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Memo writing has several benefits. First it provides a way for researchers to record their prejudices as well as reflect upon their own experiences with the phenomenon. Second, it provides a written record that can be referred to later on in the research process. In this research design memo writing was included in the form of a reflective journal.
Overall, this research was situated in the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm highlights the importance of the mind in constructing reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). It emphasizes multiple realities and the co-construction of meaning among participants and researchers. Researchers using this methodology build and develop explanatory theories from data sources with sensitivity to closely approximating the reality that is to be represented (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In this study the constructivist lens afforded an opportunity to focus efforts on better understanding the unique experiences and perceptions of doctoral student completers in leadership studies. The Choicemap survey tool alongside an interview was used in order to capture a retrospective history and explore an outcome-based data set for analysis. Themes were constructed and descriptively reported to better illustrate and understand the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My dual role as both researcher and doctoral student of leadership studies provided insight and afforded advantages to thematic integration than what otherwise might have been attained by a naïve interviewer unfamiliar with the program.

**Setting**

The research setting for this study, henceforth to be known by the pseudonym “Midland University,” was a mid-sized regional teaching university, historically related to a conservative, traditional church. This private, not-for-profit university has an undergraduate enrollment of 2,200 and a total enrollment of nearly 6,000 when including student enrollment at its numerous off-campus centers. It offers courses in the liberal arts and sciences as well as providing both initial and advance preparation programs in the areas of business, education, and theology.
The research context for this study was the College of Education at Midland University. The mission of the College of Education is to prepare pre-service and practicing teachers, administrators, and human service professionals to positively impact students, schools, and society. Tenets of the mission include providing an environment that is both challenging and supportive and which seeks to contribute to the holistic development of individuals across the lifespan. Essential to the College of Education is the concept of a learning community. Faculty members, students, school personnel, human service professionals, and community members all collaborate to develop and share knowledge in order to promote growth and effective practices for all.

The study was set within the Graduate School of Midland University, specifically the Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies program. This program was begun in May, 1998. It includes the following program requirements: one-week residency, 60 plus course hours beyond the master’s degree, a mentorship course, cognate area coursework, a comprehensive examination, and a dissertation.

Unlike many doctoral programs at other universities, the doctoral program at Midland University was built around the principle that students would continue their full-time employment. Thus, the residency requirement is met in a number of ways. First, students are required to live on campus for one week during an intensive summer program in their first semester. Second, students work closely with a faculty advisor from the beginning of the program on a mentorship project. The mentorship project is a four semester-hour course conducted over 15 months. Together, the student and faculty member work with the student’s employing organization to identify an area of the organization that is operating sub-optimally. The student must work in cooperation with
the organization’s leadership to design an action research project with the goal of improving the organization’s functioning. Finally, students are members of a cohort, a select group of fifteen or fewer students who have been selected through a competitive selection process. Through the selection process, the cohort is balanced with regards to personal characteristics, academic background, communication style and skill, leadership ability, and cultural diversity.

Demographics

For the purposes of this study, the survey sample included 42 graduate student completers in cohorts two, three, four, and five. A total of fifteen surveys were received. Demographic data from the fifteen responders with regards to cohort, gender, age, marital status, and ethnicity is summarized in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1 the majority of responders were from cohort five. These responders were mostly Caucasian, married, and between the ages of 45 to 54.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics for Surveyed Doctoral Student Completers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>Number of Responders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or older</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated by Table 2, prior to entering the program a majority of the survey responders were either teachers or principals. Ten years after graduation, a majority of the survey responders reported working as directors or supervisors and superintendents or CEOs. No responders reported occupations as principals and only two were teachers. Three respondents reported a new field of work as faculty in higher education. The average number of changes in fields of work reported since beginning graduate studies to
ten years post-graduation was 3.6.

Table 2

*Data on Changes in Field of Work for Surveyed Doctoral Student Completers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Prior to Entering Doctoral Studies</th>
<th>Number of Responders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director or Supervisor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation 10 Years After Graduation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director or Supervisor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent or CEO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty in Higher Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Number of Work Site Changes          3.6

The interview sample was selected to maximize the range and diversity of participants. A minimum of one participant was interviewed from each cohort. As indicated by Table 3 a majority of those interviewed came from Cohorts 2 and 5. The sample was evenly divided between females and males and among three of the four age ranges. A majority of interview participants were married and Caucasian.
Table 3

*Demographic Characteristics for Interviewed Doctoral Student Completers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
<th>Cohort 4</th>
<th>Cohort 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>65 or older</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated by Table 4, prior to entering program a majority of those interviewed were either teachers or principals. Ten years after graduation, a majority of the survey responders reported changes in their field of work to directors and supervisors or superintendents. The average number of changes in field of work reported since beginning graduate studies to ten years post-graduation was two.

Table 4

Data on Changes in Field of Work for Interviewed Doctoral Student Completers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Prior to Entering Doctoral Studies</th>
<th>Number of Responders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director or Supervisor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Occupation 10 Years After Graduation          |                       |
| Teacher                                       | 1                     |
| Director or Supervisor                        | 2                     |
| Principal                                     | 0                     |
| Superintendent or CEO                         | 2                     |
| Faculty in Higher Education                   | 1                     |

Average Number of Work Changes 2
**Instrument**

The Choicemap is a clinical tool that has proven to be useful as an interview tool and research instrument for clinical interventions. Lewchanin and Zubrod (2001) have used the tool extensively “both individually and with groups, in clinical trials with psychotherapy clients, in workshops designed to facilitate choicemaking for midlife women, in questionnaires, and in pilot interviews with volunteers” (p.194).

The adapted Choicemap tool survey, shown in Appendix C and further described in the article by Lewchanin and Zubrod (2001), was used as the primary data collection instrument. This instrument promoted the collection and analysis of doctoral students’ life choices starting with their choice to pursue doctoral studies in leadership studies. The decision was made to start at that point in order to minimize intrusion, risk, and potential discomfort to participants and their mental health as might be experienced due to participation in the life review process.

In addition to the Choicemap tool, three survey questions were developed based upon the focus of the research to be asked of participants in the study. To ensure reliability and validity an outside expert was asked to review the instrument. The outside expert also reviewed the demographic questionnaire at the beginning of the survey that was used to help maximize the range of participants.

**Data Collection and Sources**

Qualitative studies typically are composed of a small number of participants, less than 50. For such sample sizes, Weiss (1994) recommended the use of purposive sampling techniques to maximize range. Such samples, he noted, are beneficial in that they reduce the possibility of duplication and increase the likelihood of including
instances of dissimilar forms. Participants for this study were selected from a survey sent to all doctoral graduate student completers in cohorts two through five. I believed that these cohorts best represented the program as a whole and had been out of the program long enough to develop a post-graduation life perspective. Survey participants were asked to read the Choicemap article and complete the Choicemap tool survey via e-mail (See Appendix C for Choicemap survey). Fifteen individuals chose to participate in the survey. Each participant signed a consent-for participation in the survey, interview, and audio taping process. The consent form included a full disclosure of any potential risks or benefits to the participants as a result of their involvement in the study.

From this pool, I screened the participants for characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, present and past occupations, and marriage in order to maximize the sample’s range (See Appendix C for Choicemap Survey). At least one participant from each cohort was then contacted for face-to-face interviews for a total of six. The interview was semi-structured and consisted of a set of three open-ended questions (See Appendix D for Interview Protocol). Each interview was audio taped and field notes were used to identify important sections for transcription. A transcription of the interview sections occurred as soon as possible after the conclusion of each interview and was checked for accuracy. A copy of the field notes and transcription segments was then e-mailed to each participant to review.

The interview served two primary purposes. First, it allowed each participant to judge the accuracy of the survey answers and provide corrections and feedback to the interviewer. This is known as member-checking (Merriam, 2009). Second, the follow-up interview afforded the opportunity to confirm preliminary themes and data analysis
gathered from the survey. The interview offered a chance to do more in-depth exploring with each participant (See Appendix D for Interview Protocol). Participants were able to give more details and highlight certain areas during the interview. Again, based upon field note analysis, sections of the interview were transcribed and checked for accuracy as soon as possible. The interview transcript was also shared with the participant. Data analysis resumed with new germane data from the interview included. Peer debriefing and reflective journaling were used at appropriate stages in the research process to assist in authenticating emergent themes and confirming that appropriate data analysis procedures were observed (Creswell, 2008). At the conclusion of data analysis a final member-check via e-mail occurred with participants to confirm research findings.

**Data Analysis**

In qualitative studies it is recommended that data analysis occur simultaneously with data collection (Merriam, 2009). This study was designed to follow a general deductive data analysis format similar to that of grounded theory. Such a format facilitated the emergence of additional themes related to the two already identified and predetermined themes for this research study of (a) leadership identity and (b) career paths of doctoral students at Midland University. The data analysis followed Creswell’s (2008) and Moustaka’s (1994) recommendations regarding phenomenological data and was comprised of four general steps. After *epoche* wherein the researcher set aside preconceived notions to the greatest extent possible in order to be open to the experiences of participants, the next step was to analyze the data for important statements. Merriam referred to this process as “horizontalization.” The third step in data analysis was to formulate meanings from statements and cluster them into sub-themes or separate,
emerging themes. Repetitive or overlapping statements were eliminated. The fourth and final step was a process called “reduction” wherein the exhaustive description was reduced into a narrative description of the fundamental essence of leadership development and subsequent career paths. Open, axial, and selective coding techniques were used throughout the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Verification of emerging themes was conducted using two methods. The first method was through member-checking. Follow up interviews were conducted with survey responders; participants were asked to confirm themes. Second, peer reviewers were asked to review raw data and emerging themes. A final member-check via e-mail occurred with participants to confirm research findings.

Strengths and Limitations

Examining a phenomenon, individual, or group holistically can produce rich description and possible explanations of experiences. A phenomenological study via a case study approach is a sound strategy for research interests and questions when basic exploration is needed to define concepts and constructs. It is, however, constrained by the unique characteristics of the case being studied. It is further limited by the in-depth examination of a single case within a narrow time period. Thus, broad generalizations to other cases and time periods should be approached with caution.

Obtaining external validity in qualitative studies is generally achieved through trustworthiness, a process whereby the researcher earns the confidence of the reader (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Trustworthiness can be discussed using the terms dependability, confirmability, and credibility.
Credibility refers to the extent to which the researcher represented the experiences of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks are a critical component of credibility. To maximize credibility this study was designed to use member-checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation. Member checking was conducted during the interview with each participant. Participants were asked to review the survey responses from the questionnaire and authenticate emergent themes from the initial data analysis. A second member check was conducted at the end of the study in order to have participants confirm revised or new themes that were generated due to the additional data gleaned from interviews. Peer debriefing occurred throughout the study with a group composed of a mentor and a peer. The group met after the interviews as well as at various stages of the data analysis process in order to discuss and examine data, dialogue about next steps, and discuss data interpretations. Finally, triangulation was identified for use to a lesser extent by using email surveys, time-delayed interviews, and peer reviewers. Furthermore, interview participants were selected as a sample seeking to maximize range.

Summary

This research into leadership identity and career paths using qualitative research methodologies resulted in a thick description of the experiences of doctoral student completers in leadership studies. Themes across participants were developed and validated by peer reviewers. Chapter IV contains a full analysis and description of the identified themes.
CHAPTER IV

As stated in Chapter I, the study reported here examined in detail the perceptions of doctoral students about the impact of doctoral studies upon their leadership identity and career development. This chapter is organized in terms of the specific research question and sub-questions posed in Chapter III. It first identifies the common themes and experiences of doctoral student completers pinpointed during data analysis. It then elaborates upon the perceptions of respondents about the ways in which the doctoral program influenced their leadership identity using the respondents’ own words. Next it examines respondents’ perceptions about the doctoral program’s impact upon their job and career paths, again using respondents’ own words, pulling data both from the questionnaire and the Choicemap survey. Finally, it reports upon one additional theme voiced by doctoral students as interpreted from data analysis and confirmed through member-checking and interviews.

Of the 42 original surveys sent out to graduate student completers in cohorts two through five, fifteen were returned. These respondents represented a range of demographics. The common thread linking respondents to this study was their participation and completion of the Doctor in Leadership Studies program at Midland University. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe doctoral student experiences in leadership development and changes in career paths. It is not the intent of this study to generalize information from this uniquely bound case.
For this exploratory study, data was qualitative in nature. A common protocol, an adapted Choicemap survey and interview tool, shown correspondingly in Appendix C and Appendix D, was used to collect data. These instruments provided structure to the data collection efforts. When reporting data associated with specific research questions and identified themes, general terms such as respondent, student, or completer were used to protect the anonymity of participants.

**Common Themes and Experiences**

Data analysis was undertaken in an effort to address the main research question of this study, “What are the common themes and experiences of doctoral student completers?” Two predetermined themes were initially identified to help frame the study and guide data analysis. The predetermined themes were (a) leadership identity and (b) career paths. Upon careful analysis, using processes that included horizontalization, coding, reduction, and triangulation of data, several common themes emerged that shed light on how completion of the doctoral study program at Midland University influenced students’ leadership skills, abilities, and self-perceptions (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Moustaka, 1994).

Emergent themes related to leadership identity development included the following: (a) increased confidence, (b) identity affirmation, (c) personal learning and self-development, and (d) emphasis on collaborative relationships. Themes related to job and career paths comprised (a) perceived expansion of field of work, (b) emphasis on collaborative relationships, and (c) goal attainment. One additional, separate theme identified was pride and self-fulfillment. Uncovering these themes was instrumental in better understanding the perceptions of doctoral student completers. A more detailed
Influence Upon Leadership Identity

For the first research question in this study, respondents were asked in what way did the doctoral program at Midland University influence their leadership identity. Evidence supporting doctoral program influence upon leadership identity development was based upon both survey and interview responses. Responses included simple statements describing gains in confidence, reflective affirmations of identities, in-depth explanations of personal learning and self-development, and, finally, responses that emphasized an increase in awareness about the importance of collaboration and collegiality.

**Increased Confidence.** Of the fifteen respondents, seven either explicitly stated or alluded to being more confident in their leadership identity post-graduation. One respondent stated, “I believe also that there exists a certain confidence that comes with the completion of a doctoral degree.” A second respondent wrote, “I am more verbal now. I take more initiative. I am also no longer the battered consumer. I fight back, but with tact and grace.” She later penned,

I am not so much a quiet “wallflower” anymore. I speak my mind. I speak when I see things that are wrong. I called 2013 “the year of the bitch” (always with tact and grace) and 2014 will be the same. I have more confidence and I ask more questions. I demand answers if needed and I fight for my clients.
A third expressed her experience and leadership identity in this manner, “It added more clout to my name and gave me the assurance that the techniques I was using were indeed recognized.”

**Identity Affirmation.** Four survey respondents reported that the completion of doctoral studies affirmed her identity or career role. For one respondent, the doctoral program affirmed their teaching identity. She wrote, “In the current climate there is too much pressure to perform on tests, so much so that the administrative role has been relegated to being consumed with assessment. My strength lies in the teaching.” This individual later noted that, “This experience has given me more pride in my work,” and “People look to me for advice and guidance.” In a similar vein, another respondent explained, “I completed my coursework for my superintendent’s license prior to entering the doctoral program at Midland University so I always knew that I wanted to be a superintendent. It was simply a matter of when I would pursue that leadership position.” One other respondent remarked, “The doctoral program at Midland University continued to reinforce and strengthen my leadership identity.”

**Personal Learning and Self-Development.** Nine of the survey respondents revealed that the program impacted their personal learning and self-development in some way. For example, one male respondent expressed that the greatest impact of the program “was in an increase in my own ability to read education research and in so doing stay abreast of educational trends.” Another male respondent gave the following explanation, “The program enabled me to learn more about my own leadership traits and skills and how to further develop them.” This same respondent later wrote, “The program provided a solid foundation in leadership but also a knowledge base on organizational behavior.
and the change process. This prepared me to be a successful change agent and to help building strong school districts and aspiring administrators.” A third respondent, this one female, elaborated in this manner,

I return to the principles of Kouzes and Posner – I envision a future and analyze information and put together a plan with all the pieces – develop programming and professional development (my cognate area) – I inspire, I support, I compliment, I model for others – All that I learned I refer to as I process new leadership opportunities.

As illustrated by the above responses, all nine respondents described specific changes in behavior, knowledge, and skills that they gained as a result of participation and completion of doctoral studies at Midland University.

**Collaborative Relationships.** In response to the first research question, five respondents noted that an emphasis on collaborative relationships was an important outcome of their studies in leadership studies and had a positive impact upon their overall leadership identity. One respondent wrote, “Collaboration and collegiality became much more important to me. Starting a program and knowing that it would go on without me was what I was striving for after I became a true leader.” A second respondent stated, “The doctoral program at Midland University strengthened my belief that greater learning and progress is accomplished by groups working together – supporting each other.” A third respondent agreed, “I would say the leadership program really focused on leading rather than managing. And that would be a big difference between getting your certification to become an administrator and actually providing building leadership.”
Influence Upon Job and Career Path

For the second research question in this study, respondents were asked how the program impacted their job and career path. Evidence supporting doctoral program impact upon job and career paths was based upon both survey and interview responses as well as an analysis of respondents’ Choicemap surveys. A majority of the responses indicated that successful completion of the doctoral program afforded greater career options and opportunities to the individual graduates. In addition, eight respondents specified that the program resulted in more collaborative relationships with peers. This number, when combined with the collaborative responses from question one and analyzed to reduce overlap, made for a total of ten positive responses for this sub-theme.

A third theme, goal attainment, was also revealed. A final response indicated no impact.

Expanded Field of Work. As previously stated above, a majority of the respondents indicated that as a result of doctoral program completion, career options and opportunities expanded. One respondent stated, “My job title and position is the same but I have many options to do whatever I desire.” Another graduate noted that,

I have had some unfortunate incidents in my career where I have been fired due to my disabilities. However, I have been more likely to go for jobs a little out of my comfort zone and not be afraid to ask questions.

In speaking about expanded career opportunities, one male respondent recalled, “Immediately following graduation I was promoted to assistant superintendent and went on to be superintendent of three school districts.” Along these same lines a female respondent wrote,
I wanted to become a superintendent in a mid-size to large school district and these positions are generally awarded to male leaders. I thought the doctoral degree would provide me with additional credentials so that I could be considered for one of these positions.

In a follow-up statement she elaborated that, “Professionally, I believe the credentials opened more doors for me when I was applying for superintendent positions.” A different female respondent attributed her entrance into higher education to her degree attainment,

Without my doctorate, I would not have served at the college level – such a wonderful opportunity that I had as a faculty member to develop a program and use my skills as teacher leader; then to return this year and serve as interim associate dean truly uses these skills and I am happy!

In all, ten of the respondents pointed toward an increase in career options and opportunities as a result of doctoral program completion.

In addition to the survey data collected, respondents’ Choicemaps depicted a variety of choices for career-related life pathways taken and not taken. Standard responses included choices to do the following: (a) continue in careers as teachers, principals, superintendents, or program directors or (b) change jobs in some capacity. Specifically, data showed that one respondent indicated he remained a superintendent, one stayed a program director but for a different organization, and two other respondents indicated that they continued teaching. Moreover, two separate respondents indicated that they changed careers from principals to become superintendents. Also, two respondents mapped that they are currently working in higher education, one as a professor and another as an associate dean. Of these two respondents, one entered the doctoral program
while a school principal, and the other as a school supervisor. Additional career choice responses mapped along the way included: scholarship, adjunct professorships, consultant work, and retirement. In all a total of five respondents had major career changes.

**Collaborative Relationships.** In all, ten respondents indicated that the experience of the doctoral program at Midland University resulted in increased collaborative peer relationships. This collaboration took various forms. One respondent simply wrote that the program had, “allowed me to build a network of colleagues that provide feedback and support.” Another penned, “The doctoral program at Midland University strengthened my belief that greater learning and progress is accomplished by groups working together and supporting each other.” Furthermore, one respondent indicated that she was now using her collaborative skills as a teacher leader, one that he was helping aspiring administrators, and yet another indicated that she was “developing future global women leaders.”

The second research question asked respondents to describe the impact of doctoral program completion upon their career and job paths. In response to it one teacher respondent noted the following, “My interactions with my peers have been positively impacted. People look to me for advice and guidance. There is much more collaboration in our building as we face the educational challenges and changes.” This is the same respondent who, earlier in question one, indicated that the doctoral program had reaffirmed her identity as a teacher. Recall this attitude exemplified in her statement, “My strength lies in the teaching.”
Another respondent replied to the research question in terms of the impact upon her colleagues and co-workers. She answered, “The completion of my studies motivated and inspired many of my co-workers and colleagues to seek higher education with me as their consultant.” She went on to elaborate on her new role explaining, “Professionally, I’m the go to person for my colleagues and co-workers whenever they need professional or academic assistance.” Implicit in this statement is that a role change with her co-workers has occurred; her role as colleague has morphed into the role of advisor and mentor.

**Goal Attainment.** Seven respondents perceived that completion of the doctoral program helped them attain personal and career goals. The most comprehensive response was as follows,

The experiences gained and learned during the doctoral program have supported my career endeavors and my successes. The program also enabled me to better understand my personal self and goals and to take the steps necessary to be successful and happy in both my career and personal life.

In all, five respondents specified that the program helped them achieve career goals, one asserting that her career goals had changed in scope as a result of the program,

I never thought about becoming anything but a high school principal. That was my end goal until I finished my doctoral program. Midland opened doors for me that I thought I didn’t even want to walk through before I started the program. Now as the CAO, I am still active in leading educators and developing future global women leaders. I do not think this would have happened had I not decided to pursue a doctorate.
One respondent emphasized that he had entered the program as a personal challenge or goal for himself. He claimed, “The greatest benefit to me as a graduate of Midland University’s doctoral program has been the intrinsic rewards instead of the extrinsic ones. I am very pleased with the program, its structure, and the personal growth that it has given me.”

With regards to the impact of doctoral program completion upon her work goals, a final respondent wrote,

I honestly don’t know. After staring at this for 15 minutes I can say that I always work my way to the top and would do that with or without the Ed.D. I could do my job with a MA and don’t remember any decisions made simply because I have the doctorate. I guess it’s an attribute rather than a professional identity.

It should be noted, however, that despite the respondent’s indication above that there was a lack of career impact, this respondent did change occupations from school principal to that of a university professor subsequent to acquiring her Ed.D.

**One Additional Theme**

In addition to the themes expressed above, doctoral students voiced one more theme. This theme underwent interpretation and reduction during data analysis and was confirmed through member-checking and interviews. The theme of pride and self-fulfillment summed up emotional and perceptual responses of doctoral student completers regarding their overall experiences.

**Pride and Self-Fulfillment.** In fourteen out of fifteen responses, respondents divulged a sense of personal or professional pride and self-fulfillment from having completed a doctoral program in leadership studies. This sentiment crossed all
demographics including the following: gender, age, occupation, marital status, and ethnicity. A majority of responses were phrased positively and included the use of synonyms for pride such as respect, sense of accomplishment, and satisfaction.

Three female participants explicitly conveyed the theme of pride during the data analysis process. Respondents expressed this quality in either one of two ways, pride-in-self and pride-in-work. One completer revealed pride-in-self through this detailed response,

I am very proud that I completed the doctoral program at Midland University. It is a rigorous program and the dissertation process was extremely daunting. I am also proud that I completed this program while working very challenging jobs in an urban school district and that I personally paid for my tuition every semester. My graduation day was one of my proudest moments. I believe my background experiences and coursework at Midland University has made me a strong, successful school leader.

This response, in particular, illustrated the emotion of pride with regards to personal goal achievement, despite work and fiscal challenges. Other female respondents spoke more of pride in reference to the impact completion of the doctoral program had upon their job and career. I believe this viewpoint is best shared through the following statement, “The experience has given me more pride in my work. I feel the discipline required to complete the program has transcended to every area of my life. An unforgettable experience.” In this latter instance, pride is described less in terms of personal achievement and more as a positive social outcome.
In four instances, respondents divulged a sense of personal or professional fulfillment from having completed a doctoral program in leadership studies. This sentiment was expressed by both of the female, African-American respondents in the sample. All three responses were phrased positively and included some reference to personal growth as well as the development of social relationships. For example, one respondent wrote, “Personally I have gained a once in a lifetime educational experience and I’m grateful for that. Professionally, I’m the to go to person for my colleagues and co-workers whenever they need professional or academic advice or assistance.” A further example was conveyed by this graduate completer who asserted that the experience was, “Fulfillment of a life-long dream to teach at the college level and be a consultant to serve and teach others – I am very happy and my husband fully supports my professional life (even in retirement).”

One response was interpreted to hold both positive and negative connotations. During data analysis it fell slightly outside of the theme of self-fulfillment but it is included here as an important, somewhat contrasting perspective. This respondent began with a positive, stating, “I always recommend further education because it changes how you see the world.” She then averred,

Financially, it was not worth it. Yes, I earn more with a Dr than only MA – but over career not enough more to pay for the program. It is disheartening to see so many schools and businesses do not want to be led anywhere other than where they currently are – or just a little bit further down the road. She then emphatically concluded, “But I’d still do it again!”
Summary

Data from fifteen graduate completers were analyzed, organized into themes, and presented within this chapter. Themes related to leadership identity development included the following: (a) increased confidence, (b) identity affirmation, (c) personal learning and self-development, and (d) emphasis on collaborative relationships. Themes related to job and career paths comprised (a) perceived expansion of field of work, (b) emphasis on collaborative relationships, and (c) goal attainment. One additional, separate theme identified was pride and self-fulfillment. Uncovering these themes was instrumental in better understanding the perceptions of doctoral student completers. A more detailed summary and a discussion of the findings are presented in the next chapter, as well as recommendations and implications for further study.
CHAPTER V

Chapter V begins with a brief review of the research questions and methodology. The results of the study will be summarized and discussed. In addition, both limitations and implications of the study’s findings will be addressed as well as potential directions for future research.

Statement of the Research Question

This phenomenological case study was designed to investigate doctoral student experiences in leadership development and changes in career paths. The overall research question, and corresponding sub questions that framed the study included the following:

1. What are the common themes and experiences of doctoral student completers?
   1a. What evidence supports an influence upon leadership identity development?
   1b. What evidence supports an impact upon job and career paths?

These questions were designed to focus, but not limit the emerging nature of the study. They were instrumental in establishing the study’s overall research design, the underlying theoretical framework, as well as data collection and analysis efforts.

Review of Methodology

This qualitative, phenomenological case study was conducted to better understand the leadership development of doctoral students as it related to their leadership identity and career path. It explored graduates’ lived experiences ten years after graduation at one private university in northeastern Ohio. Participants were uniquely bound by their affiliation with the university, their participation in the doctoral program in education leadership studies, and their successful graduation.
This study was designed as retrospective analysis of doctoral students in leadership studies. The study included data from 15 doctoral student completers from Cohorts 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the program. Completers began their studies in the years spanning from 1999 to 2003. Graduation dates ranged anywhere from 2002 to 2010. The study itself was conducted from November 2013 to May 2014.

This study embraced a constructivist approach. I sought to understand the unique perspectives and experiences of doctoral student completers and the overall impact of the doctoral program upon leadership identity development and careers among successful graduate student completers. The study was conducted via a combined questionnaire and survey using a modified version of the Choicemap tool (See Appendix C) and one semi-structured interview (See Appendix D for Interview Protocol). The modified Choicemap tool survey, shown in Appendix C and further described in the article by Lewchanin and Zubrod (2001), was used as the primary data collection instrument. This instrument promoted the collection and analysis of doctoral students’ life choices starting with their choice to pursue doctoral studies in leadership studies. In addition to the Choicemap tool, three survey questions were developed based upon the focus of the research to be asked of participants in the study. To ensure reliability and validity an outside expert was asked to review the instrument. The outside expert also reviewed the demographic questionnaire at the beginning of the survey that was used to help maximize the range of interview participants. Finally, the interview included a series of open-ended questions designed to generate learning and understanding from participants. It was conducted after a time delay of six months in order to aid in member-checking preliminary themes. The procedure of field notes and partial transcriptions was used.
As a current graduate student in a doctoral program of leadership studies, data collection and analysis was aided by my familiarity with the program. Open, axial, and selective coding techniques were used throughout the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Verification of emerging themes was conducted using two methods. The first method was through member-checking. Follow up interviews were conducted six months later with a sample of survey responders; participants were asked to confirm themes. Secondly, peer reviewers were asked to review raw data and emerging themes. A final member-check via e-mail occurred with participants to confirm research findings. The themes that emerged assisted in better understanding doctoral student experiences and program outcomes as identified in the study’s underlying research questions.

**Summary of Results**

Two predetermined themes (a) leadership identity development, and (b) job and career paths were identified to frame the study. Data analysis and hand coding efforts yielded several common sub-themes for successful doctoral student completers. Sub-themes related to leadership identity development included the following: (a) increased confidence, (b) identity affirmation, (c) personal learning and self-development, and (d) emphasis on collaborative relationships. Themes related to job and career paths comprised (a) perceived expansion of field of work, (b) emphasis on collaborative relationships, and (c) goal attainment. One additional, separate theme identified was pride and self-fulfillment. These themes captured and communicated common doctoral student completers’ perceptions and experiences, shedding light upon the research study’s sub-questions dealing with leadership identity and career paths.
Discussion of Results

In this section, findings will be discussed, correlated to previous research on leadership theory, adult development, and life review, in order to shed light on the study’s underlying research question. The overall research question addressing common themes and experiences among doctoral student completers will be the focus of the section, with both predetermined and emergent themes as well as overall educational outcomes and programming, addressed within.

Leadership Identity Development

One component of the doctoral program of studies at Midland University is to focus on the role of the leader. Courses have been developed that encourage students to investigate their leadership behaviors for self-improvement. Graduate completers articulated positive outcomes with regards to increased confidence, identity affirmation, personal learning and self-development, and collaborative relationships.

**Confidence.** Seven of the fifteen doctoral completers cited increased confidence as an educational outcome of their studies. Four of the respondents were male and three female. Northouse (2007) listed self-confidence as one of five major leadership traits. He based this claim on more than a century of research on the trait approach. Northouse used the term self-confidence synonymously with self-esteem, self-assurance, and the belief that one can make a difference. He noted that self-confidence or self-esteem can help assure leaders that their attempts at influencing others are appropriate and right. This point can be illustrated by one participant’s comment that completion of the doctoral program had “given me the confidence to lead and think through the total picture of impact on leadership and decision-making.” Similarly, another participant expressed that,
The impact of the doctoral program on both my personal and professional life has been positive. It has strengthened my confidence in myself as a leader. It has allowed me to take criticism from others in a more constructive manner. The program has taught me that through perseverance, all things can be accomplished.

Lemme (2006) stated “there is no consensus in the research literature on the trajectory of self-esteem over the life span” (p. 118). Nevertheless, to address gaps in the research, Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, and Potter (2002) conducted an Internet-based study on age differences in self-esteem using cross-sectional data from a diverse group of 326,641 individuals age 9 to 90. They found that self-esteem increased and peaked in the mid-60s followed by a sharp decline around age 70 for most demographic groups. Considering that the age ranges for participants in this study spanned ages 39 on the low end to 64 on the high end, the increased levels of confidence and self-esteem expressed by participants may have been influenced by their instrumental and social roles during these productive adult years.

**Identity Affirmation.** Four of the fifteen respondents expressed that their experiences in the doctoral program merely reaffirmed their leadership identity or career choices. Lemme (2006) stated that identity formation is viewed as a key developmental task of adolescence. Such clarity is seen in one participant’s response, “I always knew that I wanted to be a superintendent. It was simply a matter of when I would pursue that leadership position.” Zucker, Ostrove, and Stewart (2002), however, indicated that the processes of identity formation may extend into and perhaps throughout adulthood. They suggested that as individuals, particularly women, confront life challenges, identity is clarified and strengthened. Such a theory is supported through one female respondent’s
statement as follows, “Throughout the doctoral program I felt as if I was an onion, peeling back the layers to reveal my true self – a confident, articulate leader unafraid of growth and change.” This notion is further reflected in a male respondent’s comment, “The doctoral program at Midland University continued to reinforce and strengthen my leadership identity.” Thus, although research suggested that some aspects of self, such as personality traits, are relatively stable, research also indicated that there are patterns of stability and change throughout the life course (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Opportunities for change are more likely during transitional periods and can vary by gender. Thus, pursuit of doctoral studies may have provided an opportunity for some adult learners to, in Erikson’s terms, “weave in” new information about the self.

**Personal Learning and Self-Development.** Learning is required throughout the life span as individuals adapt to changes in their environments and life circumstances. Adult learning is closely tied to the context of the individual’s life and may be formal, such as taking classes, or informal, such as parenthood (Merriam, 1994). The doctoral program of leadership at Midland University seeks to develop expertise through both coursework and application. Studies on expertise have found that temperament, activity level, supportive environment, availability of resources such as coaches are all necessary for expertise to develop over the course of ten or more years (Lemme, 2006). Experts are more knowledgeable and their approach to problem solving is more effective and efficient than their novice counterparts. Furthermore, research indicates that highly developed skills are less affected by age, meaning that individuals who develop high levels of expertise in one area are likely to maintain those skills even later in life.
Kouzes and Posner (2003) insisted that the primary tool that increases a leader’s success and productivity is the self. They explained that the quest for leadership is a process of self-development that begins with leveraging strengths and then identifying experiences, role models, and educational opportunities that be used to address perceived deficits. Nine of the respondents in this study expressed that the doctoral studies impacted their leadership development in terms of personal learning and self-development. Furthermore, a majority of them did so while referencing the principles of Kouzes and Posner. For example, one respondent noted,

I felt that I always had a good leadership style even before the doctoral program. But once I began the program, I immediately could see my own flaws as a leader and discovered much about what a real leader should be. Mostly, that you can't lead if no one follows.

On the other hand, two of the respondents specified that their abilities to read educational research either to stay abreast of educational trends or synthesize it to develop new solutions was strengthened. The ability to review and critique academic research is one of Midland University’s program outcomes for doctoral studies. It is embedded in all the courses but is particularly emphasized in the research strand.

Broadly speaking, the ability to understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate research literature for a specific field of interest is one small part of the three-skill approach to leadership (Northouse, 2007). The three skills defined by Katz (1955) include the following: technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill. The skill of reading and analyzing literature might be classified as either a technical skill or conceptual skill depending upon its use and implementation. Technical skills are
generally more important at lower and middle levels of management and would be exemplified by an individual summarizing research and submitting a report. Leaders at higher levels in the organization typically work with more abstract or conceptual notions. Thus, applying the knowledge gained from a report summary into a vision or strategic plan would be more in line with leadership at a high level in an organization.

**Collaborative Relationships.** Thompson (2008) observed “The world of organizations is fundamentally about relationships” (p. 91). A review of scholarly research on leadership reveals that relationships and the concept of power or influence upon followers and groups is a critical component of leadership (Aldrich, 2003a; Aldrich, 2003b; Bolman & Deal, 2008; French & Raven, 1959; Hay Group, 2007; Katz, 1955; Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Northouse, 2007). Five of the respondents initially indicated that the program positively impacted their perceptions on collaboration in regards to leadership development. Responses included thoughts about self-reflection and personal learning as well as insights gained from analyzing others’ leadership styles and characteristics.

One respondent asserted that an analysis of his leadership style and that of others, “has helped me understand the thinking and action processes of others that I needed to work with.” Earley and Mosakowski (2004) characterized this as “cultural intelligence.” Cultural intelligence can be defined as, “An outsider’s seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person’s compatriots would” (p. 140). They pointed out that there are three sources of cultural intelligence: cognitive, physical, and emotional. Individuals can increase their cultural intelligence through self-analysis, and targeted skill practice. Similarly, the Hay Group (2007) has
published research into key influence strategies for outstanding performers or leaders. The Hay Group found that leaders who have mastered the skill of influencing others are knowledgeable of themselves, others, and can carefully select and apply a range of influence strategies with integrity.

Midland University’s doctoral program weaves the themes of human relationships, leadership, and power throughout its comprehensive program. For example, the three components are evident in many of the courses on Leadership Theory, Organizational Behavior, and Professional Development and Change. The program also employs a cohort model for instruction, thereby embedding the importance of relationships and group interaction into its actual practice. Additionally, the assignment of advisors for the mentorship project and dissertation supports the relationship facet of the program. Advisor and advisee relationships are one important area that has been linked to doctoral student completion or non-completion (Council of Graduate Schools, 2009; Council of Graduate Schools, 2010; Gardner, 2009; Lovitts, 2001; Morgan, 2003). The responses of these five respondents seem to indicate that there was a positive impact regarding their personal perceptions on the importance and use of collaborative relationships in both leadership and learning.

Job and Career Paths

Overall, a majority of graduate completers articulated positive outcomes with regards to an expanded field of work, collaborative relationships, and goal attainment.

Expanded Field of Work

Ten respondents attributed doctoral experiences with expanded career options and opportunities. This perception was embodied in one respondent’s generalized claim,
“A doctorate opens opportunities for advancement. The doctoral degree from Midland University is well-respected as being challenging and meaningful – preparing candidates for advanced leadership challenges and demands.” Survey responses were supported by an analysis of demographic survey data as detailed in Chapter III, Table 2. For example, prior to entering doctoral studies a majority of the survey responders were either teachers or principals. Ten years after graduation, a majority of the survey responders reported occupations as directors or supervisors and superintendents or CEOs. Three respondents reported a new occupation as faculty in higher education. Such data would seem to corroborate respondents’ anecdotal statements that career advancements were made during the ten-year span.

The Council of Graduate Schools’ Ph.D. Completion Project (2009, 2010) completed a survey of 1,406 students who completed Ph.D. degrees in 18 universities between March 2006 and August 2008. It listed mentoring and advising as one of three major factors that contributed to completion. One of four additional factors that students identified as contributing to their success was professional and career guidance. And in earlier research Lovitts (2001) argued that lack of advising support and mentoring was a major contributing factor to doctoral students departure prior to degree completion. As a researcher who has the unique role of also being a participant in the program, I can attest that the doctoral program at Midland University includes aspects of mentoring and advising and, to a lesser extent, informal professional and career guidance through that advisor and advisee relationship as part of its overall program design and structure.

The stated mission of Midland University is one that focuses on the individual (College of Education, 2000). There are three targeted outcomes for the program that
respond to this need. First, students develop a cognate specialty area that is unique to them, yet related to the major area of study. Some of the suggested areas are: the Superintendency, Business Management, Curriculum, Theology, and Higher Education Pedagogy. A second outcome is that students are paired with an advisor for a mentorship project that involves research in the workplace. A third outcome is the individual dissertation research that each student undertakes in order to add to the overall body of scholarly knowledge in leadership studies. Each of these outcomes provides opportunities for students to explore career options and interests that are unique to them with support from a faculty advisor. Thus, although it is not the intent of this research to claim causal relationships, the design and structure of these three components of the overall program may have been a contributing factor to positive perceptions regarding awareness of expanded career options and opportunities expressed by respondents.

Nerad and Cerny (1999) analyzed data from the Ph.D.s Ten Years Later Survey. They found that more than eighty percent of Ph.D. recipients advanced post-graduation to careers that included teaching, management, or research. Nevertheless, data analysis also concluded that doctoral education is a passport to multiple career destinations, some far removed from the traditional academic path. They also found that many graduate completers did not intend to become professors. When career paths were analyzed with regards to job satisfaction, the overall results were positive. The graduate student completers in this study exhibited, to a lesser degree, varied career paths and disparate career goals. And although job satisfaction was not directly studied, career paths were viewed positively by a majority of the respondents.
**Collaborative Relationships.** The sub-theme of collaborative relationships was raised again in response to the second survey question, “How has the program impacted your job and career path.” A total of eight respondents indicated that a positive outcome of doctoral studies was a new emphasis on collaborative relationships in their jobs and careers. One respondent pointed out that, “The program has enabled me to put into practice the leadership ideas from scholars and classmates. It has allowed me to build a network of colleagues that provide feedback and support.” The other seven respondents echoed this statement with various words and phrases. Opportunities for networking included references to colleagues, co-workers, and the cohort model as well as becoming a team leader, mentor, consultant, or member of several district committees.

Social capital generally refers to opportunities that an individual creates through interactions with others via social networks (Thompson, 2008). In his book, *Achieving Success through Social Capital*, Baker (2000) argued that, “Success is social” (p.9). He claimed that all the characteristics customarily thought of as individual success, such as natural talent, intelligence, education, effort, and luck, really occur at an organizational level and are the result of networks of relationships. Baker further asserted that the use of social capital could improve business or organizational performance.

With regards to doctoral program experiences, eight respondents specifically linked networking and human relationships to positive career and job outcomes. In fact, this was the only sub-theme that was identified twice, once as an outcome for leadership identity and again for job and career paths. In all, ten respondents indicated positive perceptions of growth and learning in this area. Measuring actual growth in the levels of social capital of doctoral students was beyond the scope of this study.
Goal Attainment. Seven of the fifteen respondents observed that the completion of doctoral studies enabled them to realize personal or career goals. The drive for these respondents to realize these goals may be related to a number of factors including adult development, self-efficacy, and leadership style.

Lemme (2006) asserted that the choice of occupation is one of the major developmental tasks across the lifespan. She reported that there are a number of important factors that influence career choice: knowledge of options; market conditions; family attitudes, traditions, and expectations; proximity factors; social class; and gender role. Five respondents noted that attaining a doctoral degree was important to their career advancement. Two others indicated that is was more of a personal goal that had led to career enhancement. Understanding the underlying reasons for pursuit of a doctoral degree and the overall goals of doctoral students may help refine programming and improve completion rates.

Holland (1973, 185, 1996) developed a theory that individuals choose work that matches their personality. Other theorists such as Betz and Hakett (1986) and Lent and Hackett (1987) contended that occupation was determined by career self-efficacy, an individual’s belief in one’s capacity to be successful in a given occupation. The doctoral degree is the final degree granted in higher education. It is therefore understood that it is a mastery degree, with only about one percent of the population earning this degree (Peterson’s Staff, 2014). Bandura (1991) claimed that one of the best contributors to a strong sense of individual self-efficacy was personal empowerment through mastery experiences. Kouzes and Posner (2003) also found a positive correlation between learning and leading. They identified three methods that leaders could use to further
develop their skills: personal experience, observing good examples, and formal education. In addition to these three self-improvement methods, Kouzes and Posner elaborate upon five behaviors that leaders can use to show leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Several respondents articulated that completion of the doctoral degree was a type of “stepping stone” in their career path. It would also seem to be one vehicle to “model the way” for learning and leading.

The literature on leadership is rife with references to goals and goal attainment. Northouse (2007) wrote that leadership includes attention to goals. In writing this, Northouse was primarily referencing a leader’s ability to direct a group of individuals toward task completion. Two models for leadership, the team leadership model and path-goal theory, discuss goal attainment with regards to clarifying goals, removing obstacles, and supporting and training individuals in the organization. Implicit with each model is the assumption that leaders are not above or better than followers. Rather, Northouse argued that “leaders have an ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of followers” (p. 4). This approach is further articulated in the somewhat paradoxical approach to leadership called servant leadership wherein the leader emerges based upon service to others. More research would be needed in order to investigate what, if any, correlations exist among goal attainment, career satisfaction, and leadership style.

It is important to note that, with regards to the impact of doctoral program completion upon job and career path and goal attainment, in particular, one respondent contended that there had been “no impact.” She argued that she would have reached her career goals “whether or not she pursued doctoral studies.” She stated that she
“considered the Ed.D an attribute and could complete her job with a MA degree.” Despite the respondent’s indication that there was a lack of career impact, this respondent did change her field of work from school principal to that of a university professor subsequent to acquiring her Ed.D.

**Pride and Self-Fulfillment**

One additional theme was voiced by fourteen of the fifteen respondents. This theme summed up the emotional and perceptual responses of doctoral student completers regarding their overall experiences during and since the successful completion of their program of study. Taking directly from the words of survey respondents, I have labeled it as pride and self-fulfillment. In psychological terms, however, it might be called “self-actualization” or “identity achievement.” Similarly, in economic terms, it could be labeled “human capital.”

In humanistic psychological theory, Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of concepts with “self-actualization” as the fifth step or stage (Olsen, 2013). According to Maslow, this last stage represented the growth of the individual, caused by fulfillment of potential and meaning in life. Carl Rogers also created a theory based upon integration of the “real” and “ideal” self. This resulted in the emergence of the “fully functioning” self. Along these same lines, James Marcia operationalized Erikson’s work and theorized four identity statuses, the final status being identity achievement (Lemme, 2006). Although key elements of these theories are often thought to occur in adolescence or early adulthood, more attention is being given to identity formation throughout the adult lifespan. As it relates to this study, the responses of these successful doctoral completers
may support identity achievement and integration of self as a potential outcome of doctoral studies.

Butler’s theory on the life review process as implemented in this study by the use of the Choicemap tool may have contributed to doctoral students’ abilities to purposefully reminisce. Survey respondents were able to take time to consciously review and integrate experiences. They could reconsider the conflicts, stress, and experiences of the doctoral program from a historical point of view. As previously stated, in all, fourteen out of fifteen respondents divulged a sense of personal or professional pride and self-fulfillment from having completed a doctoral program in leadership studies. This sentiment crossed all demographics including the following: gender, age, occupation, marital status, and ethnicity. A majority of responses were phrased positively and included the use of synonyms such as respect, sense of accomplishment, and satisfaction. This positivity may point to successful program outcomes, but may also be a result of respondents’ acceptance of life choices and coming to terms with their life course experiences.

In economic terms, pride and self-fulfillment might be descriptive of the term “human capital.” Human capital espouses the idea that humans can invest in themselves, most commonly by improving their education (Keeley, 2007). Keeley compiled statistical evidence from international data sources linking improvements in human capital to increased personal income, well-being, and health. This research provides a basis for yet another viewpoint for consideration and interpretation of the final theme that emerged in this study. For, despite the argument by at least two of the respondents that doctoral completion yielded no real improvements in personal income, fourteen respondents, including the two previously mentioned, noted an overall sense of pride and self-
fulfillment. In other words, a majority of respondents cited increased education as improving their overall sense of well-being, which has been related to increased health and reciprocally lower health costs.

**Limitations**

As a bound case study, this research was limited to the population of one program of study at a private, not-for-profit, mid-sized regional teaching university, historically related to a conservative, traditional church. The results of this study were not intended for generalization to other populations. Consequently, generalizing findings of this study may be problematic due to the uniqueness of this bound case. The overall intent of the study was to investigate and better understand common experiences and perceptions among a specific population of doctoral student completers. Detail was provided to better assist the reader in understanding potential comparisons of other existing programs to the one associated with this study.

For the purposes of this study, a voluntary, representative sample of fifteen participants was identified for the survey, of which six participated in the follow-up interview. The small numbers involved in the sample as well as the voluntary nature of the sample posed additional limitations. Optimally, the survey and interview process would have included all 42 doctoral student completers. Given resource constraints and the difficulty in contacting past alumni, the processes of peer review and member-checking were used to validate findings and enhance understanding. However, the use of such processes should not be interpreted to claim causal relationships. There remains the potential for possible as-yet-unknown, extraneous variables that might be contributors to experiences and behaviors.
Implications

Research about doctoral education has been conducted over many decades on various aspects of the doctoral experience. This study adds to the research that currently exists on assessment in doctoral education. Better understanding the impact of doctoral education, which was brought to light through this study, serves to ultimately benefit students, universities, employers, and policy groups. The findings of this research provide a voice to doctoral student completers, through transferring awareness of common experiences, specifically the impact of successful doctoral completers upon leadership identity and career development. This information will assist key stakeholders in assessing outcomes for doctoral programs and enhancing programming for the future.

The predetermined theme of leadership identity as further defined by the sub-themes identified in this study: confidence, identity affirmation, personal learning and self-development, and enhanced collaborative relationships, are all consistent with the stated outcomes for Midland University. It does, however, provide insight into possible disconnects between master and doctoral degree programming. In light of the fact that few individuals pursue doctoral studies in leadership studies, the university may wish to consider reviewing programs and practices to provide more leadership content for practitioners at the master degree level, particularly with regards to the concepts of organizational behavior and leadership self-development. This may be particularly appropriate for two reasons: (a) many Ohio superintendents do not hold doctoral degrees and (b) new licensure provisions for teachers include a provision for teacher leaders. As leadership roles for teachers, principals, and superintendents are undergoing transformation in Ohio at an accelerated pace due to demands from policy making bodies,
such programming changes may help in “leveling up” the overall profession.

The predetermined theme of impact on job and career netted three sub-themes as follows: perceived expansion of field of work, emphasis on collaborative relationships, and goal attainment. The use of both the survey questions, demographic data, and the Choicemap tool aided in triangulating data and developing themes. Ten years post-graduation, graduate completers perceived an expansion of work fields as a result of their studies and life experiences. Typically, career counseling is not a formal part of the doctoral program unlike undergraduate programs. Rather, it may or may not occur depending upon the advisor. In their edited review of research on doctoral programs, Maki and Borkowski, (2006) commented that the advising experience in doctoral studies is uneven. Since graduate completers positively perceived the theme of expanded field of work, the development of more formal guidance upon careers and options post-graduation may be one venue for institutes of higher education to explore if they are seeking to add value to their programs. This is consistent with research from Nerad and Cerny (1999) who in their Ph.D.’s Ten Years Later study recommended that doctoral education should prepare students for a broad range of careers.

In the aforementioned study, Nerad and Cerny found that collaborative socialization practices should be included in doctoral programs. They recommended specific socialization practices such as attending lectures and conferences in addition to more social outings. Responses by graduate completers along this theme, labeled in the study collaborative relationships, would seem to bear out this recommendation. Along these same lines, assuring a good “fit” between prospective doctoral students and the offered program may be beneficial.
As a researcher, I found the use of the Choicemap tool rich in data but unwieldy for the purposes of data analysis. In addition, I question whether or not some individuals in the sample may have chosen not to participate due to its inclusion in the study. Nevertheless, as a tool for reflection and integration of life experiences, I felt it was of use as it provided a history of choices and enabled respondents to reflect directly upon paths taken and not taken. From this viewpoint, graduate completers’ responses along the theme of goal attainment may indicate that completion of the doctoral degree was viewed as an important life event that contributed to respondents’ integration of career and identity across the course of their lifespan.

**Directions for Future Research**

Today, doctoral education is undergoing a number of changes. These changes include a shift in the demographic makeup of students, the broadening of career paths, the ongoing struggle for financial resources, and an increase in accountability and assessment measures. Maki and Borkowski (2006) stated that, “In response to these changes, the activity of doctoral program assessment must itself become more detailed and more comprehensive” (p. 135). One way to accomplish this goal is by listening to the very people most affected by doctoral education, the students, themselves.

If we indeed listen to the respondents in this study, the emphasis on collaborative relationships spanned both research sub-questions. This theme was important as both a component and an outcome of the program. It was important considering its inclusion in doctoral coursework and the research supporting the importance of attention to relationships as a component of leadership and career success. Measuring this skill in the form of social capital as it develops within undergraduate and graduate programs may be
one avenue for further research.

It is important to note that one group of students, non-completers, was excluded from this study. Expansion of the study to include those twelve non-completers might be fruitful. Such a study would likely include their perceptions of leadership identity in addition to a review of their job and career paths. This data could then be analyzed for themes and subsequently compared to the themes previously identified for graduate completers. Conducting this study with larger numbers would be helpful.

With regards to the design and structure of the doctoral program at Midland University, it is difficult to identify within the scope of this study if any one component was more valuable than another. This, too, is area where further research is warranted. For example, it would be interesting to identify what role the advising relationship played, how important students ranked the cohort model, and what value was assigned to the mentorship project with employers.

Two other themes that stood out across this study were those of perceived field of work expansion for graduates and pride and self-fulfillment. These areas appear to be linked to the both the processes of development in adulthood as well as economic and social concepts and would also benefit from further study. Since the graduate students in this study ranged in age between 39 and age 65, a closer look into the themes of career and pride and self-fulfillment as they relate to Erikson’s stage seven of psychosocial development, generativity versus self-absorption, may be warranted. This is one of the least studied stages in Erikson’s model and has received little attention from psychology to date. Additionally, studies that continue to explore the economic, social, and health-related impact of adult education from a human capital perspective may be productive.
In addition to adding to the existing body of research, future research will assist in better understanding and communicating the impact of doctoral programs across a variety of disciplines. Attention to and the use of student voices during the research process may provide a richer, more robust understanding. As new research findings surface, the hope is that new opportunities will emerge for adult learners. Such opportunities may include a host of options to engage, motivate, promote, deliver, and expand adult learning while at the same time lowering barriers. These opportunities, in turn, can help ensure that individuals are able to develop their human capital throughout the course of their lives, to the benefit of individuals, institutions, and society at large.
References


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APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECT REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD

PART I

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO USE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Return the original and one copy of the typewritten application including Parts II and III to:
Dean of the Graduate School
101 Gill Center
Ashland University
Ashland, Ohio 44805

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Tammy L. Wagner (typed name)

DEPARTMENT: Leadership Studies

ADDRESS: 205 W. North Street

EMAIL: wagner_t@careyevs.org

CITY: Carey
STATE: Ohio
ZIP: 44831
PHONE: (419) 310-8505/ (419)-396-6767

PROJECT TITLE: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PATHS OF DOCTORAL STUDENT COMPLETERS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

BEGINNING DATE OF RESEARCH (MONTH/YEAR): August, 2013

ANTICIPATED ENDING DATE OF RESEARCH (MONTH/YEAR): May, 2014

TYPE OF PROJECT:

□ FACULTY RESEARCH: EXTERNALLY FUNDED YES __________ AGENCY __________

□ NO __________

□ STUDENT DIRECTED RESEARCH:

ADVISOR: Dr. Ann Shelly and Dr. Harold Wilson

THESIS X DISSERTATION __ COURSE REQUIREMENT X

COURSE __ PRACTICUM __ OTHER (Please Specify) __

I agree to follow the procedures outlined in this summary description and any attachments to ensure that the rights and welfare of human subjects in my project are properly protected. I understand that no contact may be initiated with subjects until I have received approval of these procedures from the IRB and complied with any required modifications in connection with that approval.

__________________________
(Date)

APPROVAL OF FACULTY ADVISOR: Required for all students

__________________________
(Date)

PRINTED NAME OF ADVISOR: Dr. Ann Shelly and Dr. Harold Wilson

ADDRESS/AFFILIATION: Offices 100 Founders & 129 Schar College of Education / Ashland University

CITY: Ashland STATE: Ohio ZIP: 44805

PHONE: 419-289-5388 E-MAIL: ashelly@ashland.edu FAX ( )

PHONE: 419-289-5339 E-MAIL: hwilson@ashland.edu FAX ( )

__________________________
(Date)
TO: Tammy Wagner  
FROM: Carol Reece, HSRB Chair  
DATE: August 7, 2013  
SUBJECT: Human Subjects Review Board Approval  
PROJECT TITLE: A Retrospective Analysis of Leadership Identity Development and Career Paths of Doctoral Student Completers in Educational Leadership Programs  
HSRB APPROVAL CODE: 07-24-13-#007

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research proposal you submitted. You may proceed with the project.

The primary function of the HSRB is to ensure protection of human research subjects. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you pay close attention to the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence when establishing your research proposal. These ethical principles pertain specifically to the issues of informed consent, fair selection of subjects, and risk/benefit considerations.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Carol Reece, DNP, APRN-CPNP  
Phone: 419-521-6877  
E-mail: creece1@ashland.edu
APPENDIX B

CHOICEMAP PERMISSIONS
August 1, 2013

Dear Dr. Zubrod and Dr. Lewchanin:

My name is Tammy L. Wagner and I am a current doctoral student in the Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies at Ashland University.

My dissertation research explores doctoral student completers' perceptions of the impact of completing a doctoral program of study upon their personal and professional lives.

As we discussed over the telephone in July of this year, as part of my research I would like to use the article, “Choices in Life: A Clinical Tool for Facilitating Midlife Review” and Choicemap survey instrument as published in the Journal of Adult Development, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2001.

If you could please grant me that same permission in writing by signing below I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Tammy L. Wagner
Doctoral student
Ashland University

I hereby grant permission for use of the Choicemap survey tool for research and publication.

[Signature]
Dr. Shari Lewchanin

[Signature]
Dr. Louise Zubrod
August 1, 2013

Dear Dr. Zubrod and Dr. Lewchanin:

My name is Tammy L. Wagner and I am a current doctoral student in the Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies at Ashland University.

My dissertation research explores doctoral student completers’ perceptions of the impact of completing a doctoral program of study upon their personal and professional lives.

As we discussed over the telephone in July of this year, as part of my research I would like to use the article, “Choices in Life: A Clinical Tool for Facilitating Midlife Review” and Choicemap survey instrument as published in the *Journal of Adult Development*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2001.

If you could please grant me that same permission in writing by signing below I would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Tammy L. Wagner  
Doctoral student  
Ashland University

I hereby grant permission for use of the Choicemap survey tool for research and publication.

Dr. Shari Lewchanin

[Signature]

Dr. Louise Zubrod
APPENDIX C

ADAPTED CHOICEMAP SURVEY
Adapted Choicemap Survey

Demographics

Instructions: This portion of the survey is designed to gather important information about you. Please list your answers. All answers will remain confidential. Please do not write your name on this form.

Thank you.

Participant number: _____

1. Gender: _______________________________________________________________

2. Age: _________________________________________________________________

3. Occupation Prior to Entering Doctoral Program: ____________________________
   Years of Experience in That Occupation: ________________________________

4. Current Occupation: ____________________________________________________
   Years of Experience: ________________________________________________

5. Marital status: _________________________________________________________

6. Racial/ Ethnicity: _____________________________________________________

7. E-mail Address: _______________________________________________________

8. Preferred Phone Contact: ______________________________________________


Instructions: Please read the Choicemap article, specifically referring to the directions in Appendix A on page 195. Record your life and career path starting with the choice to enter the doctoral program in education at Midland University and ending with life decisions at the present time.
Based upon your reflection as delineated in the Choicemap tool, please answer the following survey questions on how the successful completion of Midland University’s doctoral program influenced your leadership identity and career path. Please continue on the back of the paper if you need more room.

1. In what ways did the doctoral program at Midland University influence your leadership identity? __________________________________________________________________________________________

2. How has the program impacted your job and career path?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What has been the overall impact of the program upon your personal and professional life? __________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Protocol

Interview – Member Check, Verify Emerging Themes, and Additional Questions

Read the original survey answers and the summary of results allowing for frequent pauses for comments or clarification. Ask participants to reflect upon the following questions as you read:

1. How do these thoughts match up to your experiences?
2. Have any aspects of your experiences been omitted?
3. If you could say anything else about the experience of graduate school at Midland University as it relates to your personal leadership identity development and subsequent career choices what would it be?

NOTE: At conclusion of the interviews:

1. Check for emotional distress in participants. Provide time to discuss feelings or concerns of participants.
2. If participant experiences distress, provide contact information for a local mental health agency.
3. Follow up to ensure that participant makes an appointment.