STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF DOCTORAL FACULTY ADVISORS AND HOW THEY SUPPORT MOTIVATION IN AN ONLINE, PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE PROGRAM

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Abstract

Student perceptions of Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) and how they support motivation in an online, Professional Doctorate (PD) program were investigated in this dissertation. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how DFAs support online doctoral student motivation to progress in their PD at a private, professionally-focused university. The conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory guided the investigation of several identified gaps in the literature relating to doctoral student attrition. Specifically, gaps in the literature directed additional research towards online, non-traditional, PD student perceptions of factors which contribute to their feelings of isolation and motivation, academic and social integration, student-faculty relationships, and faculty advising. Five themes emerged from 16 semi-structured interviews: (1) DFA-Student Pairing Process and Expectations, (2) Academic Integration, (3) Social Integration, (4) Motivation, and (5) Non-traditional Student Experience. Implications to practice were identified to improve services offered by DFAs at the university. One recommendation of this study was to increase the sample size. In addition, it was recommended that the study be replicated at similarly populated universities. Other recommendations were to explore student demographic correlations in the DFA-student relationship, DFA commitment, DFA perceptions, resiliency and its connection to the DFA-student relationship, and institutional program evaluations of offered services and programs to meet the needs of their student populations' motivation. A final recommendation of this study was to include multiple research methods to increase triangulation. These recommendations will support the continued development of DFA-student relationships.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Barbara and Bill Barnickle, for instilling in me from an early age the value and power of education. Through my mother's modeling and encouragement, education has become a passion of mine. I am forever grateful for their love and support that allowed me to prioritize my education.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my loving and supportive family, Jarian Ogden and Cohen Barnickle-Ogden. They have graciously allowed my anxious mind and sleepless nights with open arms and patient cuddles and fueled my drive to advance educational research and program and policy improvement.

I also dedicate this dissertation to educators who consistently challenge policy and programs in the name of student success.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Valerie A. Storey, for the knowledge and guidance she shared with me during my doctoral candidacy. Dr. Storey truly pushed me to improve my work by digging deeper and maintaining high expectations. My subject matter expert, Dr. Rachel Althof, served as an inspirational leader at the university, provided in-depth educational expertise, and never failed to provide meaningful and rich feedback on my writing. My methodologist, Dr. Crissie Jameson, patiently scaffolded my data collection and analysis while also encouraging an excitement for research. My dissertation would not be possible without the amazing teamwork of this committee.

I would also like to thank the supportive faculty, staff, and fellow students at the university who were quick to point me in the right direction, provided sounding boards for ideas and improvements, and eased the isolation of the doctoral journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Though doctoral students meaningfully contribute to the framework of society by leading communities, producing cutting-edge research that furthers innovation and creation, and mentoring future scholars, research indicates an average of a 50% attrition rate for doctoral students across all programs (Bagaka et al., 2015; Castello et al., 2017; Cassuto, 2013; Cuthbert & Molla, 2015; Durette et al., 2016; Gilmore et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Johnson, 2015; MERS, 2013; National Science Foundation, 2015; Nerad & Evans, 2014; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Terrell et al., 2012; Throne, 2012; Tinto, 2012; Walker et al., 2008; Wendler et al., 2012). Growing trends in education suggest a larger population of doctoral students exhibiting higher attrition rates fall into the category of "non-traditional" and are choosing online options that meet the flexibility needed to maintain their many responsibilities (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Sverdlik & Hall, 2020; Youngju, Jaeho, & Taehyun, 2013). Chung et al. (2014) suggest that "non-traditional" students generally juggle school work with many competing responsibilities, may have taken a gap year or time in-between high school and college, are working full-time, and are over the age of 25. Competing and newly created doctoral programs focus on meeting the needs of online, non-traditional student populations.

All doctoral students make an original contribution to knowledge, but this contribution differs depending on the doctoral program. The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program was designed for a student whose main interest is identifying gaps in the literature and contributing their studies to the field (Costley, 2013; Dreher & Glasglow, 2011; Kot & Hendel, 2012; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). Professional Doctorate (PD) programs were designed for students who seek to contribute their research and studies to provide practical implications in the real world or workplace (Costley & Lester, 2012; Fulton et al., 2013; Wildy et al., 2015). The goal of

this research study is to qualitatively examine the connection between Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) and how they support the motivation of students in an online PD program. This researcher conducted a case study at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest, consisting of 16 semi-structured interviews divided among four doctoral programs. Previous research suggests a correlation between DFA support and doctoral student motivation to persist in an online, PD program (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Mason, 2012; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Woolderink et al., 2015). The conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory provide insightful guidance for data analysis and results.

Chapter one provides an introduction for this study that includes a background of the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the guiding research question, the significance of the study, a description of the conceptual framework, the definition of terms suggested to clarify understanding, the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study, the organization of the dissertation, and a brief summary.

Background of the Problem

This research study was derived from literature on doctoral student attrition rates and the online, non-traditional doctoral student population in PD programs. Many factors contribute to doctoral student attrition (Golde, 2005; Martinez et al., 2013), including lacking support from a DFA or committee chair (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008;

Woolderink et al., 2015), feeling lost in the dissertation process or program (Andrews, 2016; Kumar, et al., 2013; Pitchforth et al., 2012; Rademaker et al., 2016; Tinto, 1975, 2012), being overwhelmed with work and life responsibilities (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019), feeling isolated in the doctoral journey (Golde, 2005; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Orellena et al., 2016; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019), or being academically unprepared for the rigor and expectations of a doctoral program (Brill et al., 2014; Mason, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014). The literature suggests the continued investigation of doctoral student attrition. Online, non-traditional students may face increased challenges with academic and social integration as the lack of time and resources compete with program progress and their contributing motivational factors (Deshpande, 2017; Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Graham & Massyn, 2019; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Terrell et al., 2012; Ward-Smith et al., 2013). Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination theory suggest that academic and social integration, as well as student levels of autonomy, competency, and relatedness have the potential to build student retention rates.

The DFA-student relationship has been widely examined in the literature for its ability to promote both academic and social integration for online, non-traditional doctoral students and contribute to doctoral student journeys by fostering higher levels of student autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al.,

2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015). A large emphasis in the literature focuses on academic advising and its relation to student retention (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Danver, 2016; Donaldson et al., 2016; Hatch & Garcia, 2017; Khalil & Williamson, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2017; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2014; Schwebel et al., 2012; Thompson, 2016). The literature also suggests the positive impact that academic advising has on academic student success (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2013; Drake, 2013; Leach & Patall, 2016; Lowenstein, 2013; McKenzie et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2019; Rodgers et al., 2014; Schwebel et al., 2012). Academic advisors may individualize their advising approach to best meet the needs of their student population (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; He & Huston, 2016; Zarges et al., 2018). Student satisfaction data correlates highly with academic advising services (Alvarado & Olson, 2020; Anderson et al., 2014; Drake, 2013; O'Keefe, 2013; Teasley & Buchanan, 2013; White, 2015; Williamson et al., 2014; Zarges, 2018). Academic advising is also closely tied to increased levels of student motivation (Bain et al., 2011; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Jameson & Torres, 2019; Jameson et al., 2021; Litalien & Guay, 2015). Cited research supports a relational association between the DFA and doctoral student motivation and retention.

This research study took place at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest that currently offers all incoming doctoral students a DFA during their first course. The Doctoral Studies Coordinator (DSC) gathered information from all students via a form, indicating their program, intended dissertation topic interests, and qualities they would look for in a DFA (Internal communication, June 6, 2022). The DSC then paired the student with an available DFA, and the two were encouraged to make contact within their first term. The university of study had 186 eligible DFAs, 116 were actively serving 544 students (Internal

communication, June 14, 2022). DFA assignments end when a student completed their coursework and began doctoral candidacy. Each DFA served up to 15 students per term, but the average load was five advisees (Internal communication, June 6, 2022). The Dean of Doctoral Studies recommended students and DFAs meet monthly to discuss their dissertation thoughts and progressions either in person, by phone, via Zoom, or through significant email or text message exchange (Internal communication, June 30, 2022). Students may have requested a new DFA if the match was not fulfilling their needs for the program by filling out a form explaining why they would like to be re-matched (Internal communication, August 9, 2021). DFAs were paid $200 per student per term to provide mentoring and advising services to their student (Internal communication, June 9, 2022). Eligible DFAs must be full or part-time faculty, fully onboarded, and have completed an online course (Internal communication, June 6, 2022).

Problem Statement

Researchers continue to investigate contributing factors to the 50% rate of doctoral student attrition, emphasizing the population that consists of online, non-traditional learners (Deshpande, 2017; Graham & Massyn, 2019; Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Sverdlik & Hall, 2020; Terrell et al., 2012; Ward-Smith et al., 2013; Youngju, Jaeho, & Taehyun, 2013). A lack of investigation of online doctoral programs suggests the need for institutions to internally evaluate their programs to contribute research (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Chipere, 2015; Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Golde, 2005; Levitch & Shaw, 2014). Online, non-traditional doctoral student perspectives are missing in the overall narrative, and the literature indicates the importance of investigating their contributing motivating factors (Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Gilmore et al., 2016; Jameson et al., 2021; Tinto, 1975, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate student perceptions of how their DFA had supported their motivation to persist in their PD program. This researcher planned to support the institution with recommendations grounded on the research data to improve the offered support of DFAs to doctoral students. A secondary purpose was to communicate the research findings to other online institutions with similar populations regarding the role of DFAs as a tool for student retention.

Research Question

The research study focused on the doctoral student population in four online PD programs at the institution: Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Healthcare Administration (DHA), Doctor of Organizational Leadership (EdD), and Doctor of Professional Studies (DPS). This researcher gathered doctoral student perceptions of and experiences with their DFAs at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. The DFA role was investigated as a means to support program motivation. The research question guiding the study focus was: "What are students' perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation in an online, PD program?"

Significance of the Study

To advance the literature, this qualitative research study investigated the DFA-student relationship at a private, professionally-focused university and explored how the DFA supports student motivation to persist. The literature has focused on doctoral student attrition and its' contributing factors. This study added to the literature on DFAs and what motivates online doctoral learners. This case study aimed to fulfill several research needs and gaps in the literature.

By gaining the perspectives of adult, non-traditional, online students at the proposed institution, the research provided insights into how DFAs support student motivation to persist in a PD program. The research aimed to establish whether doctoral students perceive DFAs to build their sense of autonomy and competence, commitment towards the program and institution, and motivation. The research analysis may provide the university with critical feedback for the improvement of DFA services, such as how students were matched with their DFAs, what and how expectations were set within the student-faculty relationship, effective communication strategies, potential DFA needed training, and overall student satisfaction with faculty advising at the university. Potentially with this empirical evidence, other universities working with similar populations may reexamine and improve their faculty advising structure.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on both Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory. Figure 1, focusing on Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory, posits several factors that lead to either college dropout or retention. According to Tinto (1975, 2012), an individual's family background, attributes, and pre-college schooling directly affect the goal and institutional commitment a student brings to their college experience. Once in college, a student's grade performance and intellectual development during their college experience determine their level of academic integration. The student also experiences peer and group interactions and interactions with faculty and staff at the institution, which directly affects their level of social integration. While academic integration leads to higher levels of goal commitment, social integration leads to higher levels of institutional commitment, and both determine if a student will drop out of college or be retained.

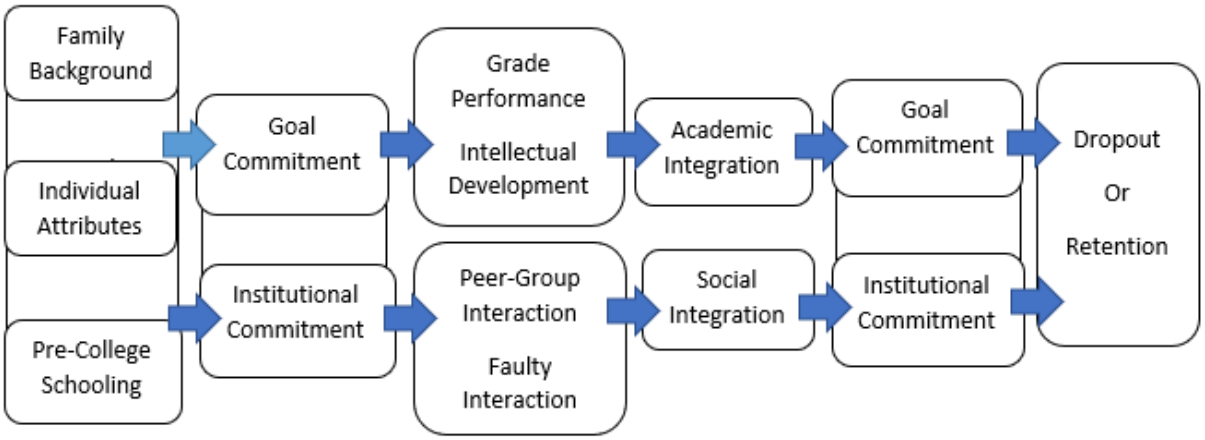

Figure 1. Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Model

Note. This model was created by Julie Barnickle and adapted from Tinto's (1975) *Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research*.

Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory is represented in the model below (Figure 2). The three psychological needs of autonomy, competency, and relatedness directly affect a student's intrinsic motivation. Autonomy includes the students' ability to make choices in their behavior. Competence consists of the student feeling confident in what is required in the academic setting. Relatedness includes the students' interpersonal relationships they build with faculty, staff, and other students. Intrinsic motivation refers to a person's innate directed energy to successfully manage their environment without outside reinforcements. Self-determination incorporates an individual's ability to choose their future outcomes or self-direction based upon their intrinsic motivation and their accrual of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A student exhibiting autonomous regulation blooms in a supportive environment with the fulfillment of autonomy, competency, and relatedness leading to doctoral student persistence (Litalien & Guay, 2015).

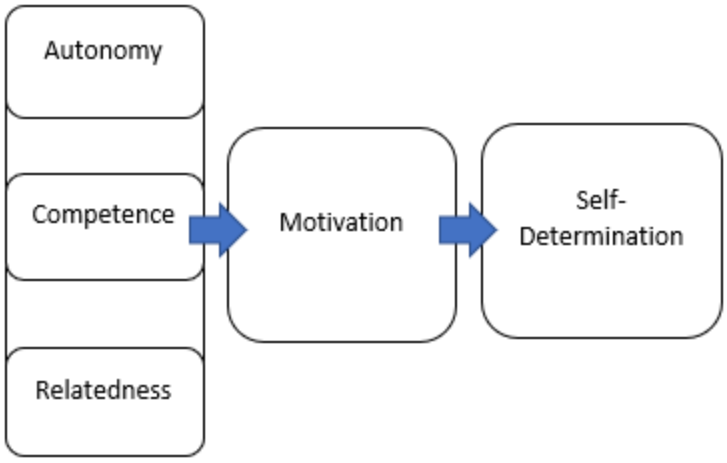

Figure 2. Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory Model

Note. This model was created by Julie Barnickle and adapted from Klampfer's (2015) *Holistic Impulses for Teaching and Learning Self –Determination Theory of Motivation in Teaching and Learning Processes*.

Definition of Terms

- Doctoral Candidate: a doctoral student who has completed all program course requirements and passed the qualifying exam (Internal communication, 2022)
- Committee Chair: a faculty member who guides and directs the student through the dissertation process while empowering student autonomy and ownership of the process (Hart-Baldridge, 2020)
- Doctoral Faculty Advisor (DFA): a professional in the discipline field who advises students in academic areas such as research interests for dissertation and coursework selection and encourages growth and familiarity with research processes and professional development (Internal communication, 2022)

- Doctoral Studies Coordinator (DSC): a doctoral coordinator who organizes and shapes program policies, procedures, and student progress (Internal communication, 2022)
- Institutional Review Board (IRB): an administrative research granting body that monitors the safety and welfare of human subjects in research studies at the institution of study (Internal communication, 2022)
- Non-traditional College Student- a student who may be over the age of 25, working, balancing life responsibilities, and who did not go straight into college after high school (Chung et al., 2014)
- Online College Student- a student who is taking online courses exclusively and receiving online student support services via email, video conferencing, or phone (Miller et al., 2019)
- Principal Investigator (PI): the researcher who is submitting their application to the IRB; the person conducting the research (Internal communication, 2022)
- Professional Doctorate (PD): a professional doctoral degree focused on investigating and researching a problem in the field and providing implications for future practice (Armsby et al., 2018; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015; Storey et al., 2015)
- Traditional College Student: a student who begins college directly after completing high school, relies on family support, is under the age of 25, and does not work part-time or full-time allowing complete focus on studies (NCES, 2013)
- Underrepresented College Student: a student who represents specific minority demographic characteristics such as low-socioeconomic status, non-white racial identity, non-male gender, and first-generation status (Harris et al., 2020)

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This researcher found the following assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the research study to be of importance.

Assumptions of the study:

1. The sample is typical of the total population of non-traditional doctoral students in an online, professional doctoral program.
2. Respondents answered honestly.

Limitations of the study:

1. Sample diversity as it only included students who had communicated with the DFAs at least once per term, which inherently may have excluded other students varying feedback about their DFA experience.
2. Sample size. A quantitative study with the entire caseload of students would add to the breadth of results.
3. Lack of similar studies at other institutions with the same populations to produce generalizability.
4. Limited opportunity for triangulation. The university of study's doctoral programs were relatively new, and limited data had been produced from this population. One quantitative study had taken place at the university, but the results were not attainable for this study.
5. Case study, as a research design, comes with potential interpretation bias and can lead to lower ability to reproduce similar studies (Kekeya, 2021; Yin, 2017).

6. A representative sample of all four programs could not be acquired, which this researcher attributes to one program's size being considerably smaller than the other three.

Delimitations of the study

1. The population of students used for this study all attend the same private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. Their willingness to participate in this study indicates their potential engagement level in their program.
2. The sample criteria were created to acquire meaningful feedback to interview questions and avoid researcher bias, but the original recruitment email did not produce adequate sample numbers. This researcher then used snowball sampling, which may have produced participants who were earlier or later in their doctoral journey than first anticipated, which may affect how much of a relationship the student was able to build with their DFA so far or if the student was able to separate their experiences of DFA versus chair.
3. Students were asked to self-identify if they had communicated with their DFA at least once per term, but some interviews had to be discarded due to the students not being involved with their DFAs.

A researcher's professional and personal experience can affect the topic selection, how to approach the subject, what findings are most pertinent, and how those findings should be framed within the conclusion (Redmond, 2018). Therefore, during all phases of planning for a qualitative study, the impact of the researcher should be considered. While preconceptions based on professional and personal experience must be differentiated from bias to maintain reflexivity, the researcher should not mistake awareness that intuitively exists with the insight that may

develop from the qualitative data analysis. To avoid mistaking previous intuitive knowledge with emerging conclusions, viewpoints were disclosed before the study, and data's interpretation was assessed for conflicting suppositions (Redmond, 2018).

Organization of the Dissertation

The organization of this dissertation is as follows:

- Chapter one provides an introduction for this study that consists of a background of the research study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research question, the significance of the study, the guiding conceptual framework, a definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study, the organization of the dissertation, and a summary.
- Chapter two contains a systemic review of the literature, including a guiding conceptual framework, a rationale for the study, and an examination of gaps in the literature.
- Chapter three includes research methodology, including research design, population and sample, data collection methods, measurements and instruments, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and data analysis.
- Chapter four describes the sample's demographics, themes and patterns, general conclusions, a summary of results, and limitations.
- Chapter five concludes with the results, a discussion of findings, recommendations for future research, and practical and theoretical implications.

Chapter Summary

Chapter one provided an introduction for this study that included a background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research question, significance of the study, conceptual framework, the definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations

of the study, organization of the dissertation, and a summary. Chapter two includes a systematic review of the literature for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter first begins with a description of the conceptual framework this researcher applied to the research problem for this study: Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory. Second, the systematic literature review examines empirical research focused on doctoral student attrition and identifies gaps in the literature, which provided foundational support and guided the study's research question. Differences between the Professional Doctorate (PD) and the Doctoral of Philosophy (PhD) are highlighted, including program requirements and outcomes. Further, the literature review includes an examination of the impact of an online learning environment and its effects on the research problem, including growing educational trends and environmental challenges. The systematic literature review concludes by exploring doctoral advising with special emphasis on the different types of academic advisors, approaches to academic advising, academic advising impacts on student success, institutional advising models and advising systems, and factors in deciding an institutional advising model.

Conceptual Framework

Qualitative researchers use a conceptual framework of developed constructs to organize the readers' understanding by referencing certain concepts or relationships that are present in the research (Antunes et al., 2021). Antonenko (2015) breaks down this definition by defining 'construct' as a connection between concepts and relationships and 'concepts' or 'relationships' as elements of structured knowledge already in existence. Antonenko (2015) also notes that the conceptual framework may be defined as a guide of the study's structure in relation to 'structured knowledge' or theoretical foundations. The conceptual framework for this study is based on both Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory.

Student Integration Theory

Tinto (1975, 2012) explores the balance between academic and social integration and suggests that minimal integration of either leads to low student commitment and the possibility of attrition. He suggests that the more a student is integrated into the academic and social systems of a university, the higher probability of their program retention and completion. To increase retention, academic and social support should be offered by the institution, as well as opportunities for engagement. Academic integration can then be broken down into a student's grade performance and intellectual development. Grade performance can be linked to future educational and career advancements, as well as persistence. The importance of the assessment of students at entry, after coursework, and institutional review to influence early alert systems to maintain student success is emphasized.

According to Tinto, intellectual development includes a student's personality growth as well as the overall institution's intellectual climate, which includes peers, faculty, staff, and administration. The multiple facets of social integration include association with peer groups within the institution, structured extracurricular activities, and connecting with faculty who introduce them to their respective departments. College dropout can result from being both overly socialized, as well as feeling isolated or lacking supportive peer groups and involvement in the institution's community. The lack of social integration usually results in voluntary withdrawal, whereas the lack of academic integration results in academic dismissal.

Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan (1985, 2012a, 2012b) modeled human motivation on the fulfillment of three psychological needs: autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to an individual's choice in one's behaviors; competence refers to an individual feeling confident as

they interact with the environment and in their skills; and relatedness refers to an individual's yearning to feel close to and trust someone while also feeling cared for.

Self-determination is defined as a volitional choice, based on intrinsic motivation and perceived levels of autonomy and competence, to achieve an anticipated future outcome. Self-Determination Theory comprises three theories: Cognitive Evaluation Theory, Organismic Integration Theory, and Causality Orientation Theory.

1. Cognitive Evaluation Theory examines the perceptions of an individual's locus of causality and their level of competence.
2. Organismic Theory is defined as the motivation for development, which includes the ability to elaborate on current structures proving competence, flexibility, and a united structure.
3. Causality Orientation's Theory includes the orientations of autonomy, control, and impersonal.
    a. Autonomy is associated with interpreting regulatory events as informational and is linked to intrinsic motivational behaviors.
    b. Control is associated with interpreting information as feeling controlled or regulated.
    c. Impersonal orientation is associated with feeling like a situation is unachievable, and an individual lacks all motivation to accomplish.

Systematic Literature Review

Systematic investigation allows for discovery that supports a rigorous research analysis (El Hussein, 2014). Pajo (2018) adds that a systemic review of literature focuses on collecting and analyzing all studies on the topic of interest, reducing selection bias by including how the

results were found and reporting on the methodologies and conclusions of each source. This researcher used the EBSCOhost Database, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, and Google Scholar to conduct this systematic literature review. At first, this researcher searched for useful sources that originated after the year 2012. As the research progressed, this researcher began looking for more current literature by refining the search to include sources that were published after 2015 and then 2018 to remain current in the literature and track research development. Keywords that guided the literature review research were doctoral student attrition, faculty advisor, PD, online doctoral programs, doctoral student retention, doctoral student motivation, academic advising approaches, academic advising impact, institutional advising models, Student Integration Theory, and Self-Determination Theory.

Doctoral Student Attrition

Doctoral completion rates have been documented in the United States at around 50% across all programs (Castello et al., 2017; Cassuto, 2013; Cuthbert & Molla, 2015; Gilmore et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Johnson, 2015; MERS, 2013; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Terrell at al., 2012) with online programs and populations comprised of non-traditional students showing even lower completion rates and higher attrition (Deshpande, 2017; Graham & Massyn, 2019; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Terrell et al., 2012; Ward-Smith et al., 2013) coupled with underrepresented populations (Barnes & Randall, 2012). Youngju, Jaeho, and Taehyun (2013) report that online learning has risen from 4 million in 2008 to 49.6 billion strong in 2014, but they also agree that online learning is leading to higher dropout rates which in turn produces lowered individual confidence and a loss of finances.

A large focus in the literature explores why doctoral students are not completing their programs with a variety of studies and supporting research focused on students and program

evaluation (Litalien & Guay, 2015; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Maddox, 2017; Walker et al., 2008). Allum (2014), Allum et al. (2014), and Sowell et al. (2015) report that attrition rates remain a continuous issue, and Martinez et al. (2013) and Golde (2005) note that doctoral students usually leave programs for more than one reason which are still under investigation. Tinto (1975, 2012) delineates the dropout from higher education as being due to questions of definition, inadequate data collecting, and lack of theoretical models that seek to explain. This view is supported by Rigler et al. (2017), who note that the literature often synonymously uses the words "chair" "advisor" and "mentor," making some research challenging to distinguish.

Lacking support from a faculty advisor has been reported as a main factor in doctoral attrition, with higher completion rates being associated with students who regularly met with and communicated with their advisors (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015). Golde's (2005) study, including 58 case study interviews, utilized Tinto's (1975) Student Integration Theory as the conceptual framework and produced six themes of attrition: (1) research best practices did not match well with students' strengths, (2) the student and department or institution's expectations did not match, (3) a poor pairing between the advisor and student existed, (4) the student's glimpse into faculty life was incompatible with what they envisioned, (5) the student learned about the forecasted job market, and (6) the program structure was isolating to the student. Maddox (2017) used Attribution Theory as the conceptual framework for her 15 semi-structured doctoral student interviews to

find out why they chose to leave their doctoral programs, and her findings centered on four themes: (1) inflexibility of the program, (2) program and student expectations did not match, (3) lack of advising and mentoring services, and (4) personal factors that challenged resilience. Quality academic advising is linked to higher retention rates (Danver, 2016; Donaldson et al., 2016; Hatch & Garcia, 2017; Khalil & Williamson, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2017; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2014; Schwebel et al., 2012), positive academic careers (Lowenstein, 2013), overall student satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2014; Teasley & Buchanan, 2013; Williamson et al., 2014), and increased motivation (Litalien & Guay, 2015).

Attrition rates may also be attributed to the institution's lack of academic and social support (Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). Doctoral students need positive social exchanges within program structures to reduce social isolation, which leads to attrition (Golde, 2005; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). Online students, in particular, often feel alone in their studies and feel there is no one to help them on their journey (Orellana et al., 2016). McCray and Joseph-Richard (2021) surveyed 67 and interviewed 11 online doctoral PhD completers and found the university program services built to complement online doctoral students' well-being and resilience were key to retention. Lower attrition rates have been tied to doctoral student cohorts as they provide support systems for students, which increases their satisfaction and includes opportunities to learn from and connect with each other, lowering social isolation (Bagaka et al., 2015; Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Cockrell & Shelley, 2011; Dieker et al., 2014; Holmes et al., 2014; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2016; Rigler et al., 2017; Tinto, 2012).

Many doctoral candidates do not understand the heightened skillsets needed for the rigor of a doctoral program, including but not limited to psychological, prior academics, and motivation (Brill et al., 2014; Mason, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014). Additionally, Levitch and

Shaw (2014) suggest that doctoral attrition occurs when student expectations of what a doctoral program will be like do not match the reality of being in the program. Johnson (2011) and Pitchforth et al. (2012) suggest that dissertation preparation and understanding the entire dissertation process factors into student persistence and doctoral student completion rates.

Andrews (2016) and Kumar et al. (2013) state that the dissertation chair's communication, relationship, and ability to decipher an individual's dissertation needs are crucial to doctoral completion rates. Rademaker et al. (2016) assert that the dissertation chair plays an integral part in a student's dissertation journey, as they often serve as a mentor who cares about them and their progress. Hunter and Devine (2016) suggest that when students feel appreciated and cared about, this curves their emotional exhaustion and correlates to higher completion rates. Students need regular and meaningfully individualized interactions with their dissertation chair (Holmes et al., 2014; Brill et al., 2014). Jameson et al. (2021) and Orellana (2016) highlight how important trust plays in the student-chair relationship that increases when they feel understood and supported. The chair can promote student motivation by fostering competency (Anekstein & Vereen, 2018; Jameson et al., 2021; Muirhead &Metros, 2016). The chair exhibits advising scaffolding during the dissertation process as they guide students through this final stage of fulfilling graduation requirements and also empowering student autonomy to complete the process (Hart-Baldridge, 2020). Jameson and Torres (2019) completed a qualitative case study by distributing 40 surveys between two different online universities in an effort to show the relationship between the mentor (chair)-student relationship and how it influences student motivation toward completion. To their findings, 85% of the students rated their chair relationship as "very important" in the beginning stages of their program, and 75% rated the relationship as "very important" in the final stages. For those students who felt supported by their

committee chair, one reported they needed this support during the dissertation because they were juggling many responsibilities, and another reported the chair enhanced their dissertation process and answered questions along the way. Because virtual mentoring may require different training and skill sets, Jameson and Torres (2019) suggest continuous professional development that emphasizes maintaining students' self-confidence and efficacy.

TABLE 2.1

Doctoral Student Attrition Review

Decade	Author and Year of Publication	Number
Prior to 1999	Tinto, 1975; Hirschberg & Itkin, 1978	2
2000 to 2009	Gardner, 2008; Golde, 2005; Walker et al., 2008	3
2010 to 2019	Allum, 2014; Allum et al., 2014; Anekstein & Vereen, 2018; Bagaka et al., 2015; Barnes & Randall, 2012; Brill et al., 2014; Castello et al., 2017; Cassuto, 2013; Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Chipere, 2015; Cockrell & Shelley, 2011; Curtin et al., 2016; Cuthbert & Molla, 2015; Deshpande, 2017; Dieker et al., 2014; Durette et al., 2016; Hlebec et al., 2011; Johnson, 2015; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kovalcikiene & Buksnyte-Marmiene, 2015b; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kumar et al., 2013; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Maddox, 2017; Martinez et al., 2013; Mason, 2012; MERS, 2013; National Science Foundation, 2015; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Nerad & Evans 2014; Orellana et al., 2016; Pyhältö et al., 2012 ; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017; Rourke & Kanuka, 2012; Sandoval, 2018; Shook & Keup, 2012; Sowell et al., 2015; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Stupinsky et al., 2018; Templeton, 2016; Terrell at al., 2012; Throne, 2012; Thunborg et al., 2013; Tinto, 2012; Ward-Smith et al., 2013; Wendler et al., 2012; Woolderink et al., 2015; Youngju, Jaeho, & Taehyun, 2013	56
2020 to present	Hill & Conceição, 2020; McCray & Joseph-Richard, 2021; Sverdlik & Hall, 2020	3

As suggested in Table 2.1, there has been a developing research trend in the last two decades focused on doctoral student attrition that suggests this continues to be a topic of concern and may be correlated with the growth in doctoral programs. The small number of research studies in the 2020s is likely due to the time gap between conducting research studies and

publication. This study furthers contemporary research by focusing on student perceptions of how doctoral faculty advisors support their motivation in online, PD programs.

Doctoral Student Needs

Pitchforth et al. (2012) argue that doctoral program completion is crucial as our society depends on candidates entering the workforce, but doctoral programs come with unique and remarkable demands on energy, emotion, time commitment, and financial obligations, which make program completion challenging (Hill & Conceição, 2020). Doctoral completers are able to apply their knowledge and innovations to solve real-world problems and remain competitive in the world job market (Bagaka et al., 2015; Durette et al., 2016; National Science Foundation, 2015; Nerad & Evans, 2014; Throne, 2012; Tinto, 2012; Walker et al., 2008; Wendler et al., 2012). Brill et al. (2014) and Wendler et al. (2012) describe the individual's return on completing a doctoral program to consist of career advancement and mobility and increased quality of life, gained leadership skills, and higher income.

Tinto (2012) notes that traditional college students only make up one-fourth of the college population. Online, non-traditional learners often seek flexible university programs while balancing more stressors and roles than the traditional student (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). Gardner (2013), Levitch and Shaw (2014), and Martinez et al. (2013) further the need for online learning environments to maintain faculty and leadership support to increase retention as those non-traditional doctoral students have limited time and access to supportive offerings. Kumar and Dawson (2012) and Roumell and Bolliger (2017) highlight the strategic attention and supervisory methods that faculty must make for doctoral students because distance learners may come from diverse backgrounds and previous educational experiences and may need extended

time to grasp new doctoral expectations. Orellana et al. (2016) also suggest faculty mentors need to be proactive to maintain meaningful relationships and assist online learners.

Kumar and Coe (2017) suggest that doctoral mentors seek specialized training to be able to facilitate online learners with their unique educational growth, autonomy, and dissertation needs. Adult learners may be older in age, need to attend part-time due to working full-time jobs, and experience personal and occupational transitions while completing their doctoral programs (Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Hill & Conceição, 2020). Richardson (2002) and Lee et al. (2013) refer to resiliency as an individual's ability to navigate obstacles which can either lead to retention or attrition. Sandoval (2018) conducted a case study of how online, non-traditional, doctoral graduates perceived resiliency to contribute to their degree completion, and his findings from an online questionnaire of 58 participants and eight semi-structured interviews suggested attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and believed capabilities were attributed to their success. Cassuto (2013) reports that graduate school faculty and staff should anticipate the unique needs of adult learners. Adult learners often anxiously come to the university with a fair amount of uncertainty and self-doubt as they navigate new programs and relationships (Cassuto, 2013). Mezirow (1991) suggests that adult learners would benefit from the opportunity for autonomy, discourse, and reflection.

Johnson (2015), Litalien and Guay (2015), and Shook and Keup (2012) report that positive student-faculty relationships have been linked to student persistence, and doctoral students perceived their relationship with faculty to be an important factor for their program completion in Hill and Conceição's (2020) study. Jones (2013) also mentions that students might feel unmotivated or unprepared without the presence of a supportive mentoring relationship. Tinto (2012) examined the large role faculty plays in doctoral retention and positive educational

outcomes. Golde (2005), Litalien and Guay (2015), and Maddox (2017) linked the lack of a supportive advisor relationship to increased attrition rates. The involvement and connectedness to faculty proved to keep students engaged in their studies and may be contributing factors toward success and completion rates (Joy et al., 2015; Mansson & Meyers, 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012).

Barnes and Randall (2012) highlight the low quality of mentoring and faculty support as one of the seven major concerns that factor into doctoral satisfaction, including an unclear vision of faculty's quality of life, imprecise expectations of future career outlooks, the confined definition of what professional work entails, insecure graduate funding options, struggling to place their program in a global context, and the mentor's influence on program direction. Gildersleeve et al. (2011), Mansson and Meyers (2012), and McAlpine (2012) state that faculty guidance and advising contribute to doctoral student socialization as they share university traditions, customs, and values of their departments, as well as connecting relationships within their department. Pyhältö et al. (2012) add how socialization in the culture of a doctoral program is an effectiveness indicator. Dieker et al. (2014) suggest that assigned faculty mentors that are experienced professors who can share knowledge and experiences would benefit adult learners.

Mason (2012) relays the importance of motivation and its connection to doctoral satisfaction, while Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2012) and Stupinsky et al. (2018) name motivation as a key to doctoral persistence and doctoral studies. Hidi and Ainley (2012), Templeton (2016), and Thunborg et al. (2013) specifically highlight intrinsic motivation as the key to doctoral persistence. Hirschberg and Itkin (1978) also connect motivation to doctoral completion and the time students spend in a program. Hill and Conceição (2020) suggest faculty can assist doctoral students with setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely

(SMART) goals, which have been proven to increase motivation. Kumar and Coe (2017), Mansson and Myers (2012), and Woolderink et al. (2015) highlight the role that faculty advisors play in increasing student motivation and their interest and dedication to their program. Litalien and Guay (2015) and Mason (2012) report that doctoral persistence can be predicted by a student's autonomy, controlled and clear regulations, and supportive faculty and advising relationships, which in turn have an indirect effect on motivation to remain in the program. Encouraging and meaningful faculty-student communications are foundational to productive relationships (Rogers, 2014; Stein et al., 2013). Meizrow (1991) argues that humans tend to experience an autonomy crisis while they are quite young and sometimes end up as adults who still struggle with autonomy.

Gaps in the Literature

Golde (2005) suggested more research was needed to improve doctoral studies. Although high levels of attrition may suggest underlying departmental issues, a fair amount of research does not explore environmental or university factors as the fundamental issue (Golde, 2005; Tinto, 2012). Cockrell and Shelley's (2011) research led to future recommendations of examining online education and the role it plays in student persistence, particularly relating to feelings of isolation. Future research should consider online education's relation to student satisfaction and retention (Cockrell & Shelley, 2011). Tinto (2012) argues that more research is needed to pinpoint how specific actions lead to an increase in academic and social engagement because the current literature is not well organized. As suggested in Table 2.2, there is limited literature focused on non-traditional, online doctoral students contributing to doctoral student attrition compared to literature focusing on doctoral student attrition in general in Table 2.1. This study furthers contemporary research by focusing on non-traditional, online doctoral students.

TABLE 2.2

Non-traditional, online doctoral students

Decade	Author and Year of Publication	Number
2010 to 2019	Barnes & Randall, 2012; Cassuto, 2013; Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Chipere, 2015; Cockrell & Shelley, 2011; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2013; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Orellana et al., 2016; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017; Rourke & Kanuka, 2012; Sandoval, 2018; Youngju, Jaeho, & Taehyun, 2013	18
2020 to present	Hill & Conceição, 2020	1

Barnes and Randall (2012) and Golde (2005) believe that graduate programs should carry out their own assessments to best understand the student experience and satisfaction levels to improve their programs. Levitch and Shaw (2014) additionally call for more research to diagnose and troubleshoot internal and external accountably. Chipere (2015) studied doctoral attrition rates at an online university and highlighted the minimal research on online doctoral programs in the literature. Doctoral programs largely consist of adult learners, and Cherrstrom et al. (2018) note the lack of research on this population. There is a need for additional research on underrepresented doctoral populations, as the literature produces a lack of consensus regarding their high attrition and lower completion rates (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Gardner, 2008; Ward-Smith et al., 2013). As suggested in Table 2.3, there is a lack of literature focused on students' perceptions of success and program completion indicators contributing to doctoral student attrition compared to literature focusing on doctoral student attrition in general in Table 2.1. This study furthers contemporary research by focusing on students' perceptions of how their faculty advisors support their motivation in online, PD programs.

TABLE 2.3

Student's Perception of Success and Program Completion Indicators

Decade	Author and Year of Publication	Number
2000 to 2009	Golde, 2005	1
2010 to 2019	Anekstein & Vereen, 2018; Bain et al. 2011; Brill et al., 2014; Johnson, 2015; Joy et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2013; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Maddox, 2017; McCray & Joseph-Richard, 2021; Pyhältö et al., 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012; Sandoval, 2018	12
2020 to present	Sverdlik & Hall, 2020	1

Levitch and Shaw (2014) and Tinto (1975) assert that more research on student-faculty relationships and how they are incorporated into the institution's programs is crucial. Hagenauer and Violet (2014) and Kuhn et al. (2015) suggest that the student-faculty relationship is key to overall student success. Mansson and Myers (2012) review the impact that online education has on human relationships, such as faculty advising. As suggested in Table 2.4, there is limited literature focused on faculty advisor-student relationships contributing to doctoral student attrition compared to literature focusing on doctoral student attrition in general in Table 2.1. This study furthers contemporary research by focusing on students' perceptions of how their faculty advisors support their motivation in online, PD programs.

TABLE 2.4

Faculty Advisor-Student Relationship

Decade	Author and Year of Publication	Number
2000 to 2009	Gardner, 2008; Golde, 2005; Walker et al., 2008	3
2010 to 2019	Barnes & Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Woolderink et al., 2015	19

Gilmore et al. (2016) interviewed collegiate faculty advisors to assess what they thought contributed to graduate student success and concluded that additional research would be useful to explore graduate student experiences from a student perspective that motivated their behaviors. Jameson and Torres (2019) focus on additional research to aid in developing students' internal locus of control, which factors into student motivation. Jameson et al. (2021) suggest that it would be important in the future to gather student perceptions of how mentoring faculty members support the student's program motivation through their relationship. Pitchforth et al. (2012) also recommended that acquiring student perceptions would dive deeper into understanding and humanizing the problem of doctoral student attrition, particularly in the dissertation phase. As suggested in Table 2.5, there is a lack of specific literature and empirical research focused on student motivation contributing to doctoral student attrition compared to literature focusing on doctoral student attrition in general in Table 2.1. This study furthers contemporary research by focusing on students' perceptions of how their faculty advisors support their motivation in online, PD programs.

TABLE 2.5

Student Motivation

Decade	Author and Year of Publication	Number
Prior to 1999	Hirschberg & Itkin, 1978	1
2010 to 2019	Bain et al. 2011; Brill et al., 2014; Hidi & Ainley, 2012; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Jameson & Torres, 2019; Jones, 2013; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Mason, 2012; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Stupinsky et al., 2018; Templeton, 2016; Thunborg et al., 2013	12
2020 to present	Jameson et al., 2021	1

Differentiating the PD from the PhD

Kot and Hendel (2012) note that the doctoral degree dates back to medieval Europe, with the first of record at the University of Paris in Theology, Law, and Medicine. The first PhD in

the U.S. originated at Yale University in 1861, and the first PD originated at Harvard University in 1921. Since the early 1990s, there has been a huge increase in the range and nature of PDs in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, although the growth in PD provision has been relatively slow in Europe and in America (NQAI, 2006).

The PD was created as a professional practice degree that offers an applied element (Costley & Leter, 2012; Kot & Hendel, 2012; Fulton et al., 2013). The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) (2021) recognizes 18 doctoral degrees in the U.S. The NCSES reported in their Survey of Earned Doctorates in 2020 that out of 55, 283 doctoral completions in the U.S., 98.3% of them earned a PhD, and the second highest reported degree was the professional education doctorate EdD at 0.9%. Both the PhD and the PD have unique and differentiating requirements and outcomes.

Program Requirements and Outcomes

Kot and Hendel (2012) state that the PhD often requires pre-service training and is designed for the professional researcher. PhD coursework typically includes statistics and theory in addition to methodology and data analysis (Fell et al., 2011; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). Though the PhD is intended for scholars, Kot and Hendel (2012) suggest that not all program graduates end up working in academia. For those who do end up in academia, many have the opportunity to become post-graduate researchers at institutions (Armsby et al., 2018).

The research from a PhD is often generalizable to larger populations due to the fact that the focus of the PhD is to identify a gap in the literature and publish research (Costley, 2013; Dreher & Glasglow, 2011; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). Blackman (2016) and Kot and Hendel (2012) suggest that the PhD candidate often works independently with little supervision and increased autonomy. PhD programs are centered on an in-depth dissertation, include

comprehensive exams, and require a lengthier completion time than PDs (Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). PhD candidates thrive on committee feedback, and Schildkraut and Stafford (2015) maintain this relationship to be more fruitful with in-person coursework and collaboration.

The first-generation PD differed only from the PhD in terms of structure (Wildy et al., 2015). The newest 3rd generation PD includes the university's general framework, which consists of a mix of required academic coursework and opportunities to apply learning to the workplace. Costley and Lester (2012) and Fulton et al. (2013) state that the difference between the 3rd generation model of the PD and the PhD is the demonstration of knowledge to provide practical implications in the field. Costley (2013), Dreher and Glasglow (2011), and Fulton et al. (2012) propose that the PD's main focus is to create real-world knowledge by utilizing practice-based evidence. Costley (2013) and Fulton et al. (2012) add that PD candidates often develop their methodology and research-based on a conceptual framework. Kot and Hendel (2012) and Wildy et al. (2015) suggest that professionals in the field pursue the PD to raise their workplace qualifications or status at the university level but do not often view it as a requirement to obtain a job. The purpose of the PD is to examine a problem in the field, conduct research, and provide results that address a complex problem of practice (POP) and produce meaningful change (Armsby et al., 2018; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015; Storey et al., 2015). Armsby et al. (2018) suggest this change often has a social benefit or focuses on social justice. PD coursework may require methodology, statistics, theory, data analysis, and also systematic and collaborative coursework that allow for practical skills to advance career skillsets (Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015; Zeegers & Barron, 2012). PD candidates bring their professional experience and often collaborate in cohorts or teams at the workplace (Armsby et al., 2018; Schildkraut & Stafford,

2015). Depending on the institution, PD programs offer assessments such as small research projects, publications, comprehensive portfolios, and Dissertations in Practice (DiP) (CPED, 2013; Kot & Hendel, 2012; Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015; Storey et al., 2015). The PD candidate also works with a committee but often through online collaborations (Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). Schildkraut and Stafford (2015) state that PDs have a set structure that usually includes a fixed time of completion paired with flexibility and choice in the curriculum (Hartocollis et al., 2014). Faculty in PD programs require doctorate achievements similarly to PhD faculty but also require practical field experience to be effective (Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015).

The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) was created in 2007 and included an online survey administered to 25 institutions to examine and improve the EdD and clearly distinguish the EdD (professional practice doctorate) from the PhD (Perry & Imig, 2008). CPED consortium members focused on the nature of the PD program outcomes, namely the dissertation or the DiP. Storey et al. (2015) analyzed the DiPs from 25 early CPED members. Though the findings showed little progress had been made in differentiating the DiP in relation to research methodology and design, there was evidence that the DiP is grounded on addressing a complex PoP from the field and that DiPs are shared with a professional community and therefore have a professional impact.

Program Challenges and Evolving Status Implications

The PhD has undergone little to no change since its conception (Wildy et al., 2015). Wildy et al. (2015) state that the PhD is increasingly not meeting the needs of modern workplaces requiring high-level, field-specific skills. Currently, some PhD programs are working to incorporate practicing components into their structure (Schildkraut & Stafford, 2015). Blackman (2016) suggests that perhaps doctorates should have practice-based requirements,

much like undergraduate programs have practice-based and teaching components. Kot and Hendel (2012) add that some PhD graduates struggle to find work upon degree completion due to the narrowness of study. The PhD continues to be criticized for its lack of diversity and collaboration, resulting in biased and perhaps limited findings (Blackman, 2016; Kot & Hendel, 2012). Blackman (2016) proposes that historically, the economy has valued knowledge. Today, the economy calls for problem-solving skills to create our intended futures.

Wildy et al. (2015) state that one of the more common status challenges to the PD is questions relating to program rigor. Potential candidates are worried about finding a job after graduation due to the varying status indicators between the two degrees (Armsby et al., 2018; Wildy et al., 2015). Wildy et al. (2015) believe that conservative academia may be having a generational shift that allows for open-minded views of the PD status. Armsby et al. (2018) and Fulton et al. (2012) argue that many try to pinpoint the drastic differences between the PhD and PD, but there is rigor and research required in both. Some argue the existence of the PD challenges the integrity of the PhD and doctoral study (Kot & Hendel, 2012).

The PD is built for working professionals who do not have the time to pursue traditional PhD programs but do have rich professional experience to advance their workplace or field in knowledge creation (Wildy et al., 2015). Blackman (2016) and Wildy et al. (2015) suggest that society as a whole is starting to place new values on professional knowledge and has too often undervalued professional excellence.

Schildkraut and Stafford (2015) highlight the ongoing debate that faculty should hold similar credentials for both PD and PhD programs. Armsby et al. (2018) and Blackman (2016) add that universities are finding their faculty unprepared to teach PD students without some experience in their professional fields when providing guidance for and evaluating DiPs. Some

question if the PD should be counted of equal merit as the definition of the PD continues to evolve and program requirements often vary by institution and country (Kot & Hendel, 2012).

Sands et al. (2013) claim that due to the flexibility of the DiP, issues of rigor across institutions and an increased understanding of the definition of PoP are needed. Fulton et al. (2012) caution that the PD candidate's seasoned experience and professional identity may place a barrier to new knowledge and problem-solving skill obtainment. Drake and Heath (2015) add that some institutions struggle to provide practice-based programming to offer PDs. Fulton et al. (2012) and Kot and Hendel (2012) argue that the PD is underexamined in the literature, and Provident et al. (2015) believe increased research would minimize the doubts about the value and quality of PDs. Storey et al. (2015) conclude that continuous PD research and analysis of the DiP indicates there are still improvements and consistency standards to identify as institutions continue to clarify PD design.

Online Learning

Gagnon (2012) and Palvia et al. (2018) suggest that online learning or E-education has forever changed the educational landscape with pros and cons for both institutions and students alike as the rise in non-traditional student enrollment thrives on flexibility. After the creation of the internet in 1990, online learning quickly included the creation of learning management systems (LMS) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS), which currently outpace traditional student enrollment (Dziban et al., 2016). In 1989, the University of Phoenix first offered online offerings with its Compu Serve program, and the recognition of online coursework became increasingly popular as a real option for students after New York University (NYU) marketed its online options in 1998 (Palvia et al., 2018).

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 a pandemic on March 11th, 2020, and higher education transformed traditional settings and coursework to remote learning for longer than 15 months, which had a profound impact on both adult education and online learning (Boeren & Roumell; Brammer & Clark, 2020; Gagnon, 2021; Kapplinger & Lichte, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). Palvia et al. (2018) state that despite the decline or rise of the economy or overall college enrollment numbers, U.S. online student enrollment continues to grow.

Growing Educational Trends

Higher education is undergoing significant change due to the increase in students who are attending online courses, changes in student and institutional funding sources, greater student choice of higher education institutions, the globalization of education, and institutional marketing demands (Black, 2015). The growing trend for online programs is likely to continue, according to a 2013 survey which indicated that 69.1% of chief academic officers considered online offerings to be crucial to long-term institutional plans (Allen & Seaman, 2013).

Hildreth (2017) notes a continuous decline in overall U.S. student enrollment from 20.6 million in 2011 to 19 million in 2016, and researchers predict an increased decline in the late 2020s (Hoover, 2017). Palvia et al. (2018) believe the increasing tuition rates, the debate of educational value, the unfavorable long-term educational debts, and the cost of commuting to school are among several factors contributing to the decline in enrollment. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) states that 32% of post-secondary students took online courses in the fall of 2016. Palvia et al. (2018) add that the largest body of students taking online courses attended public and non-profit institutions. Seaman et al. (2018) state that the growing trend of online education has resulted in a decline in the number of students taking on-campus courses.

Miller et al. (2019) argue that non-classroom support services are crucial for online student success. In a 2017 student satisfaction survey administered to 128, 988 students from 164 different institutions, online learners reported academic services and student support services in their top five areas of satisfactory experience (Levitz, 2017). While traditional course offerings are slowly being replaced by online options, Protopsaltis and Baum (2019) and Levitz (2017) argue that high-quality instruction and limited faculty interaction surface as challenges for online institutions. Engaging with faculty and the quality of instruction were rated two of the highest concerns for online students (Levitz, 2017).

Performance indicators such as completion time, number of graduates, and enrollment numbers can lead to unqualified graduation rates and grade inflation (McKeown-Moak, 2013). McKeown-Moak (2013) caution that performance measurements are state-specific and are tied to institutional funding. Palvia et al. (2018) and Protopsaltis and Baum (2019) warn that some still hold a negative bias toward online schooling, including viewpoints from academia and employers.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the digital divide that supports how unreliable technology and inadequate technical skills present a challenge (Janak, 2020; Kapplinger & Lichte, 2020; Pelletier et al., 2021). Though the online and distance learning environment was believed to increase access and provide more resources to students, inequalities of behavior and interactions add to the lofty goals of democratizing equitable online education (Chawinga & Zozie, 2016; Davis, 2018; Gnanadass & Sanders, 2018; Lee, 2017; OECD, 2020; Oztak, 2019). Research shows that underrepresented students, for example, are showing gaps in success in online institutions (Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019).

A new appreciation for online education coupled with new expectations has grown from faculty who have been able to experiment and learn new digital skills (Fox et al., 2021). Aslanian et al. (2021) found that even more students are considering online options after their virtual experiences. Video conferencing and other digital learning technologies have increased in use, with possibilities of newer technology like artificial intelligence and virtual reality awaiting emergence (Garrett et al., 2021). Student demand for micro-credentials, non-degree credentials, and skill training to advance their careers has driven more flexible online options (Pelletier et al., 2021; Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021). Increased flexibility in course content and offerings is paramount to preserve the continuity of teaching and learning as students seek virtual options (Fox et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; Rapanta et al., 2020).

Doctoral Online Students

Online doctoral students may struggle with feelings of isolation (Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Maddox, 2017; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Sverdlik & Hall, 2020) and often are inadequately academically and socially integrated into the institution, which can result in increased attrition rates. Online, non-traditional doctoral students come to their programs needing to balance many responsibilities (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). For many, part-time coursework is the only option available for their work, school, family, and personal balance (Martinez et al., 2013). Offerman (2011) asserts that the average age of a non-traditional doctoral student is 33.3 years old. Rourke and Kanuka (2012) suggest that special strategies must be used to facilitate student interactions and engagement for distance learners. The faculty-advisor-student relationship has the potential to meet the needs of online doctoral students by facilitating academic and social integration for the institution and mitigating contributing factors for doctoral attrition (Barnes &

Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Maddox, 2017; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015).

Doctoral Advising

Antoney (2020) states that the first known recognition of academic advising dates back to 1636 at Harvard University. During this initial creation of academic advising, advisors were able to freely advise gentlemen to be distinguished and productive citizens of the future. Between the period of 1890-1920, the pairing of faculty and advising became evident as servicing and mentoring the whole student became a priority and as student autonomy increased (Gillispie, 2003). During the time period of 1906-1908, advising began to incorporate career advising in order to produce productive workforce members (Antoney, 2020). The post-world war era of 1939-1945 changed the focus of education and advising to include improving social justice reform and placed a new need on equal access to education and university accountability, which introduced professionally trained advisors. In 1979, the National Academic Advising Association (NAAA) was created to allow advisors to share current best practices and partake in professional development. In addition, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) was created to help guide the academic advising profession with clear standards, frameworks, and guides (Cook, 2009). Offered institutional advising, mentoring, or coaching helps build student leadership skills and contributes to their social engagement (Hastings & Kane, 2018).

Academic Advisors

Grites (2013) defines the academic advisor as one who takes a holistic view of the student and encourages and scaffolds the obtainment of academic, career, and personal goals. Drake (2013) adds that academic advisors put student learning at the core of their practice. Antoney (2020) highlights the main primary roles of the academic advisor is to assist students with their selection of courses, provide program pathways and guidance, navigate institutional resources and policies, implement career planning services, and a build connection to the institution. NACADA (2006) includes that academic advising centers on higher education's mission of teaching and learning.

Through a series of intentional student interactions, the academic advisor helps students synthesize their educational experiences to build their current abilities and meet their future aspiration (NACADA, 2006). Steele and White (2019) compare academic advisors to first responders serving on the front lines with students, and Jones et al. (2021) add that academic advisors provide unique feedback about what supports students, barriers to academics, and a more in-depth understanding of why students leave the institution.

Faculty Advisors

Up until the 1950s, faulty advisors were responsible for solely providing all academic advising services to students (Cook, 2009). NACADA reported in their 2011 national survey that 18.4% of U.S. institutions still used faculty advisors to provide academic advising to students, while 59.7% used a combination of both faculty advisors and academic advisors to provide advising services to students (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013). Hart-Baldridge (2020) suggest that faculty advisors most commonly define their role to explain how to navigate graduate school,

provide an opportunity for career exploration, empower students to build autonomy, and guide students to fulfill graduation requirements.

Hart-Baldridge (2020) interviewed 11 faculty advisors at a Midwestern public institution. They found that all too often, faculty advisors had challenges navigating institutional software, observed workload inequalities throughout the institution, and felt like advising was an isolated activity under an umbrella of unclear expectations. A recommendation was made that the study should be replicated at other higher education institutions.

Adjunct Faculty Advisors

Caruth and Caruth (2013) pinpoint the major role adjunct faculty play as doctoral advisors by reporting that institutions are hiring adjunct faculty at a ratio of three to one over full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty are part-time, contingent employees who often do not receive institutional benefits, retirement packages, and are paid less than full-time faculty (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). Additionally, adjunct faculty working at multiple institutions tend to show less commitment and connection to each institution (Hollman, 2013).

Hoyt (2012) highlights how the institutional oversight of adjunct faculty management and the decreased loyalty levels of adjunct faculty produce reduced adjunct engagement and efforts leading to lower student graduation rates. Institutions rely heavily on adjunct faculty, but their commitment levels to any one organization or institution tend to be lower than full-time faculty (Delotell, 2014). Andressen et al. (2012), Hollman (2013), and Hoyt (2012) link the program chair's connection to adjunct faculty as the main driver for commitment levels. With the growing numbers of adjunct faculty in academia, Delotell (2014) urges researchers to examine the commitment levels of part-time employees in virtual environments.

Mentoring

Floyd et al. (2017) refer to mentoring as being a relationship between two people, where one senior member facilitates a junior member through professional development, psychosocial growth, and academic and research skillset expansion. Campbell et al. (2012) add that mentoring usually requires long-term dedication, frequent formal and informal interactions, a focus on empowering the mentee, and investment from both participants. Crisp (2010) ties mentoring to positive persistence, academic success, and both academic and social integration outcomes in a college setting. Faculty mentors can assist with writing, research, overall educational development, time management, emotional support, and professional development, which aims to increase doctoral retention and also feelings of self-efficacy and academic inspiration (Anekstein & Vereen, 2018; Curtin et al., 2016; Hill & Conceição, 2020; Kumar et al., 2013; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Walker et al., 2008). The mentor benefits from a mentoring relationship in the areas of leadership, confidence, pride, overall satisfaction, and job performance (Floyd et al., 2017).

Peer Mentors

Gardner (2008) refers to a peer mentor as a person who is an experienced student paired with a novice student to provide academic and social support and advice for college navigation. Hlebec et al. (2011) add that having a doctoral student network of peers significantly predicts student success. Peer support and mentorship are imperative to doctoral student persistence and completion and often help reduce social isolation and anxieties about skillset levels upon program entry (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Marshall et al., 2017). Dieker et al. (2014) suggest that because doctoral students balance many responsibilities outside of school, they may not develop social support naturally. Dieker et al. (2014) recommend faculty assign initial peer mentors in

addition to providing cohort possibilities or peer support groups. Cherrstrom et al. (2018) highlight the benefits of peer relationships transferring knowledge to assist with program requirements, comprehensive exams, or research and dissertation journeys.

Coaching

Coaching refers to a personalized one-on-one session with a student that may be in a more formalized setting and on a short-term basis (Floyd et al., 2017). Floyd et al. (2017) state that the goal of coaching is permanent behavior modification that results in increased self-efficacy, positive psychological growth, and goal-setting skills. Korotov (2016) and Passmore (2015) add that knowledge transfer and increased motivation are also direct benefits for the coachee. Conceição and Swaminathan (2011) suggest that faculty take on varying roles depending on the student's progress in their journey: one, as an advisor in the beginning of their process, a mentor while the student is in the middle of their program, and one of a coach when the student is nearing the end of their dissertation and needs direct and immediate guidance to complete.

Approaches to Academic Advising

Approaches to academic advising include specific components, unique stakeholders, and distinctive organizational processes (He & Huston, 2016). Stakeholders may refer to those invested in the approach, such as students, institution, advisors, etc. The content of the approach might suggest cognitive, affective, meta-cognitive, or behavioral development theories. The process of an approach details and defines the interactions between the advisor and student. He and Huston (2016) identify five advising approaches: prescriptive, developmental, intrusive, advising as teaching, and appreciative advising. Depending on one's role at the institution,

Alvarado and Olson (2020) and Zarges et al. (2018) suggest advisors may tailor individualized approaches for doctoral students.

Prescriptive Advising

He and Hutson (2016) state that prescriptive advising is the most common advising approach as it is mainly information-based. Prescriptive advising sets the advisor as the expert who relays program requirements, course sequencing plans, and institutional policy and procedures to the student (He & Hutson, 2016; Howard, 2017). Prescriptive advising is a one-way model where students generally come to an advisor for specific information. Students are not afforded autonomy or decision-making during prescriptive advising, thus making this approach quick and efficient but leaving the student as a passive participant (He & Hutson, 2016; Howard, 2017). Prescriptive advising approaches have been easily moved online as the presence of technology has grown in educational settings (He & Hutson, 2016).

Developmental Advising

Howard (2017) advocates a developmental advising model guided by Student Development Theory. Crookston (1972) based the Student Development Theory on the premise that a student should acquire self-fulfilling skills from higher education and be able to make life and career choices. Higher education should include teaching and learning experiences that produce individual and group growth that can be measured.

He and Hutson (2016) describe developmental advising as a holistic approach that includes both cognitive and non-cognitive development. The developmental advisor focuses on the student's growth and development and maintains a close relationship with their caseloads. Consensual educational, personal, and career-oriented goals guide developmental advising. As a consequence, developmental advising can be viewed as a shared activity between the student and

advisor and stretches student growth beyond cognitive development, making it a unique approach (Grites, 2013; He & Hutson, 2016). Harris (2018) notes that developmental advising may be appropriate for students who feel isolated and need to build a connection to the institution.

Intrusive Advising

He and Hutson (2016) describe intrusive advising, often referred to as proactive advising, as intervention based, beginning with the academic advisor reaching out to targeted populations and when specific academic challenges arise that put the student at risk. The intrusive advisor identifies student problems and initiates the support needed (He & Hutson, 2016; Howard, 2017; Mu & Fusnacht, 2019).

Varney (2013) states that intrusive advisors must start their processes early, develop student rapport, leverage the relationship they have with the student to help them overcome obstacles, and help the student build a connection to the institution. Antoney (2020) highlights the role of the intrusive advisor in encouraging student growth beyond the classroom. Antoney (2020), He and Hutson (2016), Howard (2017), and Varney (2012) argue that intrusive advisors communicate with the student frequently and even set up a communication plan to anticipate possible setbacks and offer pertinent support.

Advising as Teaching

Advising as teaching is an advising approach that is teaching and learning-centered and focused on student learning outcomes (He & Hutson, 2016). Teaching advisors provide strategic input, model and guide practice, and check for understanding during sessions (Drake, 2013; Reynolds, 2013). Drake (2013) notes the importance of teaching advisors in providing systematic feedback and guiding sessions to affective closings.

The teaching advisor strives to reinforce takeaways and build student autonomy (Drake, 2013). He and Hutson (2016) add that the advising as teaching approach also focuses on setting high expectations and maintaining student motivation through active involvement. This approach is particularly common at institutions where faculty advisors provide both teaching and academic advising services for students (He & Hutson, 2016).

Appreciative Advising

He and Hutson (2016) suggest that appreciative advising is a collaboration between positive psychology and appreciative strengths-based inquiry to achieve student success and navigate challenges. NACADA supports the newly created appreciative advising approach (Antoney, 2020). Appreciative advising joins cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective development and centers them with an appreciative mindset (Bloom et al., 2013). He and Hutson (2016) and Schreiner (2013) state appreciative advisors identify student strengths early, provide affirmation of these strengths through interaction, help students envision their future, and make an achievement plan to get there.

Howard (2017) details the six phases of appreciative advising, including disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, and do not settle. During the disarm phase, the academic advisor strives to make a first impression that is positive and begins to remove barriers of hesitation. In the discovery phase, the academic advisor builds rapport with the student and makes inquiries that lead to students uncovering their skillsets and strengths. The dream phase is focused on the academic advisor helping the student visualize their future hopes and dreams. In the design phase, Howard (2017) states that the academic advisor and student co-create a plan to achieve their dreams and future goals. Antoney (2020) indicates that the delivery phase focuses on the implementation of the co-created plan and involves the academic advisor assisting

students to break down barriers. The academic advisor challenges students to grow to their full potential during the do not settle phase (Howard, 2017).

Table 2.6 compares the content, process, and stakeholders of the five academic advising approaches. Based on the literature review and this study's data, this researcher recommends the DFAs utilize the advising as teaching approach to support motivation by fostering academic integration, social integration, autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Tinto, 1975, 2012).

TABLE 2.6

Approaches to Academic Advising

Advising Approach	Content	Process	Stakeholders
Prescriptive Advising	-Advisor as expert who relays information, student is passive, quick process	Lead by advisor One-way	Students Advisors Institution
Developmental Advising	-Student Development Theory (Crookston, 1972), holistic, advisor builds close relationship with caseload	Lead by both Shared activity	Students Advisors Institution
Intrusive Advising	-Proactive and targeted outreach, build trust and connection, encourages growth	Lead by advisor Shared activity	Students Advisors Institution
Advising as Teaching	-Teaching and learning-centered, build student autonomy, faculty provide both teaching and academic guidance	Lead by advisor Shared activity	Students Advisors Institution
Appreciative Advising	-Positive psychology, appreciative strengths-based inquiry, six phases: disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, and do not settle	Lead by advisor Shared activity	Students Advisors Institution

Academic Advising Impact on Student Success

Alvarado and Olson (2020) conducted an extensive literature review focused on the outputs of academic advising over the last two decades. They found that 49.1% of the articles they researched focused on academic advising, 20% focused on faculty advising, and 30.9%

focused on both. Seven of the most common advising outputs found in the 85 journal articles were: retention, GPA, timely completion rates, career decision making, career self-efficacy, engaging in significant educational experiences, and academic self-efficacy. Though research suggests that academic advising proves crucial to student success, limited institutional resources, and funds are awarded to advising services, thus producing a limitation of scholarship on the topic (Thompson, 2016).

Retention

Danver (2016), Donaldson et al. (2016), Hatch and Garcia (2017), Khalil and Williamson (2014), McKenzie et al. (2017), Mu and Fosnacht (2019), Rodgers et al. (2014), and Schwebel et al. (2012) highlight the correlation between quality academic advising and persistence and retention within the student's chosen program or institution. Bland et al. (2012) further detail that frequent and quality interactions with academic advisors increase student retention. Drake (2013) ties the positive effects of academic advisor-student experiences to increased retention due to academic integration and a positive academic career. Tinto (1975, 2012) has contributed a wide array of research focusing on doctoral attrition, and his Student Integration Theory focusing on academic and social integration, has been widely cited in the literature.

Johnson (2015) conducted a mixed-methods research study to investigate doctoral student perceptions of program completion across multiple fields of study at one particular institution. Student Integration Theory (Tinto, 1975) and Theory of Attribution (Heider, 1958) were utilized. as the conceptual framework, and the Doctoral Completion and Persistence Scale (DCPS) was the applied measurement instrument. The study's findings suggest that positive faculty-student relationships directly contributed to the persistence of the student in the program.

Pitchforth et al. (2012) researched factors that contributed to the timely completion of different discipline-related and doctoral programs using the prior research of Isaac et al. (1992). Muszynski and Akamatsu (1991), Seagram et al. (1998), and de Valero (2001) found that student's personal aspects, the overall research environment of the institution, the student's chosen research project, and the student's incoming skills have a direct influence on completion rates.

In a meta-analysis of the literature, Jones (2013) notes that about 15% of all journal articles from the years 1971-2012 focused on identifying doctoral student issues. The student-advisor relationship and pairing process was highlighted. Joy et al. (2015) state that students often consider an advisor's area of interest, personality, funding opportunities, previous experience with students, and career prospect opportunity when selecting an advisor. The student's advisor selection process is both pragmatic and developmental for their future academic career. Pairings are conditional on advisor availability, the departmental paring process, and the reward structure. Faculty search for candidates that might contribute to their own research or have exemplary credentials and qualifications.

Walker et al. (2008) provide research from the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), which includes 84 PhD granting institutions covering six different departments. One suggestion made for program effectiveness is to foster an intellectual community and exchange which can be initiated by a shared vision that sets faculty advising/mentoring timelines, protocols, and data collection. The faculty advisor both represents the departmental culture and connects the student with it. Faculty also have the ability to develop students intellectually and guide them to be experts in their subject matter or field.

Mansson and Myers (2012) state that relational maintenance between the faculty advisor and student leads to a positive relationship which in turn relates positively to doctoral retention and completion rates. Gardner (2008) and Gilmore et al. (2016) suggest that faculty tend to link attrition rates to individual student circumstances rather than the faculty or program. Gilmore et al. (2016) add that faculty expect students to come into the program intrinsically motivated to continue.

Harding-Dekam et al. (2012) affirm that doctoral faculty advisors are often not provided adequate training or mentoring before working with students. Roumell and Bolliger (2017) add that some faculty report being frustrated with not receiving proper training on how to be effective advisors and also found their student caseloads in competition with other managerial tasks and teaching appointments. While research often indicates lower attrition rates associated with strong DFA matches, Roumell and Bolliger (2017) associate the mismatching of DFA-student relationships or negative experiences between the DFA and students contributing to attrition.

Academic Success

Academic advising resources, guidance, and modeling are tied to an increase in student self-confidence in their decision-making ability in their academic careers (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2013; Leach & Patall, 2016). Lowenstein (2013) furthers the connection of academic advising to career and program exploration leading to positive academic outcomes. In addition to academic advisors, faculty advisors are tied to student success because they help make connections between the student and the institution and help the student visualize their academics as leading to their future goals (Drake, 2013). Drake states that positive academic advising interactions increase the probability of academic success. McKenzie et al. (2017),

Rodgers et al. (2014), and Schwebel et al. (2012) correlate academic advising outputs to higher student GPAs.

Miller et al. (2019) conducted a research study regarding residential students who were placed on academic probation that occurred in the spring of 2014 at private, non-profit Midwest intuition. Students were asked to meet with their academic advisor three times during the semester, and the advisor applied appreciative advising methods in their interactions (Miller et al., 2019). Miller et al. (2019) report that students who did meet with their academic advisors three times during the semester were 59.2% more likely to be removed from probation than those students who attended less than three meetings. After this new initiative was implemented in a year-over-year analysis from 2014-2016, an increase of 27.2% more students were removed from probation, 16.5% fewer students were suspended, and 9.3% fewer students withdrew from the institution. The initiative was further modified and applied to online students. Academic advisors set up a communication plan with their online students that required three proactive outreaches in the form of phone calls, including one initial probation discussion, a call to check progress during the term, and a mid-term progress check. Online students who responded to at least one of the three phone calls were placed on continued probation versus suspension or withdrawal at a rate of 30.7% compared to those who did not respond to any of the three communications at a rate of 19.7%.

Student Satisfaction

Alvarado and Olson (2020) and Zarges (2018) note the prevalence in the literature of the link between academic advising and student satisfaction and recommend researchers investigate additional advising outputs. Student interactions with faculty and academic advisors have been

linked to satisfaction with the student's overall college experience, social satisfaction, and overall satisfaction (Anderson et al., 2014; Teasley & Buchanan, 2013; Williamson et al., 2014).

O'Keefe (2013) states that students benefit from faculty-advisor interaction socially because they feel a sense of belonging and connection to the institution. Issues surface when faculty advisors are not trained in academic advising, they are given unclear expectations regarding their roles, and they are not properly recognized for all of the services they provide (Drake, 2013). White (2015) explains that faculty advisors are not usually evaluated on their service as academic advisors but more on their research and teaching.

Motivation

Motivation is integral to doctoral attrition and completion rates. Jameson and Torres (2019) designed a qualitative case study at two different institutions to examine the relationship between the mentor and student and how it contributed to online doctoral students' motivation to persist and complete their programs. The study utilized Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan (1985, 2012a, 2012b) as a conceptual framework and concluded that feelings of connection or relatedness, as well as their internal locus of control, were pertinent to the student's motivation to persist. Hunter and Devine (2016) also correlate that when students feel cared about, their motivation increases.

Jameson et al. (2021) utilized Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory as their theoretical framework when researching faculty members' perceptions and suggestions on how they might increase student motivation. They found that faculty who excel at increasing student motivation communicate frequently with the student, offer support and encouragement throughout the student's entire program, and help the student set up attainable goals.

Bain et al. (2011) focused their research on 70 graduate students and identified contributing factors to their success. Their study found a community of learners, financial aid opportunities, and motivational relationships with faculty as being crucial to their academic journey. In a quantitative study with 522 participants, Litalien and Guay (2015) applied Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory to link the motivational processes that are indirectly affected by support systems, such as advising and faculty and how these pair with autonomy and regulatory structures to achieve doctoral persistence. Litalien and Guay (2015) reported three major findings in their studies: persistence is directly affected by a student's self-efficacy, and the degree of advisor support and faculty interactions are directly related to student completion rates.

Institutional Advising Models and Advising Systems

Powers et al. (2014) state that the most common assessment regarding academic advising measures the student's satisfaction with their advising experience. Antoney (2020) suggests that an institution selects an advising model or system that champions its vision and mission. Out of the 85 journal articles that Alvarado and Olson (2020) examined, 45.9% did not specify what type of advising model or system was used, while 11.7% reported they utilize a centralized or split advising model, and only 8.2% reported on graduate or doctoral students. Kot (2014) and O'Banion (2016) highlight that the right combination of advising model selection, dedication, and competence produces higher student success and retention rates. Four of the most common types of advising models are centralized structures, decentralized structures, shared models, and split models.

Centralized Structures

Antoney (2020), Danver (2016), and He and Hutson (2016) refer to a centralized advising structure as one that locates professional advisors within a centralized office at the institution; and is led by a director or assigned staff member. Antoney (2020) suggests an important benefit of a centralized advising structure is that the advisors are professionally trained and exhibit a consistent and high-quality experience with students. Carlstrom and Miller (2013) state that the centralized model provides easy advising access to students and is the second most common model adopted by community colleges. One drawback to this structure is that faculty relationships are not built into this model (Antoney, 2020; Danver, 2016).

Decentralized Structures

A decentralized advising structure suggests that students acquire a faculty advisor by program/major assignment without the presence of a professional academic advisor, or the institution may have advising on campus with both faculty advisors and academic advisors to suit different academic programs in their respective departments (Antoney, 2020; Danver, 2016; He & Hutson, 2016). Decentralized structures do not include professionally trained academic advisors, and the quality of advising may suffer (Antoney, 2020). Antoney (2020) suggests that while coordination and consistency among the decentralized structure may prove to be an issue, the cost associated with providing this type of advising structure is lower. Harris (2015) warns that students appreciate student-centered advising efforts.

Shared Model

A shared advising model is one of the most commonly adopted models by institutions (He & Hutson, 2016). With a shared model, students have both faculty advisor guidance, as well as a professional academic advisor. Danver (2016) and Howard (2017) refer to the shared model

as the supplementary model that incorporates the designation of both faculty and academic advisors to a student. Even though the shared model sets up shared responsibilities between the two appointed advisors, the advisors may work from different locations or without shared communications limiting potential collaborations (Klempin et al., 2019). Close collaboration between the faculty and staff could result in providing timely, specialized, and individually aligned services (Klempin et al., 2019).

Split Model

Howard (2017) refers to the split advising model as one that incorporates a central advising center for undecided populations of students. Students are then funneled to specific academic departments or programs once they decide on a program or major. Undecided populations and underrepresented populations might benefit from this model as professionally trained advisors can provide enriching onboarding experiences to successfully start their academic careers and then switch to specialized advisors in their field (Klemplin et al., 2019).

Kapinos (2021) studied 13 advising coordinators from NE U.S. institutions and verified that 77% of their home institutions used a split model of advising. The split advising model creates logistic and administrative institutional challenges. Because of the advisors limited roles and limited time with students, institutions struggle to keep consistent communications and practices.

Factors in Deciding an Institutional Advising Model

Danver (2016) and Jones et al. (2021) recommend considering the type of institution and its mission when choosing an advising model, in addition to being cognizant of how specific advising models support student success, persistence, and completion. The organizational structure of the institution, including staffing capabilities and funding, was also pertinent

(Danver, 2016; Jones et al., 2021). Bringing together data, stakeholder feedback, institutional priorities, and advising best practices is crucial when finalizing an advising model selection.

Type of Institution and Funding

The type of institution may include: public or private, non-profit or for-profit, and community college or four-year institution. Public institutions receive their funding from the state and federal governments (Deming et al., 2013). With a generally larger campus facilities and a variety of programs and colleges within the public university, enrollment follows suit. If advising caseloads are high or students are not assigned to caseloads, there may be high wait times or inconsistent communication or information (Klempin et al., 2019). A centralized advising model with the right funding is built to handle the capacity of a public school while providing proximal access (Carlstrom and Miller., 2013). Funding for private universities comes from tuition, investments, and donations (Deming et al., 2013). Private universities typically come with smaller class sizes with higher tuition rates and prestige and can utilize a shared advising model as faculty and staff are able to handle the capacity of these specialized populations (Danver, 2016).

A public or private university may be non-profit, which means the total of all monies brought into the university is reinvested into making improvements to offered student support services and programming in an effort to increase student success (Deming et al., 2013). Klempin et al. (2019) suggest that increased funds allow for a lower advisor-to-student ratio with the addition of staff. A for-profit university indicates that the university is privately run and has higher tuition rates, and all monies brought in are typically invested in marketing and enrollment and less into advising support services, making advisor capacity and time less available (Deming et al., 2013; Klempin et al., 2019).

Student Population

Jones et al. (2021) state that the institution's mission is centered on addressing gaps in educational opportunity and the needs of the population it serves, as well as being focused on improving the community. Thus, when selecting an advising model, an institution should consider the city or state's population, including age, race, economic status, language, highest levels of educational obtainment, etc. (Jones et al., 2021). The institution's population then informs the student support services needed on campus and the involvement level and direction of the appropriate advising model (Jones et al., 2021).

Alvarado and Olson (2020) recommend researchers explore measuring advising outputs with varied populations, and Snyder et al. (2019) add that particularly private schools need investigation. Because student satisfaction is the most commonly researched advising output, there is a need for researchers to expand output measurement to include cognitive and affective development and their relationship with student retention and persistence. For traditional campuses, Jones et al. (2021) suggest that leaders should consider the campus setup and if the institution offers classes at remote sites.

Organizational Structure

Once the type of institution and student population have been considered, an advising model must be chosen with the organization's structure and business model in mind (Jones et al., 2021). Both the structure and model should be chosen to specifically meet the needs of the student population.

According to Crellin (2010), higher education institutions frequently utilize shared governance between faculty and staff, who work collegially to develop new programs, technologies, and partnerships to meet community needs. However, institutions often have a hard

time balancing administration versus faculty decision-making. State governments and lawmakers pressure public institutions to achieve higher learning outcomes and produce more research. Public funding continues to decrease, and institutions are turning to other sources of funding, such as research, partnerships, and intellectual property claims.

Chapter Summary

The gap in research pertaining to online PD student attrition provided the foundation for this literature review. The conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory were presented as leading constructs to frame this research study's findings. An overview of doctoral student attrition highlighted the need and rationale for continued research. A review of the PD with its unique challenges preceded a connection to online educational trends. Doctoral advising was examined by the different types of advisors, approaches to academic advising, academic advising impact on student success, institutional advising models and systems, and factors in deciding an institutional advising model. The literature suggests the need for investigating student perspectives on the DFA-student relationship and what contributes to their motivational processes (Gilmore et al., 2016; Jameson et al., 2021).

Chapter three discusses the research methodology of this study. The chapter begins with the research design and a description of the population and sample. Next, data collection methods, measurements and instruments, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations were detailed. The chapter concluded with data analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter two provided an overview of literature focusing on doctoral student attrition and how both Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory suggest academic and social integration and motivation, respectively, as frequent themes of supporting resolution. These two theories grounded this research and provided the guiding conceptual framework. Miles et al. (2018) describe the conceptual framework to include the researcher's foundational map of key factors, themes, and concepts from the literature that drive meaning in the study.

The intent of this qualitative research study was to explore how Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) support doctoral students' motivation to progress in their online Professional Doctorate (PD) to completion at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. This researcher used an exploratory case study to interview 16 students pursuing their online PD at a private, professionally-focused university (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggests that a case study is exploratory when the researcher is interested in what can be learned from the study that may also impact future studies.

The purpose of chapter three is to explain the methodology and design of this qualitative study. The chapter begins by exploring the study's research design and continues by addressing the research participants and sampling design, data collection methods, measurements and instruments, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

Research Design

Pajo (2018) maintains that qualitative research is essential to provide participants' perceptions, experiences, and insights that add meaningful depth to a study. Qualitative research, by way of inductive reasoning, may subjectively aid in understanding, interpreting, and exploring a social or human problem from participant data collection (Creswell, 2014). Miles et

al. (2018) add that qualitative research may uncover complex and potentially nonobvious contributing social issues. Creswell (2014) states that the key instrument in qualitative research is the researcher and that participants are best studied in their natural setting. Miles et al. (2018) further denote how a natural setting allows the researcher to study the data in close proximity. The researcher should fully investigate unknown or uncontrollable conditions that lead to potentially worthwhile phenomena or cases of study (Quintão et al., 2020). Flick (2011) and Yin (2014) indicate that qualitative researchers may use a variety of data to support their study, including documents, photographs, interviews, questionnaires, recordings, memos, and observations. To understand the phenomena or study, rich and thick descriptions build on attention to detail and are fundamental to qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2018; Pajo, 2018; Queiros et al., 2017).

Creswell (2014) highlights the importance of reflexivity and bias transparency, while also discussing the rationale for the study. Flick (2011) pinpoints the crucial ethical principles to maintain during qualitative research due to the nature of the researcher-participant relationship. Creswell (2014) and Flick (2011) suggest the need for the research, details of the study, and informed consent should be paramount to begin a study. Creswell (2014), Flick (2011), and Pajo (2018) state that respect for participants and confidentiality should be maintained during the study. Data should accurately be collected with the well-being of participants in mind (Flick, 2011). Any conflicts of interest should be reported (Creswell, 2014; Pajo, 2018), and the participant benefits of the study should outweigh the burden (Flick, 2011).

Creswell (2014), Miles et al. (2018), and Salkind (2009) suggest that a case study may explore a specific individual, program, event, activity, or even multiple individuals in a unique setting or circumstance. Yin (2014) further details a case study to be a research design that

examines a present-day phenomenon in its natural setting and in a real-world context. The institution or person(s) studied have a unique quality that differentiates them from others (Salkind, 2009). Yin (2014) highlights the different types of case studies, and this researcher led an exploratory case study to discover factors supporting online doctoral motivation and add to the literature for potential program improvement. Case study researchers should maintain data triangulation, confirmability, and credibility while considering their trustworthiness with the participant (Creswell, 2014).

Yin (2017) suggests four phases of the case study to clarify the research design. Yin (2017) details that the first phase, the research goal, must include factors contributing to the phenomenological study and include a precise definition of the topic. The second phase, research design, includes the design protocol and description of the sample population (Yin, 2017). The third phase, data preparation and collection, includes reaching out to participants, beginning the initial research design and chosen data collection, and procuring all documentation needed for the study (Yin, 2017). Yin (2017) defines the fourth phase, data analysis, which consists of data coding, triangulation, and synthesis. After the four phases of the case study design have been completed, Cohen et al. (2011) suggest the researcher may determine or confirm the best selected theories to fit the data. Salkind (2009) explains that while the benefit of a qualitative case study may not result in a hypothesis being tested, it usually results in implications for future studies.

Exploring doctoral student perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation for their online PD necessitates an in-depth research methodology that allows for rich and thick description to further the complex understanding of doctoral attrition for this niche population of students (Pajo, 2018; Salkind, 2009; Yin, 2014). This case study was focused on the doctoral student population in four online PD programs at a private, professionally-focused university:

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (EdD), Doctor of Healthcare Administration (DHA), and Doctor of Professional Studies (DPS) in Instructional Design Leadership. The research question that guided the study's focus is: "What are students' perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation in online, PD programs?"

Research Participants and Sampling Design

The case study was situated at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest centered on the needs of a changing society, equal access to education, and individualized and student-centered quality academics (Internal communication, 2022). The university is home to non-traditional students, catering to working adult learners with an average age of 34 who hope to fulfill their career aspirations, while balancing familial and other life responsibilities (Internal communication, 2022). The four doctoral programs currently serve approximately 871 students with 300 DBA, 231 EdD, 255 DHA, and 75 DPS students (Internal communication, university dashboard, 2022). The university of study currently has 186 eligible DFAs, 116 actively serving 544 students (Internal communication, 2022).

Academic advisors at the university are responsible for assisting students with registration, program planning, and selecting helpful resources upon student inquisition (Internal communication, 2022). Currently, this researcher works at the university as an academic advisor and is also currently in the university's EdD program. The sample criteria included a purposive sample of students not currently on this advisor's caseload to assure researcher objectivity and prevent a threat to internal validity (Creswell, 2014; Pajo, 2018). Participants must also have communicated with their DFA at least once per term, which may consist of meeting in person, by phone, via Zoom, or through significant email or text message exchange. The sample of students was selected first from those who replied to the recruitment email sent from the Doctoral Studies

Coordinator (DSC). Snowball sampling (non-probability, non-random) method was then deemed appropriate for the study due to low interest by the identified population (Pajo, 2018). This researcher obtained demographics from students who replied via email to select four-six participant interviews from each of the four doctoral programs or until saturation was reached. Selected participants had completed at least their first semester of coursework, giving them a full semester to make a connection with their DFA. The sample of students was emailed a written consent form in PDF format (See Appendix B) to complete and return prior to scheduling a Zoom interview session.

Data Collection Methods

This researcher requested the DSC at the university of study to identify a population of students who have started their program in the 2020 and 2021 spring or fall terms and 2022 spring term. The population was assigned to the remaining four doctoral academic advisors who advise the DBA, EdD, DHA, and DPS programs. The DSC disseminated the recruitment email (See Appendix A) to doctoral students who meet the criteria. Students self-identified by responding to the recruitment email if they have been active in communication with their DFA at least once per term. For the purposes of this study, active communication was defined as meeting either in person, by phone, via Zoom, or through significant email or text message exchange. The DFA's role at this university is to advise students on research interests for dissertation and coursework selection and encourage growth and familiarity with research processes and professional development (Internal communication, 2022). The snowball sampling method was utilized, which indicates that participants helped recruit additional participants by word of mouth (Pajo, 2018). Referrals came from previous interviewees and other doctoral students in the university's programs who gave this researcher's student email to interested participants who

met the selection criteria. When a student replied to the recruitment email or emailed interest in the study, this researcher requested demographic data to equally select a sample that produced four-six participant interviews from each of the four online doctoral programs at the university or until saturation. Prior to scheduling a Zoom interview session with participants, this researcher emailed a written consent form in a PDF format (See Appendix B) that was completed and sent back to this researcher's student email address. In the recruitment email, the potential participant could choose to email this researcher's student email address to schedule a Zoom session that worked well for us both. To start each interview, the researcher read an interview protocol (See Appendix C), and participants were thanked for their time and participation. The protocol continued to define the purpose of the study and assure participant confidentiality. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw at any point from the study and that confidentiality was assured. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines were maintained for all data collection. Data were kept in a password-protected computer at the researcher's residence, with exclusive access restricted to the researcher.

Measurements and Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom meet sessions, and audio was automatically transcribed via Zoom. The interviewer and interviewee needed a computer, internet, a headset or speaker capability, and Zoom access. This researcher obtained an ATLAS.ti membership to use the program for this study. This researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using the researcher-created interview protocol (See Appendix C). All data were stored in electronic format on this researcher's password-protected personal computer. Data were kept and will be destroyed after three years.

Reliability and Validity

A researcher-created interview protocol based on the frameworks was developed and used with all interviewees to maintain reliability (Miles et al., 2018; Salkind, 2009; Yin, 2014). This researcher aimed to interview a representative sample of four to six interview participants from each of the four PD programs or until saturation. Creswell (2014) suggests that data saturation occurs when no new themes, patterns, or codes emerge in data collection. Transcripts of audio recordings were double-checked for accuracy (Creswell, 2014; Salkind, 2009). To avoid code drifting, this researcher coded thirty percent of the data with the dissertation committee methodologist to ensure inter-rater reliability until we reached a hundred percent agreement, and then this researcher independently coded the remainder (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2018; Pajo, 2018; Salkind, 2009). Zoom policy ensured all audio transcripts and cloud recordings were stored encrypted. All recordings were password-protected using a password manager and only available to the Principal Investigator (PI), chair, and methodologist. After all transcripts were downloaded to the PI's password-protected computer and stored in a Zipped folder, the PI deleted them from Zoom's Cloud. All demographic participant data was omitted prior to performing analysis in ATLAS.ti and was replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality in final reporting (Pajo, 2018). Data were backed up and stored in a password-protected database (Yin, 2014).

Pilot interviews took place to discard unclear items and check for intended measurements prior to conducting the study (Creswell, 2014; Salkind, 2009; Yin, 2014). Pilot interviews allowed the researcher to practice building participant rapport, obtaining consent, recording, considering the timing of participant responses to questions, and overall interview length (Castillo-Montoya, M., 2016). This researcher selected one higher education professional to pilot

the interview informally and one doctoral student at the university to formally pilot the interview protocol and questions to maintain reliability. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using Zoom. This researcher reviewed the piloted interview recordings for protocol and question revision with the dissertation committee methodologist. Transcripts were uploaded into ATLAS.ti, and coding was verified with the dissertation committee methodologist.

During interviews, this researcher checked interviewee understanding and debriefed with interviewees to confirm results by paraphrasing and highlighting the main points with each interviewee (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2017). Transcripts and notes were recorded and documented promptly after their obtainment. Pattern matching occurred during coding to ensure internal validity (Yin, 2014). This researcher documented research bias formally (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Ethical Considerations

An ethical approach was embedded in the research design; however, this researcher was mindful of possible concerns with this study. First, if the recorded interviewee data were leaked, it could have affected the student's relationship with their DFA or their reputation positively or negatively at the university, depending on their answers (Miles et al., 2018). Another potential issue may have arisen from researcher bias. To ensure the study upheld compliance with human subjects research regulations, permission for conducting this research study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection. Additionally, a rigorous interview protocol was implemented to ensure that there was no indication of bias (Yin, 2014).

Data Analysis

After each interview was conducted, recorded, and transcribed using Zoom, they were uploaded into ATLAS.ti for coding and examination and deleted from the Zoom Cloud. Each

interview's transcription was double-checked for accuracy. ATLAS.ti allowed this researcher to toggle between texts easily and notate memos, codes, and richly-detailed quotes to translate meaning into themes and patterns to synthesize the data. Thirty percent of the coding was shared with this researcher's committee methodologist (Creswell, 2014; Pajo, 2018; Salkind, 2009).

This researcher began the process of coding by rereading the transcripts and creating theoretical and hypothetical memos to start dissecting the responses (Creswell, 2014; Pajo, 2018). Miles et al. (2018) suggest that codes or labels be applied to the transcripts to begin assigning descriptive or inferential meaning to words, phrases, and themes in the text. Miles et al. (2018) analysis approach guided this researcher's "first cycle" coding analysis by utilizing descriptive coding that summarized the data and incorporated the conceptual framework found in the transcripts. This researcher applied in-vivo coding, incorporating the participants' own words as reoccurring notations (Gibbs, 2018; Miles et al., 2018; Pajo, 2018). Miles et al. (2018) also recommend coding to incorporate notations of processes, emotions, values, evaluations, dramaturgical or characterizations, causations, and attributes found in participant transcripts. This researcher created diagrams of coded themes to visually allow categories to emerge using mind maps (Pajo, 2018).

In the next step of analysis, this researcher applied the concept-driven a priori coding using a code list of categories and ideas derived from the conceptual framework literature of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory before the analyzation began (Gibbs, 2018). The a priori codes included: academic commitment, academic integration, autonomy, competency, educational development, institutional commitment, intellectual development, motivation, relatedness, non-traditional student, and social integration. This researcher used data-driven "second cycle"

coding which included open and pattern coding to categorize and classify emergent themes and patterns from the "first cycle" coding (Gibbs, 2018; Miles et al., 2018; Pajo, 2018). Pattern coding may include categories and themes, causes and explanations, relationships, or conceptual constructs (Miles et al., 2018). A codebook was created and organized to track all participant interview codes and how they correlate at the researcher's residence, with exclusive access restricted to the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Gibbs, 2018; Pajo, 2018). Codes were categorically grouped and organized into themes and patterns to facilitate meaningful discussion (Pajo, 2018).

This researcher used the analytic strategies of analytic memoing, pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case synthesis (Miles et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). Analytic memoing is self-reflective and notates the researcher's thinking about the data to synthesize meaning (Miles et al., 2018). Pattern matching allows the researcher to compare the emergent pattern analysis to the expected theoretical pattern and those found in previous cases (Yin, 2014). This researcher considered themes and patterns to make meaning and build substantial evidence to support the explanation (Yin, 2014). Lastly, this researcher considered the themes from all interviews and analyzed them for understanding, patterns, and meaning during cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory guided the analysis and discussion of results (Yin, 2014).

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that the sample only included students who had communicated with the DFAs at least once per term. The sample did not include all doctoral students at the university who may have provided varying feedback regarding their DFA experience. A second limitation of this study was the limited sample size. A quantitative study

with the entire caseload of students would add to the breadth of results. A third limitation of this study was that the researcher had limited opportunity for triangulation because the university had limited data due to the newness of the four doctoral programs. A fourth limitation of this study was the lack of similar studies at other institutions with the same populations to produce generalizability. A fifth limitation included using the snowball method for recruitment. The snowball method can lead to potential sampling bias because the sample may include participants with similar traits and tendencies, and the non-probability sampling may not lead to population representativeness (Pajo, 2018).

The selection of case study as a research design also comes with limitations. Kekeya (2021) warns that case study researchers can easily present false, biased, or exaggerated findings from their studies. Lengthy research reporting from case study data collection can often deter interested parties and policymakers (Kekeya, 2021). Case study data collection can be limited based on available money, transportation, and time (Cohen et al., 2011). Yin (2017) proposes that case study researchers carefully validate their constructs and data inferences and use well-documented research protocols stored with detailed case information to proactively field issues of low reliability and the generalization of results.

Delimitations

The population of students chosen for this study all attend the same private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. The sample criteria of this study were specifically created to avoid researcher bias and provide meaningful responses to the interview questions. The recruitment email was sent to a population of students who do not fall on this academic advisor's caseload to avoid response and researcher bias (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). The recruitment email was sent to students who started their program in 2020, 2021, or spring

2022, giving them at least a full semester to build a relationship with their DFA at the point of this data collection. Students were asked to self-identify if they have communicated with their DFA at least once per term to justify the idea that they could have potentially found support from that connection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed a qualitative case study research design that utilized Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory as a conceptual framework to explore how DFAs support doctoral student motivation to progress in their online PD at a private professionally-focused university in the Midwest. Research design, population and sample, data collection methods, measurements and instruments, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and data analysis were described. Ultimately, the results of this study may distinguish if students perceive the relationship developed with their DFA contributes to their sense of autonomy, competency, and commitment towards the program and institution as outlined by Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and their motivation outlined by Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory. Chapter four discusses data collection, the demographics of the sample, and data analysis and results in depth.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) support doctoral students' motivation to progress in their online Professional Doctorate (PD) to completion at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. Chapter three discussed this study's qualitative case study research design incorporating Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory as a conceptual framework, the population and sample, data collection methods, measurements and instruments, reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and data analysis.

Chapter four includes a thorough investigation of the interview data collection and analysis of this study. The research question drove the data collection, which included the demographics of the sample and data analysis. The results of the study were broken down into five themes: DFA-Student Pairing Process and Expectations, Academic Integration, Social Integration, Motivation, and Non-traditional Student Experience. Subthemes emerged to organize understanding. Chapter four concludes with a summary and preview of chapter five.

Research Question

This research study focused on the doctoral student population in four online PD programs at a private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest: Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Healthcare Administration (DHA), Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (EdD), and Doctor of Professional Studies (DPS). This researcher gathered doctoral student perceptions of and experiences with their DFA in relation to supporting their program motivation. The directing research question that guided this study was "What are students' perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation in an online, PD program?"

Data Collection

This researcher requested the Doctoral Studies Coordinator (DSC) at the university of study to identify a population of students who have started their program in the 2020 and 2021 spring or fall terms and the 2022 spring term. The population was assigned to the remaining four doctoral academic advisors who advise the DBA, DHA, EdD, and DPS programs. The DSC disseminated the recruitment email (See Appendix A) to doctoral students who met the criteria. Students self-identified by responding to the recruitment email if they have been active in communication with their DFA at least once per term. When a student replied to the recruitment email, this researcher requested demographic data to acquire a representative sample from each of the four online doctoral programs at the university. This researcher emailed a written consent form to participants in a PDF format (See Appendix B), which was completed and returned prior to our one-to-one Zoom interview session.

For this qualitative case study, the primary data collection instrument was this researcher collecting the doctoral student perceptions of and experiences with their DFAs in relation to supporting their program motivation. This researcher conducted one-to-one Zoom interviews with participants to acquire primary data from 16 open-ended questions in the interview protocol (See Appendix C). Three pilot interviews were conducted between November 9, 2022-November 14, 2022. After three recruitment emails were sent to doctoral students, three participants agreed to interview. This researcher then utilized the snowball method to obtain 13 additional interviews to reach saturation by asking interviewees to recommend fellow interested students to interview. This researcher found sufficient data to achieve saturation within the 16 interviews. Reaching "saturation" in qualitative data refers to a point at which the researcher is no longer able to uncover any new insights from the research, particularly new codes when analyzing (Creswell, 2014).

Data for this study were collected for approximately one month between November 30, 2022- December 28, 2022. Interviews lasted between 24 minutes to 58 minutes, with the average interview duration being 35 minutes. This researcher added follow on and probing questions when additional data were deemed necessary or to member-check responses to maintain validity across participants. Individuals were excluded from the study who either had not completed at least their first term of study or who had not been interacting at least once per month with their DFA. When reporting data, participants were referred to by a pseudonym (e.g., "participant 1"), and all identifying information was discarded in the final data reporting to maintain participant confidentiality. Interview results were saved in an encrypted Zoom and Cloud ATLAS.ti account. Responses were shared with the committee chair and research methodologist. Data continues to be kept in a password-protected computer at the researcher's residence, with exclusive access restricted to the researcher.

Demographics

The participants were 16 doctoral students who attended the same private, professionally-focused university in the Midwest. Within the university, the students pursued one of four online PD programs, five students in the DBA out of 300, five students in the DHA out of 255, four students in the EdD out of 231, and two students in the DPS out of 75 (Internal communication, 2022). The students consisted of 11 females and five males, approximately a 2:1 ratio. The overall population of doctoral students in the DBA, DHA, EdD, and DPS programs at the university consists of approximately 437 females, 232 males, and 21 unreported, approximately a 2:1 ratio of female to male students (Internal communication, February 20, 2023). The students ranged in age groups, including seven students in the 30-39 age range, one student in the 40-49 age range, four students in the 50-59 age range, two students in the 60-69 age range, and two students in the 70-79 age range. The university's mean age of doctoral students in the DBA,

DHA, EdD, and DPS programs is 42 (Internal communication, February 20, 2023). Among the student sample, there were 10 Caucasian students, four African American students, one Native American student, and one Hispanic student. The participants' identities were protected, but their demographic information is included in Table 4.1. Table 4.2 visually organizes participant age ranges, highlighting the "above 25" ranges indicative of non-traditional students (Chung et al., 2014). Online, non-traditional students may require additional resources to meet their academic and social integration and motivational needs (Deshpande, 2017; Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Graham & Massyn, 2019; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Terrell et al., 2012; Ward-Smith et al., 2013).

TABLE 4.1
Participant Demographics

Participant	Program	Gender	Age Group	Ethnicity/Race
P1	DHA	Female	50-59	Caucasian
P2	DBA	Female	60-69	Caucasian
P3	DBA	Male	50-59	Caucasian
P4	DPS	Female	60-69	Native American
P5	DBA	Female	30-39	Caucasian
P6	DBA	Female	50-59	Caucasian
P7	DHA	Female	30-39	Caucasian
P8	DPS	Female	50-59	Caucasian
P9	DHA	Male	30-39	Hispanic
P10	DBA	Male	70-79	African American
P11	DHA	Female	30-39	African American
P12	EdD	Female	70-79	African American
P13	EdD	Female	30-39	Caucasian
P14	DHA	Male	30-39	African American
P15	EdD	Female	30-39	Caucasian
P16	EdD	Male	40-49	Caucasian

TABLE 4.2
Age Demographics of Participants

Age Group	Number of Participants
30-39	7
40-49	1
50-59	4
60-69	2
70-79	2

Data Analysis

After each of the 16 interviews was recorded via Zoom, they were transcribed automatically by Zoom and uploaded as text documents into ATLAS.ti for data analysis. This researcher double-checked transcripts for verbatim accuracy after each recording. This researcher selected ATLAS.ti as a tool to notate and code interview data, beginning with theoretical and hypothetical memos. Descriptive and in-vivo codes were applied to transcript data based on the conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory (Gibbs, 2018). A priori codes were applied to transcripts, while emergent themes and patterns were identified. This researcher coded the first three interviews with the committee's methodologist until there was a hundred percent coding agreement. Twenty-six initial codes are provided below in Table 4.3, including the number of participants that contributed to them and the number of transcript excerpts that were included. Table 4.3 also included a notation next to each code connecting it to the conceptual framework of either Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory (SIT) or Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Tinto's (1975, 2012) SIT framework was more heavily present with a total of 18 or 60% of the sub-themes, and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) SDT framework was present in 8 or 31% of the sub-themes.

TABLE 4.3
Initial Codes/Sub-themes

Initial code (alphabetical list)	*n* of participants contributing (N=16)	*n* of transcript excerpts included
Academic Commitment (SIT)	16	20
Autonomy (SDT)	14	28
Connection and Trust (SDT)	16	46
Connection to the University (SIT)	16	23
Competency (SDT)	16	27
DFA Expectations for Students (SIT)	11	11
DFA Commitment to the University (SIT)	16	18
DFA-Student Communication (SIT)	16	21
DFA-Student Pairing Process (SIT)	16	30
DFA-Student Pairing Recommendations (SIT)	2	2
DFA Supports Motivation (SDT)	16	61
Educational Development (SIT)	16	21
Flexibility (SDT/SIT)	9	11
Goal Setting (SIT)	16	21
Institutional Commitment (SIT)	16	22
Intellectual Development (SIT)	16	21
Internal and External Motivation (SDT)	16	45
Online Student Experience (SIT)	16	23
Online Student Experience Recommendations (SIT)	2	2
Professional Development and Growth (SIT)	16	18
Relationship Growth (SDT)	16	19
Resiliency (SDT/SIT)	14	19
Student Expectations of DFA (SIT)	10	10
Student Perspectives on Having Two Advisors (SIT)	16	16

During the next data analysis step, this researcher grouped initial codes into five themes, as identified in Table 4.4. Themes included similar data that generally addressed interview questions or follow-up questions. ATLAS.ti allowed initial codes to be merged and collected into themes or groups.

TABLE 4.4
Themes as Groupings of Initial Codes/Sub-themes

Theme Initial code included in theme	*n* of participants contributing (N=16)	*n* of transcript excerpts included
Theme 1: Doctoral Faculty Advisor-Student Pairing and Expectations (SIT)	16	90
DFA-Student Pairing Process		
DFA-Student Pairing Recommendations		
DFA Expectations for Students		
DFA-Student Communication		
Student Expectations for DFA		
Student Perspectives on Having Two Advisors		
Theme 2: Academic Integration (SIT)	16	83
Academic Commitment		
Educational Development		
Intellectual Development		
Goal Setting		
Theme 3: Social Integration (SIT)	16	86
Professional Development and Growth		
Institutional Commitment		
Connection to the University		
Online Student Experience		
Theme 4: Motivation (SDT)	16	244
Autonomy		
Competency		
Connection and Trust		
DFA Commitment to the University		
Relationship Growth		
Internal and External Motivation		
DFA Supports Motivation		
Theme 5: Non-traditional Student Experience (SDT/SIT)	16	30
Flexibility		
Resiliency		

Results

The guiding research question for this study was "What are students' perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation in an online, PD program?" In this section, the significant findings and results of the study were presented by theme. Themes were further organized by sub-themes and semi-structured interview questions that correlated with each theme.

Theme 1: DFA-Student Pairing and Expectations

The theme, DFA-Student Pairing and Expectations, was present in 87 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. This theme combined six sub-themes: DFA-Student Pairing Process, DFA-Student Pairing Recommendations, DFA Expectations for Students, DFA-Student Communication, Student Expectations of DFA, and Student Perspectives on Having Two Advisors. The DFA-Student Pairing Process sub-theme was present in 30 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The DFA-Student Pairing Recommendations sub-theme was present in two transcript excerpts and from two participants. The DFA Expectations for Students sub-theme was present in 11 transcript excerpts and from 11 participants. The DFA-Student Communication sub-theme was present in 21 transcript excerpts and from 16 participants. The Student Expectations of DFA sub-theme was present in 10 transcripts excerpts and from 10 participants. The Student Perspectives on Having Two Advisors sub-theme was present in 16 transcript excerpts and from 16 participants. The semi-structured interview questions related to this theme were: "Describe how you were matched with your faculty advisor," "What expectations has your faculty advisor set for communication and progress?" "What are your expectations for a faculty advisor?" and "Describe your experience of having both an academic advisor and a faculty advisor?"

Sub-theme 1: DFA-Student Pairing Process

When participants were asked, "Describe how you were matched with your faculty advisor," 14 participants responded that they were originally paired with their DFA by the university. Two participants responded that they were able to suggest or pick their DFA. Of those participants that referenced the university leading the process, eight participants referenced a document they filled out in their first course, suggesting pairing them with a DFA who shared similar research topic interests, goals, and experience. P7 commented, "…the first class we take

in the program…they told us to fill out something related to our topic… to the dissertation that we're targeting…the program chair…helped to assign us to a faculty advisor."

Five participants remembered the pairing as more of a random process. Of the self-selectors, one participant said the program chair gave them a list of available faculty profiles and asked them to pick their top three, of which one was selected by the program chair. One participant said they connected with a faculty member in their first course and requested them as their DFA. Three participants requested to be re-matched with a new DFA, two of which self-selected their new DFA. Two participants stated that they had connected with faculty members during a course, and P1 stated, "I took a course with someone who I really connected with, and I felt like she was incredibly thoughtful and had great insight."

Sub-theme 2: DFA-Student Pairing Recommendations

Two participants commented on the university's pairing process. Both participants suggested a more thorough and detailed intake investigation of student needs and what they would require from a DFA, including how much support they would like, their communication style, and areas they hope to improve. P5 suggested:

> …maybe they do a survey that's how much support do you feel like you need? Are you fairly self-sufficient? Where do you think your weaknesses are? Where are you going to struggle the most? …match them up to professors that have been given feedback of that nature.

Sub-theme 3: DFA Expectations for Students

Students were asked, "What expectations has your faculty advisor set for communication and progress?" Four participants responded that their DFA set clear expectations about their role and what the student could expect from them. P11 shared, "My expectations would be to read journals ongoing… come to the meetings with my advisor prepared. We started with… trying to

narrow that topic… I come to the meetings prepared with examples and pieces from the literature." Two participants said their DFA was not intentional or specific about their expectations. P5 said:

> I don't think she set hard expectations. It was more of, this is who I am. This is my role. I'm here for you as you run into issues or concerns. I think I may have gotten a, "Hey, how are things going?" email a couple of times.

Sub-theme 4: DFA-Student Communication

Though most DFA-student relationships included email communications, three participants mentioned they had monthly meetings with their DFAs over the phone, and ten reported meeting with their DFAs monthly via Zoom. Overall communication style and frequency was mentioned by eight participants. Five participants suggested being satisfied with their DFA's prompt and frequent communication. P15 commented:

> We have a very amicable relationship. It is very much a, if you've got questions, I will answer your question within 24 hours…he's always prompt, very supportive of any concerns I have. When I got done with this course, he asked for a meeting… he was like, I wanted to tell you I am so proud of you passing this semester.

One participant commented on the communication not being productive at this point in the program while they are more focused on coursework than the dissertation. One participant mentioned how their DFA's communication has slowly dwindled throughout their program. P16 mentioned how he felt like the frequent communication was a waste of time because it felt like she was only trying to get through her checklist:

> … I'd rather have someone that… in order for them to get paid, they need to spend a half hour with me once a term… I'd rather have someone that lets me dictate what that half hour is rather than them… I need to get through this checklist with you.

Sub-theme 5: Student Expectations of DFA

One question was asked to gauge student understanding of the DFA role at the university and in their doctoral journey. Students were asked, "What are your expectations for a doctoral faculty advisor?" Six participants replied that they did not have any expectations for their DFA or what that role would entail. P8 shared, "I didn't really have any. I haven't worked this closely with an advisor throughout my entire college years…it's always been scheduling…if I wanted counseling advice, I'd go to the counseling department…this has been an incredibly positive experience." Six participants expected the DFA to be someone who would help shepherd them through the dissertation process at the university. P11 said:

> I expect them to guide me along the journey, especially with regards to my dissertation…because it's new territory…the monitoring and controlling as in the check-in to make sure that we're on track in terms of time…them to be able to also provide that level of guidance in terms of the planning and execution of the dissertation, not just being a cheerleader… somebody to tell me when I'm not doing well so I can correct it.

Two participants planned to use their DFA as someone to turn to if they needed help or had questions. One participant thought the DFA would then become their dissertation chair. One participant expected the DFA to perform the academic advisor's responsibilities.

Sub-theme 6: Student Perspectives on Having Two Advisors

Participants were asked to, "Describe your experience of having both an academic advisor and a faculty advisor?" Two participants reported there was a disconnect between the two roles, and the roles were confusing. P16 commented:

> …if there's an expectation that the university has of its employees, that the faculty advisor is supposed to do one thing and an academic advisor is supposed to do another thing, and there's no dark no blind spots in between, then I think that there's some work to do there.

Five participants understood the roles of both the academic advisor and faculty advisor and thought they were clearly defined. P13 expressed:

> I think it is a benefit…I've asked my DFA questions that were a little more technical, and she's reached out and found answers for me... my academic advisor …he always reaches out and is available… we have met and talked about some things that I've had questions about….I think it would be hard to have one person who was able to capture all the things that needed to happen in this journey.

One participant believed there was no point in having both an academic advisor and a DFA. Two participants shared they did not need an academic advisor, while five participants said they had little interaction with their academic advisor.

Theme 2: Academic Integration

The theme, Academic Integration, was present in 83 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. This theme combined four sub-themes: Academic Commitment, Educational Development, Intellectual Development, and Goal Setting. The Academic Commitment sub-theme was present in 20 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The Educational

Development sub-theme was present in 21 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The Intellectual Development sub-theme was present in 21 transcripts excerpts and from all 16 participants. The Goal Setting sub-theme was present in 21 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The semi-structured interview questions related to this theme were: "Describe your commitment to finish your doctoral degree," "Describe your faculty advisor's role in your educational development," "Describe your faculty advisor's role in your intellectual development," and "Explain how/if your faculty advisor assisted you with goal setting."

Sub-theme 1: Academic Commitment

When participants were asked, "Describe your commitment to finish your doctoral degree," all 16 participants confirmed that they felt committed to finishing. Participants provided many reasons as to why their commitment was high. One participant said their commitment was high due to the time and money invested in the degree. P13 shared they plan to use this degree to open doors to new opportunities:

> … this is something that I've always wanted to do… I do know that if I want to move beyond where I am right now, it's definitely going to be a requirement and something that will hold me back. I also know that it will open up a lot of opportunities if I decide that I do want to explore teaching.

One participant mentioned they are committed to graduating from the university because the faculty and staff are responsive and helpful. P3 stated that too many people are invested in their success to let them down.:

> I've had so many people, from my faculty advisor, to my program chair, to my committee, my family, employees, and peers cheering and coaching. I would feel

> absolutely horrible if I stopped now and didn't finish it…like I let a whole lot of people down, and it's not acceptable.

Additionally, a student shared that they were committed to finishing something they've started but are currently struggling with their progress due to how much time it is taking to complete.

Sub-theme 2: Educational Development

When participants were asked, "Describe your faculty advisor's role in your educational development," 14 participants shared that their DFA had shaped their educational development, including research and writing guidance, dissertation and topic development throughout the coursework, and course selection. P10 commented on how his DFA supported his research skills, "… how to effectively read a study, what parts of the study to read before you commit to reading the whole study. He's giving me articles to read… leading me in the right direction to get the information I need." Another participant said her DFA would send them guides to help with the dissertation proposal planning and share what worked for him for his dissertation. Additionally, P14 shared that their DFA would look over samples of their writing, "… she usually wants to see some kind of writing sample so that she can look at it and measure if I'm improving my writing and if my conversations about my topic need to be refined…" Two participants did not believe their DFA had any direction toward their educational development. While one participant shared they felt confident in their education development and did not need any support, the other had tried to reach out to their DFA regarding educational growth and was not satisfied when he continued not to provide any expectations.

Sub-theme 3: Intellectual Development

Participants were asked to, "Describe your faculty advisor's role in your intellectual development." Fifteen participants responded that their DFA had supported their intellectual development or sparked their thinking throughout their journey by challenging them to dig

deeper regarding coursework, dissertation studies, and narrowing their proposed dissertation topics. P3 commented on how his DFA helped narrow his topic:

> … he kept challenging me …"Do you think self-efficacy plays a role in shared leadership?" He showed me models... "Does it influence your leadership?... Would this have a part in your research?" He was playing supportive in a lot of it… he would give me an idea… and play a little bit more of a devil's advocate…it did help because there are several parts of my research I wouldn't have thought of going into a nonprofit without his guidance…

P1 said her DFA pushed her to consider more regarding her dissertation's study:

> … I was going to do a very straightforward survey… my faculty advisor… said, "So, what?… it has to be a representative sample." She encouraged me to dig deeper… "if you're somebody who isn't in health care, why should you care?" And was there a quantitative or a qualitative element missing from this study design… Based on that feedback, now I'm doing a mixed study.

One participant shared how their DFA guided them to narrow their topic and consider more about their target population. One participant shared that they were not intellectually challenged at all by their DFA and felt as though they were treated more like a master's student and not a doctoral candidate.

Sub-theme 4: Goal Setting

Participants were asked, "Explain how/if your faculty advisor assisted you with goal setting." Eleven participants replied that they thought their DFA did support their goal setting, including helping them set realistic goals for program progress, keeping their end goal of completing the dissertation in mind, and developing their topic and dissertation study throughout their programs. P1 shared:

> My faculty advisor called me and said, “Stop, you're not doing your best work. Let's set a reasonable goal for when you can get this done… you've missed a month of work. I know you have a pretty high-demand job…let's set some realistic goals…you're definitely going to finish…but you know you're not going to get the result that you'll be happy with if you push this way.” I really appreciated that.

Another participant commented on how their DFA assisted with course and committee selection. Five participants replied that their DFA did not assist in goal setting. P14 said, “Not as much…the mentors and folks I've had before me have really established that process.” Another participant commented that their conversation with their DFA usually resulted in him talking about himself for a full hour.

Theme 3: Social Integration

The theme, Social Integration, was present in 86 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. This theme combined five sub-themes: Professional Development and Growth, Institutional Commitment, Connection to the University, Online Student Experience, and Online Student Experience Recommendations. The Professional Development and Growth sub-theme was present in 18 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The Institutional Commitment sub-theme was present in 22 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The Connection to the university sub-theme was present in 23 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The Online Student Experience sub-theme was present in 23 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The Online Student Experience Recommendations sub-theme was present in two participant transcript excerpts. The semi-structured interview questions related to this theme were: “Describe your faculty advisor’s role in your professional development and growth,” “Describe your feelings of institutional commitment towards the university,” “Describe how connected you

feel to the university," and "How does being an online doctoral student affect your connection with the university?"

Sub-theme 1: Professional Development and Growth

Participants were asked, "Describe your faculty advisor's role in your professional development and growth." Five participants replied that their DFA did support their professional development and growth. Out of those five, two participants shared their that DFA prompted them to become a member of a professional organization and attend a conference and present. P4 commented:

> … I am going to present at a national conference in April…she asked that I take that presentation and give it to the university in June…she was the one that prompted me, although I knew I needed to write and present outside of my forum. But, she's the one that said… make sure that you are integrating in with those people…start doing it now.

One participant said their DFA urged them to consider what their work would contribute to the field, while another DFA helped a participant secure an adjunct teaching job. Another participant shared that their DFA facilitated conversations that allowed them to appeal to leadership at work.

Eleven participants replied that their DFA did not support their professional development or growth. Out of those 11, two participants commented that they didn't need any help in their professional lives. P6 shared, "I don't know that we did much of that only because I'm already where I need to be… I didn't need any guidance professionally from him at that time." Two participants added they did not receive professional guidance because they were in different fields with different interests than their DFA.

Sub-theme 2: Institutional Commitment

When participants were asked, "Describe your feelings of institutional commitment towards the university," 15 participants expressed being institutionally committed to the

university. Five of those 15 participants mentioned their DFA having a direct role in feelings of institutional commitment. P4 stated:

> "…She helps me to refocus, and she helps me commit… if I didn't look at what university I was at, I would not necessarily know it's not about the school… It's about her investment in me. But, you know, the university has invested in her in me."

Three participants shared that they are university alumni. Three participants said they were committed because they like the program offered by the university. Three participants commented that they recommend the university to their peers and colleagues. P 9 commented:

> …I'm very proud to be a part of it. I know I've talked to other people about the university… my old manager, she was… at another university…doing their doctorate in nursing, and I remember that she was having a very difficult time. And, I'm like, "hey,… look into the university… I'm sure they're able to do something for you." I've recommended the university absolutely to everybody that I can…

One participant shared their commitment stems from their family member being enrolled at the university. One participant replied that they would like to be an alumni of the university, but they are currently feeling stuck in their program and would consider transferring out if needed.

Sub-theme 3: Connection to the University

Participants were asked, "Describe how connected you feel to the university." 15 participants described some connection they felt to the university. Out of the 15, three participants mentioned professors having a direct impact on the connection they felt to the university. P14 said, "I do feel a level of connection… so far in this journey, every professor…I have worked with in courses have been extremely committed, and they've been accessible. They've been relatable." Five participants shared that the courses provided opportunities to

connect in group work, and some continued after the course. Two participants commented that they felt connected due to their relationship with their DFA. Three participants said their involvement with their university's Doctoral Student Association (DSA) connected them to the university. P2 shared, "Oh, I feel very connected because I connected myself…I feel very fortunate, actually. Right now, it is kind of a quiet time for the DSA… I can't wait to have regular meetings with everyone again."

Two participants mentioned they felt like everyone provided receptive support at the university, which was why they felt connected. One participant commented that they felt connected due to the frequent email communications the university sent out. One participant mentioned being alumnus increased their connection to the university. One participant shared that their connection shifts when they are not enrolled in coursework or have not met with the DFA. One participant said they did not feel connected at all to the university, but they felt incredibly connected to their DFA. Two participants expressed interest in furthering their connection to the university by creating more student groups and opportunities to connect with potential committee members.

Sub-theme 4: Online Student Experience

As a follow-up question related to the student's connection to the university, participants were asked, "How does being an online doctoral student affect your connection with the university?" Eight participants reported that the online experience had been good, and for some, a better experience at this university due to accessible professors willing to build relationships and connect using tools such as Zoom. P10 stated:

> This university was a much better experience because I had more contact with the professors…whereas with my previous institution, you're pretty much left on your own…

> at this university, it's almost like being in a class every week because I have to meet with the professor every week via Zoom.

P12 also commented about her online experience:

> …as far as getting into the course work or being able to communicate with the professors and being able to do the assignments, that was no problem whatsoever… the technical programs you have available as well… they will help walk you through it, and you have access to people…reasonable hours during the day… the assignments are very explicit. They're laid out with the objectives for the course… the professors…have office hours… I don't find being online to be intrusive or to be difficult…

Six participants thought being online was affecting their experience, and they reported feeling a lack of connection to students, potential committee members, and resources. Four participants reported feeling isolated in their program. One participant commented on how their job and life responsibilities often left them feeling alone when it came to school. One participant reported feeling as though being online didn't affect his experience.

Sub-theme 5: Online Student Experience Recommendations

Of the six participants who reported their online experience affected their educational journey, two provided recommendations for improvement. P4 expressed how an in-person colloquium would have assisted in her committee selection:

> …When I was at the end of my comps, originally the second set of Colloquium, you still went on campus for onboarding…they stopped that, and I was looking forward to going back on campus to talk to folks to choose my committee because some of these people… I had not seen…I wanted… to connect…I think that would have been a valuable

> experience. I live in Wisconsin now, which isn't that far from Ohio, and I still would come for a weekend or for a few days to make that kind of connection…

P15 added about not being able to take advantage of the university resources because she does not live locally to the university's campus:

> … unless you are local to the university you're studying at, there are… recommendations like you can always go to the university library and… use our onsite resources… and for someone who lives three/four hours away from Ohio, that's not exactly possible. It would be really cool if the university… partnered with other universities that are more nationwide…I live five minutes from Indiana University. It would be really cool if I could go to the IU library and use their resources with my university credentials.

Theme 4: Motivation

The theme, Motivation, was present in 244 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. This theme combined seven sub-themes: Autonomy, Competency, Connection and Trust, DFA Commitment to the University, Relationship Growth, Internal and External Motivation and DFA Supports Motivation codes. The Autonomy sub-theme was present in 28 transcript excerpts from 14 participants. The Competency sub-theme was present in 27 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The Connection and Trust sub-theme was present in 46 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The DFA Commitment to the university sub-theme was present in 18 transcripts excerpts from all 16 participants. The Relationship Growth sub-theme was present in 19 transcript excerpts from all 16 participants. The Internal and External Motivation sub-theme was present in 45 transcripts excerpts and from all 16 participants. The DFA Supports Motivation sub-theme was present in 61 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. The semi-structured interview questions related to this theme were: "Describe your confidence as a student in this doctoral program," "Describe the relationship you

have with your faculty advisor," "Describe how or if your doctoral faculty advisor has expressed that they care about you as a person," "Describe your faculty advisor's commitment to the university," "Describe how your relationship with your faculty advisor has changed over time," "Describe the motivation you have to complete your doctoral program," and "How has your faculty advisor supported your motivation?"

Sub-theme 1: Autonomy

Autonomy emerged as a theme in 14 participant interviews, with 12 participants reporting they received general process guidance and topic refinement coaching from their DFA, allowing them to start working on their dissertation independently. P12 commented that her DFA was helping her piece together different parts of the dissertation:

> I'm looking at her to be instrumental… in helping me when I go through and read the new guidelines… these are the steps that you're going to go through, and these are the goals that you're going to end up being able to practice… she is helping me to…put different puzzle pieces together so that I can try and make that fully possible...

Six participants reported their DFA assisted them with selecting committee members and informed them of the committee process. P6 said:

> … he also gave me guidance on who and how to pick my dissertation committee…it wasn't just the who, it was definitely the how because he didn't know a lot of people per se because he was an adjunct… he told me what to look for…He knew my topic, and he knew what I was interested in and where I wanted to go….

Two participants shared that their DFA helped keep them at a comfortable and maintainable pace to continue their programs. One of those participants expressed how they had a family member pass right after their comprehensive exam, and her DFA helped them maintain a steady pace consistent with the quality of work the student is capable of.

Sub-theme 2: Competency

Participants were asked, "Describe your confidence as a student in this doctoral program." Eleven participants shared they felt confident in their program. Of the 11, nine participants mentioned their DFA's guidance contributing to their confidence. P3 shared:

> …I like the faculty advisor, and I think it's the biggest benefit for a student there is… I think the benefit I had is I had a career educator… because my DFA had experience in not only working with students and doctoral candidates, but he also had teaching experience at every level before he and I established our relationship… he understood sometimes I needed to hold their hand, walk them through a little bit more. But, at some point, let them do their thing and hands off… let them walk through the process themselves.

Two participants mentioned professor competency and feedback helped them feel confident in the program. One participant said they felt confident because their courses built nicely upon their prior degree coursework. One participant suggested more feedback on coursework would help him feel even more confident in his program. Two participants mentioned needing to read more to build their framework and literature review. One participant said they are getting by one class at a time. Four participants reported they were not feeling confident in their program currently. Out of those four, P5 stated she was lost in her thought process for the dissertation:

> …after I finished my coursework, the best way I can describe it is, I feel like I've been dropped off with… I understand that the optimization process…is meant to be fairly self-starting…I've been doing the dissertation for a year, and I don't even have my proposal through yet… I'm getting to the point where I'm not confident in it.

Sub-theme 3: Connection and Trust

Participants were asked, "Describe the relationship you have with your faculty advisor," and the follow-up question, "Describe how or if your doctoral faculty advisor has expressed that they care about you as a person." Fourteen participants expressed their connection and trust in their relationship with their DFAs. P14 commented on how he could rely on his DFA throughout his journey and after:

> … I feel like throughout this journey, I can rely on her… then also… I could always lean on her as a colleague… it's…a three to four-year process of earning her respect as it relates to her referencing me as Dr., but then also obtaining a lifelong friend…

One participant shared that they had a challenging situation within the program, and her DFA encouraged her retention and grew trust in their relationship by assuring them about program quality. P7 referred to her DFA as more of a friend and someone she was set to connect with at the online university:

> …he is amazing. I love him. He's not just my faculty advisor, I feel like he's more a friend, a person who I can rely on not only for course-related things, but because… in our program, it's frustrating sometimes with work and life. It's an online program, and we do not see people.

One participant shared that they felt like his DFA valued them as a person and spent time connecting with them on being a parent and not just a student. Eight participants mentioned the idea of connecting with their DFA in part because they were relatable. One of those participants expressed how his DFA shared and asked about their life connecting on subjects such as their careers and favorite sports teams. Another participant mentioned that his DFA shared stories from her doctoral journey to comfort them about their grades. Two participants reported they did not have a connection of trust with the DFA. One participant commented that she would avoid

interaction with their DFA and did not pick him as her committee chair. Another participant shared how they felt like his DFA had a set 30-minute agenda that felt restrictive and not conducive to building a lasting relationship.

Sub-theme 4: DFA Commitment to the University

Out of the 16 participants interviewed, 9 or 56% of the sample reported their DFAs to be part-time or adjunct faculty at the university, and 7 or 44% of the sample reported their DFA to be full-time. The university reported the total population of DFAs consists of 88 part-time faculty, which is 77% of the total number of DFAs, and 26 full-time faculty, which is 23% of the total number of DFAs (Internal communication, February 20, 2023). Participants were asked, "Describe your faculty advisor's commitment to the university." Thirteen participants with a mix of part-time and full-time DFAs commented they felt like their DFA was committed to the university. Out of the 13, seven participants noted their DFA was involved and committed to multiple roles at the university, such as being a program chair. P9 shared how his DFA was developing university programs, "I actually think he's very involved with the university. He was sharing the other day that he developed, I think it was a business program… something different just to make it more intuitive to students…"

P3 said that his DFA's commitment increased his feelings of institutional commitment because they retired and returned to adjunct teaching at the university, "Yes, if anything, he kind of increased it a little bit… I know he's not a full-time faculty member, but he still is a representative of the university…. when he supported that, he just reinforced a commitment to the university." Two participants commented on how their DFA said they loved their job. Two participants with part-time DFAs said they did not believe their DFA was committed to the university. One of those participants mentioned how his DFA had possibly too many

responsibilities to spend more time on any one commitment. One participant with a part-time DFA was unsure of their commitment.

Sub-theme 5: Relationship Growth

Participants were asked, "Describe how your relationship with your faculty advisor has changed over time." Fourteen participants expressed how their relationship with their DFA evolved or grew over time. One participant expressed how their relationship with their DFA has grown from each meeting and how she comes away with more insights and engagement every time they meet. Another participant commented that he is hesitant to trust others when they first meet but that their relationship has evolved over time. P8 notes the connection she has with her DFA is hopeful to continue to dissertation due to the connection they've built from monthly meetings:

> … I think because you make that connection, right? Because if somebody contacts you every month and wants to know how you're doing, and where you're at, yes, you reciprocate… In the beginning, you're just trying to create a bond, and then that helps establish it throughout the dissertation.

One participant commented on how she feels more like a peer now with their DFA as they share and discuss research. P14 suggested how powerful it was to have a faculty member with them from the start of his journey to the end:

> … to be able to go back to my DFA and dissect that with her… I have mentors that have letters, and it's still not the same as someone following you throughout your entire journey and being able to understand your experience…

One participant maintained that their relationship with her DFA did not grow or change over time, and one participant suggested a negative shift in their relationship with their DFA over time as possibly their DFA might have had some other obligation or life circumstance pull her

attention away from the role. Out of the 16 participants, five reported they selected their DFA to continue as their committee chair, six reported their DFA did not continue as their committee chair, and five reported that their chair is yet to be determined.

Sub-theme 6: Internal and External Motivation

Participants were asked, "Describe the motivation you have to complete your doctoral program." Eight participants referred to themselves as having high levels of internal motivation. Two participants mentioned how they often finish once they set a goal for themselves. P10 shared his story about following in his uncle's footsteps:

> I had an uncle who had a Doctor in Education… I really admired him and what he went through to get it. I always told myself I wanted to do what he did. I wanted to follow in his footsteps, and that's one of the motivating factors. He got his EdD in 1974 using a typewriter… he did it the hard way… if he could do it that way, why can't I do it this way?... that's what I'm trying to prove to myself. And, he encouraged me as well…

Six participants reported that one of their main motivating factors for being a student in the doctoral program was being a good example to family members, and four participants alluded to pursuing school at the same time as other family members being a motivating factor. P15 expressed that she wanted her kids to see that getting an education is possible for them, too:

> I am a first-generation college graduate… I graduated Cum Laude with my masters… I'm sitting with a doctorate at 4.0 is super confidence-boosting, and it gives me no reason to give up… I have three daughters…I don't want any of them to look at their situations and say, "I can't do it.… Because I saw my mom and how committed she was, and she did it. And, she had all of us at home… and she still did it."

Obtaining a new job or retirement plans were mentioned as motivating factors for seven participants. One of those seven participants shared how they hope this degree will open doors

for him as the barriers of their intersectionality sometimes present challenges for their career advancement. Three participants said contributing to the community or their field of study was motivating. Two participants shared that getting their terminal degree was motivating, while two others expressed their goal to become an expert.

Three participants shared that being in coursework and learning helped motivate them to persist. One of those participants commented on how she finds motivation in the structure of coursework and the interaction with professors and peers. Graduation and degree obtainment was mentioned by two participants as being their motivating factor. Two participants expressed how their support system at school and work fueled their motivation. One participant commented how it is motivating to see the graduates at the university and how fellow students make up their support system. Time and money spent on the degree contributed to two participants' motivation.

Sub-theme 7: DFA Supports Motivation

Participants were asked the follow-up question, "How has your faculty advisor supported your motivation?" Fifteen participants reported their DFA did help support their program motivation. P1 commented on how her DFA supported her:

> … she is 100% my greatest cheerleader… she knows that I'm going to finish this. And she's like… "Hey, what do we have to do? You know we've got you." …..It's taken time for us to get to a cadence that allowed us to… lean on each other… I can't express… how grateful I am that she did those things because when things went south, and I was in trouble caring for my mom and trying to keep all the balls in the air, we had a relationship such that I did not hesitate to reach out to her directly, text her on her cell phone and say, "this is what happened to me."

One participant commented on having the faculty advisor as an available option was motivating as her previous institutions did not offer the tool. One participant commented how weekly meetings with their DFA have kept her motivated when she wasn't feeling self-motivated. P4 also shared how important the weekly meetings were with her DFA:

> The motivation wanes… I have a very high-profile project at work that's due... But, I do have… consistency, and meeting with her often reminds me of why this is important… I've made that commitment to her… I'm motivated to make sure that I honor that. And, on the other hand, I want to get this finished, and she's helping with that also… my connection with my DFA does help my motivation because I renew it every time I see her.

One participant commented how they admire their DFA because she is a positive and aspiring woman, and they never had a relationship like this one in their previous schooling. Another participant expressed how they want to be like their DFA in the future by giving back to the university and helping shape future students. One participant shared how their DFA would consistently build her up and express how he believed in her, motivating her to keep going. One participant reported that their DFA did not support their motivation to persist in the program, but she was able to find motivation internally. One participant shared how her first DFA before she switched made demotivating comments about her age and the degree payoff.

Theme 5: Non-traditional Student Experience

All 16 participants who were interviewed fell into the "non-traditional" student category. The theme, Non-traditional Student Experience, emerged in 30 transcript excerpts and from all 16 participants. This theme combined two sub-themes: Flexibility and Resiliency. The Flexibility

sub-theme was present in 11 transcripts excerpts from 9 participants. The Resiliency sub-theme was present in 19 transcript excerpts from 14 participants.

Sub-theme 1: Flexibility

Flexibility was a common theme that emerged from nine participant interviews. The nine participants shared their need for an online, flexible doctoral program to complement their busy lives, which included four participants mentioning having families and all nine working full-time. P15 said that her DFA assured her that other students in the program also had families:

> … I've got four daughters, so I have a lot of stuff going on in my home. One of my daughters has epilepsy, so there are very short notice emergencies with her, and that was one of my biggest concerns with continuing my study. Am I going to have enough time between taking care of my daughter and taking care of the others and getting my work done? …he has done a phenomenal job putting my mind at ease, and making me feel like I'm not the only one who has family struggles.

One participant strained to find time to connect more with the university due to having a four-year-old and a two-hour commute. P13 commented about why she chose this university's program, "… flexibility seemed like something that would work really well since I work full time, and a lot of programs I saw it was going to be a little harder to navigate the two different roles."

Sub-theme 2: Resiliency

Resiliency was a common theme that emerged from 13 participant interviews. Seven participants shared that they had older family members who came with certain caregiving responsibilities, or they had lost a family member during their doctoral program. P2 expressed:

> …I had lost my stepfather… then in the next year, I lost my mother. So, there was a lot going on behind the scenes in my life, working full-time, trying to take at least two courses per semester, and deal with the aging parents who did then ultimately go on to their reward.

Two participants shared about their family members passing during the program and being able to lean on their DFA for support, and P14 shared:

> …I think that having somebody who's gone through that and my DFA's unique experience is tied to mind… during her journey, she lost her husband, and… during this journey…, I lost my sister… I didn't ask for that specifically in my search… We often talk about how I'm doing mentally, how I'm doing as it relates to taking care of myself…

Four participants said they had a significant gap in education between their master's and the start of their doctoral program, and one of those participants commented on how it had been 40 years of working full-time since she took courses.

Three participants were transfer students, and one participant shared how she took time off from their original program due to being stuck in the dissertation and having a wounded son at home and took advantage of this university's program because of the offered transfer credit. Two participants shared that they had health issues during their program. Two participants expressed that their work and home lives left minimal time available for school. One of those participants expressed almost quitting the program due to being overwhelmed with life, but she decided to stay after she talked with her DFA. Three participants mentioned being first-generation college student, and one of those participants mentioned how her parents were excited about them finishing this degree. One participant shared that this was their first educational experience in the U.S. One participant commented that they were not local to the university.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four included an in-depth examination of this study's data collection and analysis. The chapter began with the research question and continued with the description of data collection, demographics of the sample, detailed data analysis, and themes and subthemes that emerged from interview data. Five themes were identified: DFA-Student Pairing Process and Expectations, Academic Integration, Social Integration, Motivation, and Non-traditional Student Experience. Chapter five includes conclusions and recommendations for future study.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) support online doctoral student motivation to progress in their Professional Doctorate (PD) at a private, professionally-focused university. The conceptual framework of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory guided the investigation of several gaps in the literature relating to doctoral student attrition. Specifically, gaps in the literature directed additional research toward online, non-traditional, PD student perceptions of factors contributing to their feelings of isolation and motivation, academic and social integration, student-faculty relationships, and faculty advising. Chapter four's data collection focused on five themes that were found from 16 conducted interviews: (1) DFA-Student Pairing Process and Expectations, (2) Academic Integration, (3) Social Integration, (4) Motivation, and (5) Non-traditional Student Experience. This researcher intended to make recommendations on the findings of this study to improve services offered by DFAs at the university. Benefits of the DFA-student relationship were proposed for universities with similar populations.

Chapter five includes a statement of the research question and a discussion of the findings reported in chapter four compared to the themes and framework explored in chapter two's literature review. Then, this researcher summarizes and further explains the limitations of the study. Next, this researcher proposes implications for practitioners and leaders in higher education. Lastly, the chapter includes recommendations for future research and concludes with a dissertation summary.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the data collection analysis of the 16 qualitative interviews were included in chapter four. Five themes emerged from the analysis: (1) DFA-Student Pairing Process and

Expectations, (2) Academic Integration, (3) Social Integration, (4) Motivation, and (5) Non-traditional Student Experience. Below, each theme is analyzed and discussed in relation to the study's research question: "What are students' perceptions of how their DFAs support their motivation in an online, PD program?"

Theme 1: DFA-Student Pairing and Expectations

The DFA-student pairing process led by the university was not memorable or meaningful to 12 or 75% of participants in this sample, but one participant was pleasantly surprised with his pairing because he was very specific in his ask for a DFA. The pairing process as self-selection reported by four or 25% of participants provided meaningful accounts of their connection and satisfaction with the match. These data suggest student involvement in the pairing process was valuable. Poor or mismatched advisor-student pairings are commonly associated as a cause for dissatisfaction and attrition (Golde, 2005; Joy et al., 2015; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017). By evaluating student feedback on the pairing process and the DFA program at the university, improvements can be made to increase student success and contribute to online doctoral program research (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Chipere, 2015; Cherrstrom et al., 2018; Golde, 2005; Levitch & Shaw, 2014).

The online doctoral students in this sample had never had a DFA relationship in previous schooling experiences. They started the relationship with unclear expectations of what services the DFA might provide and their ownership of maintaining the relationship. Clear student expectations allow meaningful interaction and progression in student goal work and lower attrition rates (Golde, 2005; Hart-Baldridge, 2020). Universities can include expectations of their program resources and services in handbooks, orientations, and other easily navigated materials to ease student transition.

When DFAs also set transparent expectations with students, meetings and overall services productively add a shared value to program progression measurements of academic and social integration, autonomy, and competency which ultimately lead to student satisfaction, motivation, and lower attrition rates (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Drake, 2013; Hart-Baldridge, 2020; Maddox, 2017; Tinto, 1975, Walker et al., 2008). Four or 25% of participants mentioned their DFAs setting clear expectations that scaffolded their learning and usually entailed building their literature library outside of coursework. Frequent DFA communication and monthly meetings were a source of student satisfaction for five or 31% of participants in the program, and this coincides with the literature regarding the needs and retention of online, non-traditional, adult learner, doctoral students (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Bland et al., 2012; Cassuto, 2013; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jameson et al., 2021; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015).

While both graduate academic advisors and DFAs are offered to doctoral students at the university, less than half utilized their graduate academic advisor. These data suggest the need for the university to evaluate communications sent to students regarding the available academic advisor and DFA services with direction and acknowledgment of the *Doctoral Studies Handbook* (2022-2023). Additional training on how to meet the needs of the online, non-traditional doctoral student population could benefit both the graduate academic advisor and DFA (Danver, 2016; Donaldson et al., 2016; Hatch & Garcia, 2017; Khalil & Williamson, 2014; McKenzie et al., 2017; Mu & Fosnacht, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2014; Schwebel et al., 2012; Stein et al., 2013).

Theme 2: Academic Integration

At the university, all 16 or 100% of participants reported their commitment to finish their degrees. Though the reasoning for student commitment varied, common themes included time and money already invested and support systems invested in their success. The DFA was positively linked to academic integration, as 14 or 88% of participants reported their DFA's assistance with educational development, and 15 or 94% of participants suggested their DFA's supportive role in their intellectual development. The DFA's involvement with goal obtainment was linked in 11 or 68% of participants, and Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals were linked to increased doctoral student motivation and student success (Drake, 2013; Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jameson et al., 2021). All academic integration indicators from DFA service measured at 69% or higher. The literature notes the online, non-traditional, doctoral student population sometimes struggles to find the time, resources, and faculty assistance to achieve academic integration (Gardner, 2013; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Martinez et al., 2013; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). The DFA tool, with set communications and agenda that is strongly encouraged by the university's program shows a positive correlation to adding to or filling in the gaps of academic integration otherwise offered at the university for this population to utilize and to increase retention (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Maddox, 2017; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Tinto, 1975; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015).

Theme 3: Social Integration

Rourke and Kanuka (2012) suggest social integration was needed for online doctoral students. Online courses and services offered by the university were reported as a sense of satisfaction for eight or 50% of participants. The online component influenced the educational experience of six or 38% of participants because they did not meet students or professors in person and participated in coursework via the online learning management system. Being online contributed isolation for four or 25% of participants. The fact that 50% of online doctoral student participants reported feeling satisfied with their online experience at the university is significant as the literature reports more of how the online component produces challenges, less faculty interaction, and produces feelings of isolation for online doctoral students (Cockrell & Shelley, 2011; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; O'Keefe, 2013; Orellana et al., 2016; Protopsaltis & Baum, 2019; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019; Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2017; Sverdlik & Hall, 2020). University connectedness was reported by 15 or 94% of participants, with five or 31% of participants mentioning their opportunities to connect with fellow students as their source, five or 31% linked their DFA as their primary source of connection, and two or 13% provided input on how to build more connection. Connection with other students was mentioned as the drive of connection for six or 38% of participants, and the university's Doctoral Student Association (DSA) was mentioned as a satisfier for their online engagement. The DFA assisted with professional development with five or 31% of participants. Commitment to the university was pledged by 15 or 94% of participants. For five or 31% of participants, the DFA was specifically referenced as their main source of commitment, which is consistent in the literature (Kumar & Coe, 2017; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Woolderink et al., 2015). The data suggest that the DFA-student relationship has the potential to provide a source of social integration for the online doctoral

student population at the university and add to student feelings of university commitment and retention (Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Mansson & Meyers, 2012; McAlpine, 2012; Sandoval, 2018; Tinto, 1975).

Theme 4: Motivation

Fifteen or 94% of the participants reported their DFA relationship to have supported their motivation for the program and listed monthly check-ins to be a huge positive distinguisher of this university's program. Motivation was noted to have a direct positive correlation with online doctoral persistence and retention (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Jameson & Torres, 2019; Spaulding & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Stupinsky et al., 2018). The DFA directly impacted 12 or 75% of participant levels of autonomy primarily by providing dissertation process guidance throughout their program, allowing them to work independently on their dissertation work. Preparation for the dissertation and understanding the dissertation process includes students who are capable of exhibiting autonomy and competency, which results in motivation and higher completion rates (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Johnson, 2011; Litalien & Guay; 2015; Mason, 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012; Sandoval, 2018). The DFA was reported as building competency in nine or 56% of participants. The autonomy and competency resulting from the DFA-student relationship suggested the DFA may positively support the online doctoral student's internal locus of control and lead to increased motivation and retention (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Hart-Baldridge, 2020; Jameson & Torres, 2019). Fourteen or 88% of participants mentioned the connection and trust they built with their DFAs over time to be significant, with eight mentioning their DFA's ability to relate and others remarking on the idea of feeling cared about to have impacted their motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Joy et al., 2015; Mansson & Meyers, 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012).

Online doctoral students' motivation and self-determination for retention was positively linked to academic and social integration leading to student autonomy, competency, and the relatedness provided by the DFA-student relationship in at least 56% of participants interviewed for this study.

High DFA institutional commitment was perceived by 13 or 81% of participants, including 7 or 54% of full-time faculty and 6 or 46% of part-time faculty. The three or 19% of DFAs that were reported to show no indication of commitment were part-time faculty. These commitment levels suggest full-time faculty DFAs are providing services that are perceived to show more commitment to the university than part-time faculty DFAs, which is consistent with the findings of Delotell (2014) and Hollman (2013). The results of the DFA becoming the participants' committee chair were inconclusive as five or 31% of participants chose their DFAs to continue as their committee chairs, while six or 38% did not choose or were unable to select their DFA to become their chair. Committee chair selection is yet to be determined by five or 31% of participants. Internal motivation was reported by eight or 50% of participants as a driving force to progress in the program, which may also be implications from the qualifiers to participate in this study. Family was the main motivation for six or 38% of participants, while seven or 44% stated career ambitions were their motivation, three or 19% of participants referenced contributing to their field, three or 19% of participants mentioned coursework, and two or 13% of participants shared that support systems helped keep them motivated. It would behoove universities to consider what motivates their students and then create specific resources and services that cater to those motivators (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Golde, 2005; Levitch & Shaw, 2014).

Theme 5: Non-traditional Student Experience

Online, non-traditional doctoral students seek university programs that offer flexibility due to competing life demands and commitments of their time (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Maddox, 2017; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). Flexible online programs were reported as a necessity from nine or 56% of participants, while four or 44% specifically mentioned having families and all nine or 100% reported working full-time. Richardson (2002) introduced his metatheory of resilience, alluding to an individual's ability to overcome obstacles. Themes of resiliency emerged in 13 or 81% of participant interviews, with seven or 54% of participants reporting they experienced a loss or caregiving responsibilities during their program, and two or 15% specifically mentioned their DFA relationship as integral to their retention. A significant education gap prior to starting the doctoral degree was reported by four or 31% of participants, while three or 23% of participants had transferred from other programs, and three or 23% reported being first-generation college students. Lee et al. (2013) and Maddox (2017) add that resilience also references the ability of the student to take the negative experiences or obstacles they overcome and turn them into opportunities to thrive, or these experiences can lead to attrition. The need for flexibility and the stories of resiliency color the online, non-traditional doctoral student experience and in this population, were often connected to the heart of their motivation or their "why" they are persisting in their doctoral programs (Hill & Conceição, 2020; Jairam & Kahl, 2012; Martinez et al., 2013; Neale-McFall & Ward, 2015; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019). For example, many participants shared that family was the reason behind their needing flexible online options for education but also that family was their main motivation to obtain their degree. The DFA must be highly trained and capable of providing meaningful relatedness that complements the non-

traditional student's innate resilient nature to fuel their motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Joy et al., 2015; Mansson & Meyers, 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012). McCray and Joseph-Richard (2021) add that specific university programs should center on complementing online doctoral students' well-being and focus on building resilience. Considering 15 or 94% of 16 participants connected their DFA relationship to their motivation, this suggests students may perceive the DFA to bring them closer to the motivating contributors that hold meaning for them and ultimately drive their motivation, commitment, and retention.

Limitations

Limitations were previously noted in chapters one and three. The qualifiers for participation in this study included participants who had communicated with their DFA at least once per term, may have inherently avoided diverse feedback. The snowball sampling (non-probability, non-random) method was appropriate for the study as the identified population is hard to locate. Referrals came from previous interviewees and other doctoral students in the university's programs. However, the snowball method can lead to sampling bias. People refer those whom they know and have similar traits, and this sampling method can have a potential sampling bias. Though the researcher was able to obtain saturation, the limited sample size and inability to produce a representative sample of the four doctoral programs means there is no guarantee about the representativeness of samples or the actual pattern of population distribution.

Qualitative data collection and findings are subject to the researcher's unconscious bias and reported via the researcher's lens of understanding, which can sometimes skew results (Kekeya, 2021; Redmond, 2018; Yin, 2017). The qualitative methodology of case study inherently has the potential to produce low generalizability as the study includes a unique location and sample population (Kekeya, 2021; Yin, 2017). The online doctoral student

perceptions of how their DFAs supported their motivation to persist in their programs were explored in this study, but the perceptions from the DFA viewpoints are missing and could add value and meaning to results. Regardless of the stated limitations, this study provided some clarity in respect of the motivational impact of the DFA for online doctoral students at a private, professionally-focused university.

Implication to Practice

The first implication to practice notes that the DFA-student relationship at the university, which adhered to the guidelines and responsibilities set in the university's *Doctoral Studies Handbook* (2022-2023), has the ability to support academic and social integration leading to increased autonomy, competency, and relatedness which drives motivation and retention for online doctoral students (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Tinto, 1975, 2012). The study addressed the gap in the literature that Jameson et al. (2021) suggested as a need to examine student perceptions of how faculty supports motivation.

A second implication from the study findings is that a more detailed DFA intake pairing investigation process, which closely aligns the DFA and student in communication, feedback style, personality, interests, domain, etc., was supported in the literature as a process that may increase student persistence and completion (Golde, 2005; Joy et al., 2015; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017). One participant suggested more opportunity to connect with potential committee members is needed, and the idea of connection here might also transcend to the DFA-student relationship pairing.

Thirdly, clearly defined expectations for the DFA role and what students expect from the relationship are necessary to drive communication, student satisfaction, and program progress (Golde, 2005; Hart-Baldridge, 2020). Centrally located resources with role definitions and

expectations are suggested. Students and faculty should be directed to the resources at multiple points in their journey or employment to maintain consistency.

As a fourth implication, online, non-traditional doctoral student learners benefit from proactive, meaningful, and frequent communication (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Cassuto, 2013; Curtin et al., 2016; Dieker et al., 2014; Gardner, 2008; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gilmer et al., 2016; Golde, 2005; Hagenauer & Violet, 2014; Jones, 2013; Joy et al., 2015; Kuhn et al., 2015; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Kumar & Dawson, 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Mansson & Myers, 2012; Orellana et al., 2016; Rademaker et al., 2016; Roberis et al., 2019; Shook & Keup, 2012; Stock & Siegfried, 2014; Walker et al., 2008; Woolderink et al., 2015). The DFA program at the university builds this piece of communication into the DFA role expectations and responsibilities in the *Doctoral Studies Handbook* (2022-2023), and participants noted that this communication had a direct effect on their motivation, which correlates to the gap in the literature related to faculty-student relationships and how they are built into institutional programming (Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Tinto, 1975).

Fifthly, participants noted the advantages of having a DFA they worked with from the start and throughout their program. The relationship's longevity helped build trust, connectedness, and familiarity (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Hunter & Devine, 2016; Joy et al., 2015; Mansson & Meyers, 2012; Pitchforth et al., 2012). It was important the participants felt like their DFA understood their personal lives and were familiar with their work. If universities cannot replicate longevity in DFA pairings, trust-building activities and suggested meeting agendas may help build connectedness.

A sixth implication is if full-time faculty members are perceived to show higher levels of commitment to the university, administrators might consider assigning more students to full-time

faculty DFAs or investigating how they can impact and increase the commitment levels of part-time faculty suggested by Delotell (2014). If the university intends to utilize both an academic advisor and a DFA, then there is an increased need for training, role definition clarity, improved communication with students, and increased proactive connection opportunities to reach online, non-traditional doctoral students (Orellana et al., 2016; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017).

A seventh implication to practice is that non-traditional students benefit from highly trained faculty and advising support as they typically have limited time and access to assistance (Gardner, 2013; Levitch & Shaw, 2014; Martinez et al., 2013; Rockinson-Szapkin, 2019), as reported by participants with the emerging theme of flexibility and the educational and intellectual development, goal setting, connection, and motivation they received from their DFA relationship.

An eighth implication to practice is the idea of making all university offered resources available to distance learners. The online university serves non-traditional students worldwide, and one participant suggested the concept of localizing resources would aid in her program persistence. She struggled to find available resources and was not local to the university's library.

As a ninth implication, the advising as teaching model suggests advisors incorporate teaching as they scaffold student learning. The DFA can incorporate academic and social integration with threads of relatedness into their skillset as they build a student's autonomy and competency (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b; Drake, 2013; Hart-Baldridge, 2020; He & Hutson, 2016; NACADA, 2006; Reynolds, 2013; Tinto, 1975).

A tenth implication to practice suggests that the DFA role closely aligns with that of a mentor. It is a long-term relationship, includes frequent communications, and relies on

investment from both parties (Campbell et al., 2012; Floyd et al., 2017). The possibility of mentorship may depend on the close alignment in research and domain of the DFA-student pairing. The university must be clear in faculty training if mentorship is an intended outcome of the DFA role. Online, non-traditional, adult doctoral learners reported feeling as though they were cared about as a person and formed a bond or connection with their DFA increased their motivation to persist (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Dieker et al., 2014; Harding-Dekam et al., 2012; Kumar & Coe, 2017; Litalien & Guay, 2015; Roumell & Bolliger, 2017).

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the qualifications to participate in this study is that the doctoral student had been meeting with their DFA at least once per term. This qualifier suggests a specific sample of students that may be particularly engaged and perhaps skewed results of the overall health of the DFA program. This researcher suggests future research to explore all student experiences with their DFAs. Further research could provide results indicating what does not work well in a DFA-student relationship and could investigate the motivational results from a negative or withholding DFA experience.

As with any qualitative research study, the researcher holds potential bias in data collecting and reporting, and this researcher suggests future research using quantitative methods to provide more objectivity and possible statically significant results (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Future researchers could replicate the study to check the reliability and with a larger sample population to increase the representation of the whole population (Yin, 2017). The study might also be replicated with similar populations at other universities (Yin, 2017). Though the demographics of age, gender, and ethnicity/race were documented, they were not analyzed for

their result correlations. This researcher recommends further analysis of how these demographics affect the DFA-student relationship.

The results of the study indicate full-time faculty DFAs have perceived higher levels of commitment to the university. This researcher sees an opportunity to investigate further as to how this perceived commitment translates into offered services and studying university commitment levels with part-time faculty and how they suggest building commitment (Delotell, 2014). This study explored the student perceptions of their DFAs and how they supported their motivation. This researcher proposes gathering the perceptions from the DFA's perspective and interviewing DFA and student pairs to compare perceptions from similar experiences. Investigating student motivators can drive university offered services and resources, and this researcher suggests universities assess their programs to find out what services or resources might be lacking for their specific populations (Barnes & Randall, 2012; Golde, 2005; Levitch & Shaw, 2014). Future research might investigate the correlation directly between the DFA-student relationship and how it contributes to online, non-traditional doctoral student resiliency. This study provided data to suggest a correlation between the DFA advising method at the university to the advising as teaching approach. Future research could investigate DFA advising methods and their impact on online, doctoral student motivation. Finally, this researcher suggests combining data triangulation methods with interviews, such as focus groups or quantitative surveys, to strengthen reliability and validity (Creswell, 2014; Pajo, 2018; Yin, 2017).

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how DFAs support online doctoral student motivation to progress in their PD at a private, professionally-focused university. The four phases of case study, including a research goal, design protocol and

description of the population, data preparation and collection, and data analysis have been completed (Yin, 2017). This researcher made recommendations from the study that may improve the DFA-offered services at the university and suggested potential benefits of a DFA-student relationship for other universities with similar populations. Chapter five included a discussion of the findings from the following five themes that emerged from 16 student interviews on the conceptual framework lens of Tinto's (1975, 2012) Student Integration Theory and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2012a, 2012b) Self-Determination Theory: DFA-Student Pairing Process and Expectations, Academic Integration, Social Integration, Motivation, and Non-traditional Student Experience. Limitations of the study were identified and summarized. The researcher included this study's implications for future leaders and practitioners in higher education which may benefit various audiences, including higher education and student affairs leaders, students, research scholars, and higher education professional organizing bodies. Lastly, future research recommendations were presented for further research in the field.

The data from the 16 semi-structured interviews suggest the online, doctoral students perceived their DFA to support their academic and social integration (Tinto, 1975, 2012), as well as their autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2012a, 2012b). Of the 16 participants in this study, 15 or 94% reported that their DFA supported their motivation for their online PD program at the university. The DFA-student relationship provided a positive correlation between the online, non-traditional doctoral student and the motivation to persist in their programs.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Email Subject Line: Qualitative Dissertation Research: Interviews to Explore Your Experience with Your Doctoral Faculty Advisor

Dear Doctoral Student,

My name is Julie Barnickle, and I am a doctoral candidate at Franklin University. I am reaching out today to ask for your help in providing qualitative feedback on your perceptions of how your doctoral faculty advisor has supported your motivation to progress in your professional doctorate. Please anticipate your interview to take approximately 45-60 minutes via Zoom. I am conducting this research in the capacity of a doctoral candidate and not as a Franklin employee. Please be assured all participation and results will be kept in the strictest confidence.

I am seeking participants who have been actively meeting with their DFAs at least once per term either in person, by phone, via Zoom, or through significant email or text message exchange.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding the study, please respond by emailing me at barnic01@email.franklin.edu, and we will coordinate a Zoom interview session that works well for us both.

I sincerely appreciate your time,

Julie Barnickle

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Julie Barnickle, Principal Investigator
Project Title: Students' Perceptions of How Their Faculty Advisors Support Their Motivation in Online Professional Practice Doctoral Programs

Hello, my name is Julie Barnickle, and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student in the Ed.D. at Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio. As part of the requirements for earning my doctorate, I am doing a research project.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of my project is to explore students' perceptions of how their faculty advisors support their motivation in online professional practice doctoral programs. I am inviting you to participate in my project because you are a student at Franklin University in an online professional doctorate program with an assigned faculty advisor.

What am I being asked to do?

If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for a scheduled online interview using Zoom at a time convenient for you.

Taking part in this study is your choice.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits you would normally have.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

The interview will consist of 16 questions and will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. The interview questions will include questions like, " Describe the relationship you have with your faculty advisor" and "What are your expectations for a faculty advisor?."

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I will audio record the interview so that I can focus on our conversation and later transcribe the interview for data analysis. You will be one of about 16 people I will interview for this study.

With your permission, I will also video record the interview so that we can see each other and have a comfortable conversation.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Julie Barnickle, Principal Investigator
Project Title: Students' Perceptions of How Their Faculty Advisors Support Their Motivation in Online Professional Practice Doctoral Programs

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. If you become stressed or uncomfortable with a question, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

I will keep all study data for a minimum of three years before destroying it. Only my Franklin University dissertation chair and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The Franklin University IRB has the right to review research records for this study.

After I upload a copy of the Zoom interview transcripts, I will erase or destroy the audio and video recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I

will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Future Research Studies:

Identifiers will be removed from your identifiable private information and after removal of identifiers, the data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies and we will not seek further approval from you for these future studies.

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study, please email me at barnic01@email.franklin.edu. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Storey, at Valerie.storey@franklin.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Franklin University IRB Office at 614-947-6037 or irb@franklin.edu.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date the following signature page and return it to: barnic01@email.franklin.edu

Keep a copy of the informed consent for your records and reference.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Julie Barnickle, Principal Investigator
Project Title: Students' Perceptions of How Their Faculty Advisors Support Their Motivation in Online Professional Practice Doctoral Programs

Signature(s) for Consent:

I agree to join the research project entitled, "Students' Perceptions of How Their Faculty Advisors Support Their Motivation in Online Professional Practice Doctoral Programs."

Please initial next to either
"Yes" or "No" to the following:

_____ Yes _____ No I consent to be audio recorded for the interview portion of this research.

_____ Yes _____ No I consent to being video recorded for the interview portion of this research.

Name of Participant (Print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Ice Breaker:

Why did you choose this university for your doctoral program?

RQ1: What are students' perceptions of how their Doctoral Faculty Advisors (DFAs) support their motivation in online, professional practice doctoral programs?

Interview Questions:

1) Describe how you were matched with your faculty advisor.
2) What expectations has your faculty advisor set for communication and progress?
   Follow up: What forms of communication do you use with your faculty advisor?
   Follow up: How have they have supported your progress?
3) What are your expectations for a faculty advisor?
   Follow up: How and in what ways have they been met?
4) Describe the relationship you have with your faculty advisor.
   Follow up: Describe how or if your doctoral faculty advisor has expressed that they care about you as a person.
5) Describe your faculty advisor's role in your educational development.
   Follow up: How has your faculty advisor encouraged the progression of your writing or research skills?
6) Describe your faculty advisor's role in your professional development and growth.

Follow up: How has your faculty advisor encouraged your engagement with colleagues and your field of study?

7) Describe your faculty advisor's role in your intellectual development.

Follow up: How, and in what ways, does your faculty advisor challenge and/or spark your thinking and assumptions?

8) Describe how connected you feel to the university.

Follow up: How does being an online doctoral student affect your connection with the university?

9) Describe your confidence as a student in this doctoral program?

Follow up: How has your faculty advisor supported your confidence?

10) Explain how/if your faculty advisor assisted you with goal setting?

11) Describe your commitment to finish your doctoral degree?

Follow up: How has your faculty advisor affected this commitment?

Follow up: Why are you pursuing your doctoral degree?

Follow up: What are the obstacles that you have or anticipate having as you complete the degree?

Follow up: How likely is it you will finish this degree?

12) Describe your feelings of institutional commitment towards the university.

Follow up: How has your faculty advisor affected your commitment towards the university?

13) Describe your faculty advisor's commitment to the university.

Follow up: Is your faculty advisor an adjunct professor or full-time professor at the university?

14) Describe the motivation you have to complete your doctoral program.

Follow up: How has your faculty advisor supported your motivation?

Follow up: What other things have motivated you to progress in your program?

15) Describe your experience of having both an academic advisor and a faculty advisor?

Follow up: How did you utilize the two different advisors?

16) Describe how your relationship with your faculty advisor has changed over time.

Thank you for your time participating in this interview regarding your perception of how doctoral faculty advising supports program motivation at a private, nonprofit, independent university in the Midwest. Again, your responses will be kept confidential. If you have any questions regarding this dissertation project, please email me at barnic01@email.franklin.edu. I may need to contact you with follow-up questions regarding your responses; please keep in mind your participation is voluntary.