

**A MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT SATISFACTION LEVELS  
AS A MEANS OF PROGRAM EVALUATION: AN EXAMINATION OF BAKER  
UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

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## ABSTRACT

Considering the social, professional and academic issues currently challenging the field of education, not to mention an aging workforce in the area of school leadership/administration, many graduate level school leadership programs are taking steps to redesign the theoretical context and traditional delivery systems that have long been a trademark of these programs. As the need for qualified, capable school leaders continues to grow, student attrition rates in doctoral programs in education remain high. A primary reason for this increasing gap between supply and demand is a failure by many institutions to properly consider and assess student satisfaction within their programs.

The Mission of Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership program is to develop leaders who have a strong knowledge base and a sense of beliefs and values supported by educational research and best practices; and who have the passion, commitment, and skills to transfer knowledge, beliefs, and values into policy and practice. The two fold purpose of this study was to determine the level of overall satisfaction by students participating in the first two cohorts in Baker University's Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program, and the influence of various demographic factors on program satisfaction.

A convenience sample of two cohorts of students (n=46) enrolled in Baker Ed. D. program (from 2005 and 2006), who agreed to participate in the study, were administered a questionnaire aimed at assessing their satisfaction in the areas of Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction. The findings of the study showed that participants in the study expressed general satisfaction across all of the design components of the Baker Ed. D. program and also identified some areas that may

require further examination/consideration. The researcher recommended that these findings may be used to guide the university's efforts in continuous program improvement. The results of this study may also serve as an initial indication of program quality.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The preparation of educational leaders continues to be imperative to the success and viability of the educational system of the United States (Hoffman and Snyder 213). In considering the significance of effective school leadership, Marzano indicates school leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform (172). In addition, Hargreaves and Fink cite several key studies that indicate the single key force in leading to meaningful long-term change toward effective school reform is proficient building level leadership (17). Further, a 1998 study by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) sought to verify the correlation between the quality of leadership and student achievement.

The data from our meta-analysis demonstrates that there is, in fact, a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement. We found that the average effect size (expressed as a correlation) between leadership and student achievement is .25, which means that as leadership improves so does student achievement (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty 49).

While the benefits of effective school leadership appear well supported by current research, recent studies also warn of a looming shortage of highly qualified school leaders. According to a study conducted by the Educational Research Service in the fall of 1998, the United States is already facing a national trend of shortages of qualified candidates for public school administrative positions (Gilman and Lannan-Givens 73). An estimated 40% of the 93,200 school administrators across the nation were expected to

retire by 2007 (Ferrandino and Tirozzi 17). Unlike previous issues related to administrator shortages, collected data indicate the prospect of a school leadership shortage is no longer a problem specific to rural or inner city America, but instead is expected to impact suburban districts as well.

Ferrandino and Tirozzi predict not only will there be few administrative candidates in the pool from which to select, fewer of those available will be highly qualified (12). Highly qualified school leaders not only possess a high level of knowledge in child development, pedagogy, standards, curriculum and assessment; they also have leadership capacity (Lambert 61). According to Lambert, leadership capacity is the ability effectively to involve others in the process of creating visions for schools, collaborating with others regarding the vision and keeping the goal of student achievement at the forefront of all decisions (61). These are skills that school districts require of their administrative candidates, and colleges attempt to instill within their students.

Recognizing the challenges facing our public school system and the documented relationship between effective school leadership and student achievement, a shortage of well-trained, able leaders has the potential to create a crisis in our schools. While non-degree seeking opportunities for professional development continue to address issues related to school leadership, the primary sources for acquiring administrative licensure and training are college and university graduate programs.

In a 1999 study, The Digest of Educational Statistics reported that of the 172.2 million Americans aged 25 and over, 1.1% have doctoral degrees. Additional statistics from the Digest reveal that the largest single field for which doctorates were awarded was

in education (31). However, education not only leads the field in degrees awarded, it is also the front runner for student attrition. Nearly 50% of those students entering into doctoral programs do not complete their university program (Ogden 19).

One solution to the impending shortage of qualified school administrators is to increase retention rates in education doctoral programs. The benefits of, and means to, improving retention rates in doctoral programs is an increasingly common topic among graduate admissions professionals, administrators and academic departments (Kerlin 26). However, the need to increase retention rates is not only a concern of higher education professionals, it is also a primary source of concern for prospective students considering the tremendous time, financial, and emotional commitment required to pursue a doctoral degree.

In his 1998 study of doctoral student attrition rates, Sigafus identified five primary reasons for the high attrition rate. According to Sigafus, these reasons include: (1) illness, (2) the burden of finances, (3) demands on student and family, (4) lack of enthusiasm and (5) the onset of dissatisfaction (47). In addition to the elements reported in the Sigafus findings, it is also reasonable to expect that some doctoral attrition can be attributed to students who eliminate themselves, or are counseled out of programs, due to a lack of skill or academic readiness.

Considering the social, professional and academic issues currently challenging the field of education, not to mention an aging workforce in the area of school leadership/administration, many graduate level school leadership programs are taking steps to redesign the theoretical context and traditional delivery systems that have long been a trademark of these programs. While change has been slow to come to higher

education, many programs are breaking with tradition, offering a more practical regimen of coursework and field experience and developing delivery systems that are more student centered. In order for educational institutions to maintain excellence in these changing times, new outcomes must be identified and new ways to evaluate these outcomes must be developed (MacGinitie 556).

Improving the quality of educational programs at all levels is worthwhile and the examination of student perceptions and satisfaction levels is a primary means to this important end. A high quality program recognizes the academic and professional needs of its students. Further, a high quality program has a method for gathering and disseminating this information, enabling it to make appropriate adjustments in courses or policies when the student data indicate that change or improvement is needed (Astin 162).

While many doctoral programs fail to implement comprehensive systems of meaningful program assessment, Gauthier suggests that educational institutions have many needs in the evaluation process. Specifically, institutions need to:

1. assess program quality, productivity, need and demand
2. improve the quality of academic offerings
3. determine the program's effectiveness and consider possible modifications
4. satisfy state-level review requirements (Gauthier 2-3).

In addition, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has laid out standards for high quality programs. The following standards are

related to knowledge, skills and professional dispositions that graduates from these programs should demonstrate:

1. In-depth understanding of knowledge in their fields as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards and demonstrated through inquiry, critical analysis and synthesis. Graduates collect and analyze data related to their work, reflect on their practice, and use research and technology to support and improve student learning.
2. Critique and are able to reflect on their work within the context of student learning. Graduates establish educational environments that support student learning, collect and analyze data related to student learning, and apply strategies for improving student learning within their own jobs and schools.
3. Graduates work with students, families, colleagues and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. They recognize when their own professional dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so. (NCATE 7)

Emphasizing the need for on-going program evaluation to an even higher level, Peters states that the need to assess the effectiveness, quality, efficiency, and productivity of higher education degree programs is of colossal importance (2). Spanbauer argued that improvement in higher educational institutions requires complete and constant review of every action and decision (15). Sykes maintained that for too long, decisions



for graduate level academic disciplines have been left to professors without any system of evaluation or accountability. These decisions include issues of curriculum, admission, and other degree requirements (21). In addition, Clark and Austuto contend that graduate training for educational leaders is one of the few areas in education that has remained impervious to reform over the past twenty years. Due to the significant impact effective leadership can have on student achievement, it is one of the areas most in need of reform (518).

Since there has been general agreement that evaluation in some form is needed for any educational program, the debate has now centered on the best method for conducting this evaluation. Alkin and House noted that in order to evaluate a program, the focus must be on gathering data about existing actions and activities and making value judgments about them (471). These value judgments, according to Perelman, are best made by people who have the greatest stake in the educational program, the students (285).

Ultimately, retention of students in doctoral degree programs is essential not only for the individual being trained or for the institution that is training them, but is most significant to the schools and school systems that have an increasing need for talented and skilled school leaders.

### *Background to the Study*

Baker University, located in suburban Baldwin City, Kansas, initiated a new doctoral education program in February, 2006. The development of the new Baker Doctorate of Education (Ed. D.) program was in response to an overwhelming number of expected administrative retirements in both Kansas and Missouri. After receiving input

from various focus groups, the structure of the new Ed. D. program (including an accelerated class schedule and the selection/assignment of cohort learning groups) was based on an existing structure already being used in a highly successful School Leadership masters program at Baker University. Research conducted by Baker University's Department of Education, examining over 50 existing doctoral programs, indicated that the selected program structure would appeal to adults engaged in full-time, professional careers.

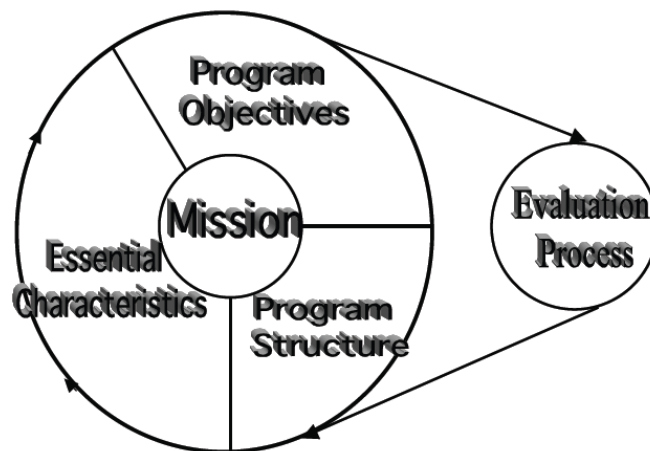
Admission to the Baker University Ed. D. degree program is competitive and the program is approved by the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Candidates accepted to the program are required to take sixty-one hours of program study (Refer to Appendix 2) and successfully complete and defend a clinical research study (Refer to Appendix 3). Program courses are seven weeks in duration and are conducted one night a week during the hours of 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm.

The two-wheel model (see Figure 1) developed for the conceptual framework accurately represents Baker University's Ed. D. / District Level Licensure (DLL) philosophy and vision. As described in the 2006 Doctorate in Education Leadership Policy and Programs Handbook, the conceptual framework serves as a dynamic guide for education which is represented by the larger revolving wheel composed of four elements, driven by a smaller wheel containing the evaluation process. The three outer components in the larger wheel, which include the Program Objectives, the Program Structure, and the Essential Characteristics, rotate around the program mission statement. This model illustrates the never-ending relationship that the three outer components of the first wheel have to each other and to the program mission and how the evaluation process drives the

components in the first wheel. The model represents the dynamic process necessary for designing programs that will develop effective and relevant educational leaders (4).

*Figure 1*

Two-Wheeled Model for the Conceptual Framework representing Baker University's Ed. D. / DLL philosophy and vision.



Source: “2006 Educational Leadership Policy and Programs Handbook” 4.

### *Program Mission*

The mission of Baker University's Doctorate of Education (Ed. D.) in Educational Leadership program, as stated in the 2006 Doctorate in Education Leadership Policy and Programs Handbook, is to develop leaders who have a strong knowledge base and sense of beliefs and values supported by educational research and best practices; and who have the passion, commitment, and skills to transfer knowledge, beliefs, and values into policy and practice (4).

Program assessment and evaluation, including on-going student feedback, has also been designed as a key component of the new Ed. D. program at Baker University. In order to continually monitor progress and identify program strengths and weaknesses, the university intentionally includes the evaluation process within the Ed. D. conceptual framework (see Figure1). The evaluation process enables the program to assess, both internally and externally, candidate progress on designed program objectives, the scope and quality of the program, the effectiveness of operation, faculty competence, and graduate performance (“2006 Educational Leadership Policy and Programs Handbook” 8).

For NCATE accreditation and program evaluation purposes, Baker University utilizes an electronic portfolio system, TaskStream, as a means to gather formative and summative assessment data throughout the Ed. D. program. TaskStream’s origins date back to the mid 1990’s when its founders were pioneering the full integration of technology, including Internet-based research and e-portfolios, in all aspects of diverse educational and training environments (“2008 TaskStream Overview and Policy Guide”). In 1998, TaskStream was organized to focus on the production, distribution, and support of the Tools of Engagement to enhance learning and accountability in formal education institutions. TaskStream delivers on-demand tools and supporting services for standards-based instruction, competency assessment and electronic portfolios for demonstrating learning achievement. In addition, the TaskStream competency assessment and reporting tools provide a large range of report data based on the evaluation of participant work. Consideration of this data is a critical part of Baker University’s Ed. D. program conceptual framework.

Unlike the rigid, institution-centered structure found in many existing doctoral programs, the Ed. D. program at Baker University has been designed to align with both the professional needs and personal priorities critical to the success of today's aspiring school leaders. At the time of this study, four active cohorts were engaged in the Baker University Educational Doctoral Program and a fifth group was scheduled to begin the program in August of 2008. Cohort number one, consisting of twenty four members, completed program course work in November 2007 and was eligible to graduate, pending completion of a clinical research study, in May 2008. Cohort number two, also consisting of twenty four members, began course work in August of 2006 and was scheduled to complete program course work in June 2008. Members participating in cohort number two were eligible to graduate, pending successful completion of their clinical research study, as early as December 2008.

### *Problem Statement*

While developing effective schools is a complex undertaking, current research demonstrates a positive relationship between the existence of quality school leadership and student academic achievement. Findings of this kind are encouraging, yet recent research also forecasts a leadership shortage in American public schools over the next five years. In addition to individual schools being concerned with their inability to attract desirable administrative candidates, state boards of education worry about unfilled vacancies creating a lack of leadership in some of their schools. Departments of Educational Leadership in universities across the nation are also feeling the pressure to graduate qualified administrators (Brown and Amsler 4). As the need for qualified, capable school leaders continues to grow, student attrition rates in education doctoral

programs remain high. A primary reason for this increasing gap between supply and demand is a failure by many institutions to properly consider and assess student satisfaction within their programs.

### *Purpose of the Study*

Baker University, in an attempt to respond to both needs - training quality school leaders and providing on-going avenues for gauging student levels of satisfaction - has designed a doctoral program in educational leadership aimed at addressing the professional challenges associated with 21<sup>st</sup> century school leadership, while at the same time remaining cognizant of the factors that lead to student satisfaction and retention.

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of overall satisfaction by students participating in the first two Ed. D. cohorts at Baker University and the influence of various demographic factors on program satisfaction. Satisfaction was measured in the areas of program design, curriculum content, advising, collegiality, faculty expertise and general program coordination and communication.

The results of this study may be used to guide the university's efforts in continuous program improvement and may also provide a framework for how doctoral programs in education can be designed to more effectively respond to issues related to student satisfaction and retention. The findings of this study may also provide an initial indication of program quality.

### *Significance of the Study*

Understanding student perceptions regarding the components of their graduate program experience is critical in evaluating a doctoral program. Student evaluations, when used appropriately, aid educational leaders in assessing the impact of instruction

within the context of the personal experience of the student. Student evaluations do this in a manner that other forms of evaluations such as faculty interview or peer review do not even attempt to address (Cashin and Downey 565).

A focus on improvement of educational preparation programs at the doctoral level and the successful retention of students participating in these programs has become increasingly important as administrative candidate pools become limited. Appropriate student evaluative feedback can aid in helping to identify program strengths and weaknesses. Listening to student comments and concerns allows for pedagogical progress. Strong doctoral programs continually strive for betterment as they attempt to enhance the practice and purpose of current and future school leaders.

This study constitutes the first formal step in identifying the collective perceptions of graduate students who have participated in Baker University's Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program. This study endeavored to aid Baker University in evaluating, from the students' perspective, the program's ability to meet designed expectations and achieve program goals in a manner that was reasonable for, and relevant to, student participants.

The data from this study can assist Baker University's School of Education in the determination of program modification and can be useful in the area of strategic planning and accreditation. The structure and purpose of this study may also serve as a guide for other programs in how to design systems for conducting an initial or formative student evaluation in similar programs.

### *Overview of Methodology*

The research for this study involved the quantitative study of 48 aspiring school leaders who were participants in the first two cohort groups of the Doctorate of Education in School Leadership Program at Baker University. The Baker Ed. D. program provided a rich setting for study because the program was in the early stages of implementation and would benefit substantially from the baseline data this study would provide. In order to collect the data needed for a comprehensive program evaluation, the researcher attempted to survey all program participants and conducted interviews with selected School of Education administrators.

In order to generate data for this study, all participants (from each of the first two cohort groups) were provided a web link to an anonymous on-line survey to be completed after completion of seventy-five percent of the required program coursework (Refer to Appendix 4). The selected survey instrument was intended to measure levels of student satisfaction in the areas of academic coursework, program schedule, advising, collegiality, faculty expertise and general program coordination and communication. The survey also collected personal data on each participant for the purpose of defining multiple subgroups. Prior to providing students access to the online survey, the researcher met with each cohort to provide background data related to the purpose of the study, directions and timelines for completing the survey instrument and to provide an assurance of participant anonymity. Follow-up communication was conducted two days prior to the survey deadline to encourage participation.



The survey included 39 statements which had to be rated using a 5-point Likert scale by respondents. The objective of these items was to measure student satisfaction in the following areas:

1. Collegiality
2. Program Schedule
3. Curriculum Content
4. Advising and Instruction

The survey was also aimed at collecting demographic information of the participants of the study, as well as their current professional position and their reasons for choosing Baker University's program specifically.

Data analysis was completed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS 13.0). The analysis involved computing mean, median, minimum, maximum and standard deviations on the satisfaction scores (based on the responses to the 39 Likert-scale items). Since each of the dimensions of satisfaction (Collegiality, Program Schedules, Curriculum Content and Instruction and Advising) is measured by more than one item, internal consistency reliability for each of these subscales was computed. This was done by computing Cronbach's alpha on each set of items which measured the same dimension. Paired  $t$  tests were performed in order to assess the Research Hypotheses of the present study (as described below).

### *Research Questions*

The research questions of this study intentionally focused attention on evaluating a single aspect of program effectiveness, student satisfaction. Six primary research questions were addressed throughout this study:

1. What are the personal and professional characteristics of the program participants in the 2005 and 2006 Baker University Ed. D cohorts?
2. What design components of the Baker Ed. D program appeal most to participants (based on levels of student satisfaction)?
3. What program areas are identified as areas worthy of additional consideration/modification (based on levels of student satisfaction)?
4. How do student participants rate their experience in this program?
5. Are there any significant differences in the satisfaction level of students (toward this program) based on age, gender, cohort membership or professional experience?
6. Would students recommend this program to others?

#### *Research Hypotheses*

1. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant gender.
2. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on current or previous administrative experience.
3. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program between Cohort Number One students and Cohort Number Two students.
4. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant age.

*Limitations*

1. This study may not be applicable to a larger population because the study was limited to a single university and a specifically-designed Ed. D. program.
2. While there are a variety of factors that collectively determine a program's effectiveness, the evaluation of the program, in this study, was based exclusively on student satisfaction.
3. Some participants of this study completed the research survey prior to completing the program. Members of Cohort 2 were provided access to the research survey after completing 75% of the program requirements.
4. As a member of the 2005 Baker Ed. D. program cohort, the researcher completing this study is closely connected to the program being studied. As such, involvement as a participant observer has potential implication for personal bias.

*Delimitations*

1. The sample of this study was limited to doctoral students enrolled in the first two cohorts (2005 and 2006) of the Baker University Doctorate of Education in School Leadership program.
2. As research indicates student dissatisfaction is a primary cause of student attrition in doctoral programs, this study chose to assess the Baker University Ed. D program solely on the basis of student satisfaction levels.

*Assumptions*

1. It was assumed that participants would respond honestly to survey questions.

2. It was assumed that it would be possible to obtain accurate conclusions from the data gathered.
3. It was assumed that participant recollections were accurate.

*Definition of Key Terms*

1. Advisor: defined as the faculty member a graduate student had as their academic supervisor and/or Clinical Research Study chairperson.
2. Cohort Group: Hill defined a cohort group as a group of students entering a program at the same time and completing at least two-thirds of the program together (180).
3. Course Effectiveness: defined as the degree to which completion of a course was perceived by a student as having a positive and meaningful impact on his/her professional performance.
4. Ed. D Degree: The Doctor of Education degree is primarily a professional degree that is designed for individuals who wish to pursue careers as leaders in the field of education or as applied researchers.
5. Retention: defined as continuing registration in the original program of study.
6. Satisfaction: defined by Smither as the identification and measurement of aspects of the program that are most rewarding to participants (11).
7. Student Attrition: defined as the discontinuance of students in a program of study.
8. Traditional Program: a graduate preparation program in which students take coursework toward degree completion at their own pace. Typically such

programs are campus based, include a residency requirement and allow for multiple options in course selection.

### *Organization of the Clinical Research Study*

This study is organized and presented in five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction of the problem and background information. Chapter One also contains a statement of purpose for the study, the research questions to be answered and the limitations, delimitations and assumptions associated with the study.

Chapter Two includes a review and synthesis of literature pertaining to school leadership, school leadership programs, the significance of on-going program evaluation and also a detailed look at the design and implementation of the Ed. D. program established at Baker University.

Chapter Three describes the methods used in conducting the study and addresses the process of collecting data and the methods used in analyzing collected data. Also included in Chapter three is a description of respondents and a description of the survey instrument used.

Chapter Four presents results of the study, and Chapter Five presents a summary of those results. Chapter Five also discusses the implications of the research findings and makes suggestions and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a review of the literature related to educational leadership training programs is presented. The first section includes a review of the historical evolution and rationale driving educational leadership programs. Following that, the elements of successful educational leadership preparation programs are examined. Next, a brief description of Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership and its relationship to the "best practices" as outlined in prior research is provided. Next, the positive effects of successful educational administration preparation programs are reviewed. Finally, a review of the importance of program evaluation is conducted, with examples from two studies in which educational leadership program evaluation was performed.

#### *History and Current State of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs*

Achilles examined the evolution of issues facing educational leadership training and the ideas that were devised to address them, concluding that there was a lack of really innovative ideas in this field ("Searching for the golden fleece" 7). The motivation for that study was, according to Achilles, that educational administration had been subject to considerable criticism recently and thus, there was a "rush to identify ways to improve the field and preparation programs" ("Searching for the golden fleece" 10). Achilles examined the problems and projected remedies in educational leadership training in the 1950-1990 period. Using programs and studies as a basis for analysis and comparison, Achilles argued that the reform ideas from 1980-1990 were substantially the same as the earlier ideas (those from the 1950s). According to Achilles, these results illustrated that

change in educational leadership preparation models appears to be “an epic task” (“Searching for the golden fleece” 23).

McCarthy et al. noted a move to a more intense use of research in educational administration preparation from the mid-sixties to the late eighties (4). The McCarty researchers administered a questionnaire to more than 1,600 educational administration faculty members from the United States and Canada, in which they were asked about their perceptions related to their work (6). The questionnaire was based on a survey designed and used in a previous study by Campbell and Newell in order to ease the comparison between the results of both studies. Results from Hills; Campbell and Newell; and Newell and Morgan were then compared.

The study by Hills was based on a questionnaire administered to 150 members of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration in 1964, and was guided by the following questions: (a) was the rising emphasis on research in educational administration a reality or a myth? (b) Was the frequent talk about theoretical development fact or fiction? (c) Did the value given to interdisciplinary cooperation have any effect on faculty activities (61)? Hills found generally negative answers for all these questions. Although the faculty appeared to be interested in theory, they were generally unfamiliar with the available theoretical literature (64).

Campbell and Newell’s study was based on a questionnaire administered to 2,000 educational administration faculty members in 1972 (1,333 useable questionnaires were returned). Among other analyses, Campbell and Newell conducted a factor analysis on role orientations and identified three groups within the educational administration faculty (5). “Cosmopolitans” were defined as those “highly involved in research and theory,

enjoyed extensive contacts with scholars at other institutions, and had strong commitment to academic freedom.” The groups of “locals” identified strongly with their own universities, and were less research-oriented than cosmopolitans. Finally, the third group was more “practice-oriented,” and had weak-ties with their research-oriented colleagues and with their universities (12). Approximately 20% of respondents were classified in the “cosmopolitans” group, suggesting that that was the percentage of faculty actively involved in research. According to McCarthy et al., however, a higher proportion of the faculty valued and were engaged in scholarly activity in 1972 than in 1964 (173).

Newell and Morgan used a similar questionnaire as the one in Campbell and Newell. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of professors of educational administration, community college administration and higher education (68). McCarthy et al. reported that unpublished data from Newell and Morgan’s study supported the trend of an increase in respect for theory and commitment to research since 1972 (10). They showed that the number of faculty who agreed with the notion that “scholars with specialized training in a related discipline make the best professors of educational administration” nearly doubled from 1972 to 1980. McCarthy et al. thus concluded that more of the faculty were convinced of the importance of theory and research to guide the practice of educational administration (11).

A review of possible ways to reform administration preparation in order to make it more effective was conducted in Achilles (“Support for Clinical Experiences” 2). He argued that school administration is an applied field requiring synthesis of ideas from diverse sources and application of these ideas in skillful practice. Therefore, administrator preparation programs must include opportunities for new administrators to



practice their craft in non-threatening environments and share experiences with peers while being supervised by recognized experts (“Support for Clinical Experiences” 6). He suggested that local education agencies can express commitment by reserving funding to fill a few teaching and central office positions through rotating internships. Individuals might seek specific internship experience before entering a preparation program, defer part of their normal vacation time, or attend annual meetings of professional associations as part of their preparation program (“Support for Clinical Experiences” 9). The suggestion that new administrators should practice their craft in “non-threatening” environments and share their experiences with peers is closely related to the concept of problem-based learning in educational administration (Bridges 3), which is reviewed in more detail later in this chapter.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), organized by the Council of Chief State School Officers, was formed for the purpose of developing model standards and assessments for school leaders. ISLLC's primary constituency is the state education agencies responsible for administrator licensing. It includes representatives of state agencies/departments of education and professional standards boards, with considerable participation by professional associates. The ISLLC developed six standards (described below) during 1994-1995 with the purpose of providing useful information for decision making within each state regarding issues such as program development and review, licensure, and advanced certification (“About ISLLC” 1).

Achilles and Price investigated the conditions essential for Educational Leadership preparation programs to be effective. They argued that the guidelines provided by the ISLLC for effective school leadership were not sufficient (3). Their

argument revolved around the fact that these standards were common to all leadership positions (regardless of whether they were in education, corporations, military etc.). The main argument of Achilles and Price was that a “Knowledge Base” directly related to educational administration was usually missing from Educational Administration training programs (3).

Achilles and Price provided their interpretation of the ISLLC standards for effective school leadership. These could be summarized as follows:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (ISLLC 10)

Considering these standards, Achilles and Price posed the questions: “Among these six processes where do the ‘standards’ even ask that those prepared using them will know, and therefore be expected to do, anything of substance to improve student outcomes? Where is the education-specific, research-based content that informs the education leader what to ‘facilitate, advocate, collaborate on,’ etc.?... Where is the ‘what’?” (10). Achilles and Price thus argued that the processes defined by the ISLLC standards could be done by anyone with general leadership skill or training. Therefore, these standards do not imply that someone educated in an educational administration program guided by the ISLLC standards will be able to improve school outcomes.

Based on these considerations, Achilles and Price argued that an Educational Administration Knowledge Base was required for an effective educational administrator. The sources of this Knowledge Base would include research, theory, validated exemplary professional practice and informed professional judgment (8). This is related to the “Key Triad” proposed in Achilles (“The Key Triad” 3), which stated that an effective educational administrator should know all three of the following:

- What to do (to improve education), which is given by the Educational Administration Knowledge Base

- How to do what needs to be done, which is defined as the process and leadership skills
- Why (or why not) something should be done

Therefore, the argument of Achilles and Price suggests that the ISLLC standards focus on the “How”, but are missing the “What.” Achilles and Price illustrated this point by conducting a survey on practicing educational administrators (n = 31), with an average of 11 years of experience in Educational Administration (10). The study involved administering a questionnaire in which participants were assessed for the research-based concepts they had learned in their formal Educational Administrator formal education. They found that seventeen of the respondents (55%) “...had no ‘What’ information in their preparation programs” (10). Although the sample size is small, which limits the generalizability of the results, the findings do support the idea that educational administrator candidates are not receiving an appropriate level of instruction on “What” to do as practitioners.

Achilles and Price also warned about the potential issues of not correctly defining an Education Administration specific knowledge base, and of practitioners being unaware of the “What to do.” Some of these potential problems included:

- The impending specter of external entities defining the “technical core” of education for/instead of educators.
- The collection of evidence that educators do not know or are not using the accumulating education-relevant Knowledge Base;

- The need for a unified education leadership voice to advocate for education reform that is built on a professional model (Achilles and Price 12).

Consistent with Achilles and Price, Waters and Grubb found a number of responsibilities and practices that were not included within the six ISLLC standards (5). According to Waters and Grubb, the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) developed a “Balanced Leadership Framework,” which identified leadership responsibilities and practices that were correlated ( $r = .25$ ) with student achievement (2). Waters and Grubb found that there were seventeen practices associated to this “Balanced Leadership Framework” that were not included in the ISLLC standards. Some of these practices were:

1. Systematically and fairly acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school
2. Uses hard work and results as the basis for reward and recognition
3. Uses performance vs. seniority as the primary criterion for reward and advancement
4. Is involved with teachers in designing curricular activities and addressing instructional issues in their classrooms
5. Is involved with teachers to address assessment issues
6. Adapts leadership style to needs of specific situations
7. Can be directive or non-directive as the situation warrants
8. Interacts with parents in ways that enhance their support for the school
9. Ensures that the central office is aware of the school’s accomplishments

10. Remains aware of the personal needs of teachers and staff
11. Acknowledges significant events in the lives of teachers and staff
12. Maintains personal relationships with teachers and staff
13. Is informed about significant personal issues in the lives of teachers and staff
14. Can predict what can go wrong from day to day
15. Makes systematic and frequent visits to the classroom
16. Has frequent contact with students
17. Is highly visible around the school (Waters and Grubb 7)

Waters and Grubb concluded that their findings could be used to extend the scope of the ISLLC standard by including the seventeen identified leadership practices that could offer additional insight into change leadership (11).

A recent review of the state of educational leadership programs in the United States can be found in Hale and Moorman. They showed the results of a survey conducted by Public Agenda, in which 69% of the participants responding indicated that traditional leadership preparation programs were “out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools” (Farkas et al. 15). Hale and Moorman argued that the general consensus is that current educational administration preparation programs are too theoretical and are not related to the actual demands faced by school leaders. Moreover, the fact that most programs have inadequate or non-existent clinical experiences prevents students from developing practical understanding of real-world job competence (19). This suggests that Achilles’ recommendation of providing students with the opportunity to gain experience through a comprehensive internship (“Support for Clinical

Experiences” 8) has not been generally implemented in most educational administration preparation programs.

Hale and Moorman also point to the fact that there are few direct partnerships between colleges and universities and school districts, and that this affects the selection and admission of candidates and the design of the preparation program. According to Hale and Moorman, this is due to the fact that, without proper partnerships with school districts, there are no accessible mechanisms for identifying candidates who have shown the greatest promise of future success as a school leader and who will be likely to return to the school district and make valuable contributions (24). Another problem associated to the lack of partnership with school districts is that it is difficult “to develop learning laboratories in which ‘student principals’ can make protected or mentored mistakes from which they can learn and develop.” As the Hale and Moorman study indicates, providing future school leaders the opportunity to get real-world job experience is one of the reasons why most current educational administration preparation programs appear to be inadequate.

The disconnection between content of educational administration preparation programs and actual job demands was also pointed out by Murphy (“The changing face”). According to Murphy, critics have attacked school administration preparation programs for focusing on the academic content and excluding actual practice (“The changing face” 2). Moreover, he argued that training programs ignore the ethical and moral dimensions of the job of a school leader. In addition, consistent with Achilles and Price, he argued that educational administration preparation programs tend to focus on management issues and academic disciplines such as sociology and psychology, leaving

out almost anything directly related to education and what to do in order to improve school outcomes (“The changing face” 3). Murphy has also argued that “prospective school leaders have been largely miseducated because universities, especially research universities, have constructed their programs with raw materials acquired from the warehouse of academe. In the meantime, they have marginalized practice” (“Questioning the Core” 583). He illustrated this by showing the irrelevance of prospective school leaders spending several hours of their preparation program in dissertation writing courses. Murphy argued that this was a skill valued by research universities, but it had little bearing for school principals, who “live in a world of spoken words and rapid transactions.” While there is little doubt that data-driven decision making is critical to school effectiveness, school leaders must possess the skill to actively engage the school community in this process. Successful educational leaders guide their staff toward researched-based decisions, not through their knowledge of research strategies, but rather through their ability to lead (“Questioning the Core” 584).

#### *Elements of Successful Educational Leadership Programs*

Bridges examined “Problem-Based Learning,” and considered its benefits in relation to traditional instruction (4). This type of instructional strategy was applied in the Prospective Principals Program at Stanford, a doctoral Educational Leadership preparation program. Bridges defined Problem-Based Learning as an instructional strategy that has the following characteristics:

1. The starting point for learning is a problem (a stimulus for which an individual lacks a ready response),



2. The problem is one that students are likely to face as future professionals,
3. The knowledge that students are expected to acquire during their professional training is organized around problems rather than disciplines,
4. Students, individually and collectively, assume a major responsibility for their own instruction and learning,
5. Most of the learning occurs within the context of small groups rather than lectures. (Bridges 6)

According to Bridges, the “Problem-Based Learning” instructional strategy creates the conditions that optimize the retrieval and appropriate use of formal knowledge in future professional practice (7). Moreover, it increases students’ motivations by programming them for success and using an array of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational strategies (7). Finally, the work of a student in such an environment resembles the work of an administrator more closely than it does with traditional instruction. According to Bridges, although this instructional strategy had not been tested in an educational administration environment, it had been proven to be successful in medical education programs (11). Students in programs using Problem-Based Learning expressed more positive attitudes toward their programs than did students in more traditional programs. Moreover, students in Problem-Based Learning programs tended to praise their training (especially the aspects most closely related to problem-based learning), while students in conventional programs tended to describe their training as boring, irrelevant and anxiety-provoking (deVries, Schmidt and deGraaff 263).

In spite of the benefits of the Problem-Based Learning instructional strategy, Bridges admitted that it might be difficult to implement in a higher education environment (93). He mentioned three likely barriers to the implementation of this instructional strategy:

1. **Lack of Extrinsic Rewards.** Bridges argued that higher education organizations value teaching, research, publication and fundraising differently (95). Namely, professors are more likely to be rewarded for the last three than for the first one. Therefore, this reward system provides no extrinsic incentives for professors to try relatively new instructional strategies such as Problem-Based Learning.
2. **Scarcities of Time and Money.** Preparing Problem-Based Learning projects for each lesson might prove to take much more time than it does to prepare a traditional instruction lesson.
3. **Preference for Traditional Instruction.** Bridges stated that the attitudes of professors toward traditional instruction might also constitute a barrier to the implementation of Problem-Based Learning strategies (97). Most professors have received their formal education through traditional instruction, and might be convinced that students will not actually learn what they need to know unless they do so through traditional instruction as well.

Hale and Moorman argued that, while there were very good Educational Leadership training programs which can effectively prepare school leaders to face the demands and challenges posed by their jobs, these were viewed as deviations from the

norm (9). Hale and Moorman mentioned some characteristics of these effective training programs. They serve between 20 and 25 students who enter the program at the same time and are bonded into a community of learners. They include extensive clinical activities and field-based mentoring internships (as advocated by Achilles, “Support for Clinical Experiences” 6), which help integrate the lessons students receive and ground them in the day-to-day realities of the school. In this way, “students are given opportunities to solve real problems in real schools” (Hale and Moorman 10). Moreover, and consistent with the need for an Educational Administration Knowledge Base as proposed by Achilles and Price, effective Educational Administration programs are anchored by what research shows about teaching, learning and the role of the principal as instructional leader. According to Hale and Moorman, three programs commonly identified as innovative university-based principal preparation programs were Delta State University, East Tennessee State University and Wichita State University (13).

#### *Educational Leadership Program at Baker University*

According to Baker University, the mission of the Doctorate of Education (Ed. D.) in Educational Leadership program is to develop leaders who:

- have a strong knowledge base and sense of beliefs and values supported by educational research and best practices; and
- have the passion, commitment and skills to transfer knowledge, beliefs and values into policy and practice (Baker University 4)

The Ed. D. in Educational Leadership and the District Leadership Licensure (DLL) program is designed to prepare candidates for district level administrative

positions and for leadership positions in a variety of positions within the educational community. The Ed. D. program prepares candidates to provide effective leadership and promote learning for all participants. The program involves an in-depth study of leadership issues within the educational community (Baker University 3).

One of the professional skills leadership candidates in the Ed. D. in Educational Leadership program must demonstrate is “a strong educational knowledge base that aligns with research and/or best practices” (Baker University 5). This is accomplished by candidates demonstrating the following abilities to:

1. Facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the entire community.
2. Advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and employee professional growth.
3. Develop the district’s or organization’s structure, management practices, and resources to establish a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. Collaborate with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources
5. Act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. Understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, and cultural context (Baker University 6).

It should be noted that the idea of developing a strong educational knowledge base is consistent with the argument by Achilles and Price about the importance of a

Knowledge Base related to Educational Leadership. As explained previously, this is one of the elements of the “Key Triad” that would constitute an effective educational administration preparation program, as advocated by Achilles and Price.

One important aspect of Baker University’s Ed. D. in Educational Leadership is that leadership candidates are required to complete two comprehensive field experiences. During these field experiences, candidates are “expected to assist in significant and varied leadership responsibilities under the supervision of a university supervisor and an educational field mentor, who is cooperatively chosen by the candidate, the university advisor, and the educational employment agency. The university supervising administrator and district mentor work cooperatively with the candidate to select a series of meaningful field experience activities and projects from the suggested activities associated with the program objectives” (Baker University 15). The inclusion of field experiences as part of the program is in line with the requirements about real-world job experience for effective educational administration preparation programs (Hale and Moorman, and Achilles, “Support for Clinical Experiences”).

Based on the above considerations, it would appear that the Ed. D. in Educational Leadership at Baker University fulfills the guidelines established by prior research as defining an effective educational leadership preparation program.

#### *Effects of Successful Preparation in Educational Leadership*

The importance of effective school leadership in school outcomes was stressed in a study by Achilles and Duvall (2). In the study, pupils at three elementary schools and one junior high school among Area 1 inner-city schools of St. Louis, Missouri, were identified as scoring well below norms on standardized tests. Financial support was

obtained in order to improve the educational programs in these schools in several areas. The project focused on improving the leadership of the three schools. In four testing administrations, scores from the California Achievement Tests were compared for Area 1 schools, city schools, and schools involved in the improvement project (Achilles and Duvall 4). When percentages of pupils in various quartiles were compared over time, from fall 1980 until spring 1982, students at the treated schools showed impressive gains in mathematics and good gains in reading (Achilles and Duvall 7). Although it is not clear whether the positive effect on academic achievement was directly related to changes in school leadership, these results provide an argument in making school leadership more effective, at least as part of a more comprehensive reform program.

The effectiveness of school leadership preparation programs was also examined by Leithwood et al. In particular, results from eleven program sites of the Danforth Foundation Program for the Preparation of School Principals were evaluated (Leithwood et al. 317). Some of the questions Leithwood's study set out to assess were:

1. To what extent are each of the characteristics of the Danforth-sponsored programs considered a valuable contribution to the development of leadership capacities by those who have experienced them?
2. To what extent are program graduates who have entered administrative roles perceived by their colleagues to be demonstrating effective leadership in their schools?
3. How strong are the relationships between the value that graduates ascribe to program features (such as instructional strategies and

program planning) and the extent to which teacher-colleagues perceive graduates to be demonstrating elements of effective leadership in their schools?

4. What proportion of variance in perceived leader effectiveness is explained by variation in the value attributed to features of the preparation programs considered individually and collectively?

Results of Leithwood et al. study were found to be significant and demonstrated optimism about the role of education leadership preparation programs in graduates' effectiveness as educational administrators (329). Leithwood et al. found that graduates considered their programs to have been valuable to their development as school leaders (329). Moreover, the study found that the ratings provided by colleagues of graduates who were in administrative roles indicated that administrators were generally perceived to be demonstrating effective leadership in their schools (331). According to Leithwood et al., teacher-colleagues were mid-way between "agreement" and "strong agreement" that graduates used effective leadership practices (332). Leithwood et al. also found a moderate but significant correlation ( $r = .20$ ) between the value that graduates ascribe to those program features which they experienced and the extent to which teacher-colleagues perceive graduates to be demonstrating elements of effective leadership in their schools (335). In particular, they found that eight percent of the variation in perceptions of effective leadership was accounted for by the value assigned to characteristics of the leadership preparation program (335).

Based on the aforementioned results, Leithwood et al. concluded that formal school leadership preparation did make a difference in the effectiveness of school leaders

(338). Consistent with Achilles (“Support for Clinical Experiences”) and Bridges, Leithwood et al. argued that effective school leadership programs should include authentic experiences (Rogoff and Lave 29) and foster the real-life problem-solving skills of their participants. Indeed, Leithwood et al. specifically mentioned that internships and problem-based learning were highly-valued characteristics of the Danforth educational administration preparation programs (339). They concluded that “the challenge for developing truly effective leadership preparation programs is to build them around robust theories relevant to the current and future work of school leaders and to offer forms of instruction that lead to proceduralized knowledge consistent with such theories” (340).

The results by Leithwood et al. are especially relevant to the present study, as it would suggest that satisfaction with the leadership education program is positively correlated ( $r = 0.21$ ) with leadership effectiveness as perceived by colleagues. Therefore, a high satisfaction with Baker University’s Ed. D. in Educational Leadership would suggest that it is producing candidates with the potential to be effective leaders.

### *Program Evaluation*

Kramer conducted a review of several schools throughout the United States, and concluded that program evaluation was critically lacking. Moreover, students in these programs had the perception that the profession of educational administrator was going in the wrong direction (209). Kramer thus argued that the voices of these students were not being heard, and thus suggested that it was not clear who was satisfied with the current system (210). Another interesting finding from Kramer is that, in personal interviews, many students revealed that they were afraid of stating their concerns about the problems



with their education programs, because they could be negatively labeled by other people in their university (213). Kramer thus concluded that it was necessary to change the way in which programs were evaluated, and that more importance should be given to the opinions and perceptions from the students (214).

An effective evaluation of an educational administration program requires well-documented evidence of the strengths and weaknesses of the program (Sparks 272). According to Sparks, this evidence must come from the feedback of participants in the program, which is consistent with the program evaluation strategy used in the present study. Based on a business model, Sparks argued that, since businesses and industries provided funding for education by way of grants and taxes, they should receive reliable evidence that the return on this investment is of high quality.

There have been a number of studies that dealt with the evaluation of an educational administration program. For example, Puckett examined the effectiveness of the doctoral program in Higher Education at the University of Alabama, as perceived by graduates. Puckett argued that institutions are often measured by the performance of their graduates, and thus an evaluation of these graduates was very important in order to assess the quality of the program (6). Similar to the present study, Puckett's research was based on different areas of assessment: program, curriculum content and faculty. In the study, Puckett found that the curriculum was rated as excellent (113); the overall program was rated as excellent, although the area of preparation for publication and dissertation writing was rated as being below expectations (114); and the faculty were perceived to be excellent (115). Moreover, Puckett was able to conclude that the doctoral program in Higher Education at the University of Alabama, compared with other programs, was

satisfying the needs of graduates with excellence (117). It is important to note, however, that the negative rating in the area of dissertation preparation did not result in overall poor rating for the program. The unsatisfactory rating merely represented the student's opinion that dissertation writing is not a practical, real-world skill for school leaders and that they felt unprepared to meet this program requirement.

Osmon conducted another study in which an educational administration program was evaluated. In that case, perceptions of the graduates from the Administration and Supervision Department and graduates from the Educational Leadership Department at the University of Houston were compared (99). As in Puckett's study, Osmon evaluated graduate perceptions in several areas: value of the program selected, dissertation project, faculty-student interaction and graduates' professional goals and accomplishments. While Osmon found that graduates found their experience at the program to be helpful in providing a relevant knowledge base, he also found that graduates criticized the lack of focus on the development of leadership skills (101). Consistent with Puckett's findings in the University of Alabama, Osmon found that students were not satisfied in the area of dissertation preparation. However, Osman concluded that the general perception about the value of the program was very high, and that 50.2% would choose the same graduate program if they had to choose again (107).

### *Summary*

In this chapter, a review of the literature related to educational leadership training programs was presented. The historical evolution of educational leadership programs was discussed, as well as the elements of successful educational leadership preparation programs were examined, a description of Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational

Leadership, the positive effects of successful educational leadership preparation programs and the importance of program evaluation. Chapter Three discusses the methodology that was used in order to conduct the program evaluation of Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

In this chapter, the methodology used to assess the research questions and hypotheses of the study is presented. The objectives of this study involved assessing student's satisfaction with Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership program. Forty-eight students enrolled in Baker University's Ed. D. program from 2005 and 2006 were administered a questionnaire aimed at assessing their satisfaction in the areas of Collegiality, Program Schedules, Curriculum Content and Instruction and Advising. Descriptive statistics on participants' responses were reported, inferential statistical analyses were performed in order to assess whether there were differences in satisfaction level of sample subgroups for the research questions.

#### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

Based on the objectives of the present study, the following research questions were established:

1. What are the personal and professional characteristics of the program participants in the 2005 and 2006 Baker University Ed. D. cohorts?
2. What design components of the Baker Ed. D. program appeal most to participants (based on levels of student satisfaction).
3. What program areas are identified as areas worthy of additional consideration/modification (based on levels of student satisfaction)?
4. How do student participants rate their experience in this program?
5. Are there any significant differences in the satisfaction level of students (toward this program) based on age, gender or professional experience?

6. Would students recommend this program to others?

Moreover, the following null hypotheses were established:

1. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant gender.
2. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on current or previous administrative experience.
3. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program between cohort number 1 students and cohort number 2 students.
4. HO: There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant age.

### *Research Design*

Selecting the appropriate research method involves the review of two methods: quantitative and qualitative. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) identified qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method involves collecting textual data and includes the following four research designs: (a) case study, (b) ethnographic research, (c) phenomenological research, and (d) grounded theory research. The intention of a qualitative approach is to understand the meaning of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research is grounded in the assumption that individuals

construct features of the social environment as interpretations (Gall, M., Gall, J. & Borg, 2003).

Quantitative research methods require a specific approach to sampling and statistical analysis (Gall et al., 2003). The quantitative methods address various questions and hypotheses that explore interventions. Quantitative designs such as descriptive, causal-comparative, and correlational designs are used to study the situation as it is. There are various types of quantitative studies that fall under the heading of descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive studies are mostly concerned with finding out what is, and rely on observation and survey methods to collect descriptive data. This type of research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon, or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 91).

Most research is either quantitative or qualitative; however, research methods combining the two, such as triangulation, have become increasingly popular (Borg and Gall, 1989, p 393). Triangulation tests the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments to assess some of the threats or multiple causes influencing the results (Green et al., 1989). Although both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study) the presented findings are limited to an analysis of the quantitative data. Appendix 5 provides a complete list of responses to the open-ended comments section of the survey instrument.

### *Population and Sampling*

The population of the present study included forty-eight students who at the time of the study were participating in the first two cohorts of Baker University's Ed. D. in

Educational Leadership program (Cohort 1, with 24 candidates; Cohort 2, with 24 candidates). All members of both cohorts were employed as K-12 and/or higher education professionals; including district and building level administrators, K-12 teachers, college administrators and college teachers.

All 48 students were invited to participate in the present study. As a member of Cohort 1 the researcher was able to personally communicate the value of the study and express the level of significance each cohort member would play in the evaluation of the program. In addition to the researcher's personal connection with members of Cohort 1, faculty support of the study within both cohort groups created an expectation that participation rates (those completing the questionnaire) would exceed eighty-five percent. Table 1 reports the population and participants for each Cohort.

Table 1

*Number of students and participants in each Cohort*

	Number of Students	Number of Participants
Cohort 1	24	24
Cohort 2	24	22

*Instrumentation*

A questionnaire (Refer to Appendix 4) was used in order to assess individual student's satisfaction level with Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership program. The survey was developed in cooperation with faculty members of the Ed. D. program at Baker University and is based on a survey previously used at the University of Kansas in 1995 to measure student satisfaction after completing a new, cohort-style,

masters program in educational leadership. Reliability coefficients, in the University of Kansas study, for the overall scale and all sub-scales ranged from 0.68 through 0.85, suggesting that the instrument exhibited adequate internal consistency reliability (Tollefson 31). In the present study, the survey was revised to more specifically address issues directly related to the Baker Ed. D. program. It should be noted that it was not the purpose of the present study to compare results with those of the University of Kansas study. Moreover, the present study was not intended to assess the degree to which survey results led to program change, but rather the present study was designed to measure student satisfaction and to allow program designers the opportunity to evaluate how the data could be used for the benefit or development of the overall program.

The questionnaire includes a section in which participants are asked to provide demographic information (age, gender and cohort membership), their professional experience, and the reasons why they chose Baker University for their doctoral studies. Following that, the questionnaire includes 39 items which are to be rated by participants through a five-point Likert scale (with 1 representing “Strongly Disagree” through 5 representing “Strongly Agree”). The purpose of these items is to measure student satisfaction with different dimensions of the education program. The following dimensions were assessed:

1. *Collegiality*. The survey includes ten items which measure satisfaction in terms of Collegiality. Some items associated with this dimension are: “My interaction with other cohort members was a valuable part of the learning experience,” and “The cohort format increased my level of participation.”



2. *Program Schedule.* The survey includes eight items which measure satisfaction in terms of Program Schedule. Some items associated with this dimension are:  
“Courses were offered in a logical sequence (information in earlier courses was built on in later courses,” and “Breaks between courses were appropriately scheduled.”
3. *Curriculum Content.* The survey includes eleven items which measure satisfaction in terms of Curriculum Content. Some items associated to this dimension are:  
“Courses in this program addressed common issues and contemporary challenges facing current and future school leaders,” and “Weekly workloads were rigorous but reasonable.”
4. *Advising and Instruction.* The survey includes six items which measure satisfaction in terms of Instruction and Advising. Some items associated to this dimension are: “The role of the major advisor was well defined and consistent for each student in the program,” and “Materials submitted by my advisor were carefully considered and returned in a timely manner.”

Most of the items were worded so that a higher rating was associated with a higher degree of satisfaction. However, some items were reverse-coded, so that higher levels of agreement with the item were associated with a lower degree of satisfaction. For example, some reverse-coded items were: “My advisor was more critical than supportive” and “The cohort system created an unhealthy level of competition between class members.” Responses to such items were adjusted (by reversing the Likert scale, thus assigning a 5 to “Strongly Disagree” and a 1 to “Strongly Agree”) in order to ensure that higher item scores imply higher satisfaction levels.

The researcher investigated the instrument used in the 1995 Kansas University study and in cooperation with Baker University faculty members, concluded that the instrument would be effective in generating necessary data in this study. The research questions identified for examination in this research project were considered to be compatible with a modified version of the survey used in the 1995 Kansas University research study.

The reliability of this instrument was assessed in the present study. In particular, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency reliability, as explained in the Data Analysis section.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

Members of Cohort 1 (24 candidates), of which the researcher was a member, were sent (by email) an electronic link to complete the survey, which was hosted online at SurveyMonkey.com. Prior to completing the survey, members of Cohort 1 received a thorough explanation of the study (including background, purpose and methodology) as part of a formal presentation the researcher made during a regularly scheduled class session. All twenty four members of Cohort 1 willingly participated in the study.

With regard to members of Cohort 2 (24 candidates), the researcher attended one of their class sessions and made the same presentation that was delivered to Cohort 1. In this presentation, the background, purpose and details of the study were shared with the students. At the conclusion of this presentation, members of Cohort 2 were given the same survey link to SurveyMonkey.com, and were asked to complete the survey online. Reminder notices were sent to each group one week prior to the close of the survey. At

the close of the survey deadline ninety-six percent of participants returned completed questionnaires.

No identifying information was collected through the survey instrument, and thus participant responses remained anonymous. The online survey was designed in a way that participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous prior to displaying the survey items. The survey link was available for one week after it was provided to potential participants. At the completion of each survey, The SurveyMonkey website labeled each submission with a unique numerical identifier, the Internet Protocol (IP) address as well as a time and date stamp for each survey submitted. This helped to protect against duplicate survey submissions from a single participant.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis was completed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS 13.0). Data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey.com and entered into SPSS, and reverse-coded items were adjusted appropriately.

Since each of the dimensions of satisfaction (Collegiality, Program Schedules, Curriculum Content and Advising and Instruction) were measured by more than one survey item, internal consistency reliability for each of these subscales was computed. This was done by computing Cronbach's alpha on each set of items that measure the same dimension. Cronbach's alpha measures the extent to which items within a set are inter-correlated. High values of Cronbach's alpha suggest that all items are highly correlated, which suggests that they are measuring the same construct, thus providing evidence for internal consistency reliability of a scale. This coefficient varies from 0 to 1.

Cronbach's alpha values higher than 0.7 are considered sufficient to conclude that a scale exhibits internal consistency reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein 94).

Once internal consistency reliability for the Collegiality, Program Schedules, Curriculum Content and Instruction and Advising subscales were established, satisfaction scores for these scales were computed by averaging the items within each scale.

Therefore, four satisfaction scores were computed. Moreover, an overall satisfaction score was computed by averaging all items in the survey. Following determination of these scales, descriptive statistics (mean, median, minimum, maximum and standard deviations) were computed and reported for each of the satisfaction scales. In addition, frequency tables were presented in order to assess the demographic composition of the sample.

In order to address the research hypotheses of the present study, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were performed. This test is appropriate when the means of an outcome variable (in this case, overall satisfaction) is to be compared between several mutually exclusive groups. In this case, four ANOVAs were conducted to compare the mean overall satisfaction between males and females; between students with and without current administrative experience, between students enrolled in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, and between the age groups of the students. In addition, *t* tests were performed in order to assess differences in levels of satisfaction between the means in each of the design component subscales.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The main purpose of this study was to assess student satisfaction levels within Baker University's newly developed doctorate program in Educational Leadership. A convenience sample of two cohorts of students (n=46) enrolled in Baker University's Ed. D. program (from 2005 and 2006), who agreed to participate in the study, were administered a questionnaire aimed at assessing their satisfaction in the areas of Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction. The study tested the following research questions:

1. What are the personal and professional characteristics of the program participants in the 2005 and 2006 Baker University Ed. D. cohorts?
2. What design components of the Baker Ed. D. program appeal most to participants (based on levels of student satisfaction)?
3. What program areas are identified as areas worthy of additional consideration/modification (based on levels of student satisfaction)?
4. How do student participants rate their experience in this program?
5. Are there any significant differences in the satisfaction level of students (toward this program) based on age, gender or professional experience?
6. Would students recommend this program to others?

This chapter presents the findings of the tests conducted on the sample data for reliability of the instrument and also provides a demographic profile of the sample studied, and for each research hypothesis. Both descriptive and inferential results will be offered and findings discussed. All tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance.

### *Reliability of Measure*

Reliability of a measuring instrument is the extent to which it yields consistent results over repeated observations (Cohen, 1998). Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) is the current standard statistic for assessing the reliability of a scale composed of multiple items, and alpha measures internal consistency by looking at intercorrelation between items on a scale. Cronbach's alpha values higher than 0.7 are considered sufficient to conclude that a scale exhibits internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The reliability test results in the present study indicate that the instrument has sufficient internal consistency across all of the 39 Likert-type agreement scale questions (Refer to Table 2). The sub-scale design components for Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction all showed sufficient internal consistency, and may be considered as reliable measures. The number of items in each sub-scale represents the number of statements requiring response (see Appendix 4).

Table 2

### *Reliability of Instrument*

Survey Instrument:	Valid N	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Full Questionnaire	42	39	.84
Program design components:			
Collegiality	45	10	.73
Program Schedules	46	8	.75
Curriculum Content	46	10	.80
Advising	44	6	.89
Instruction	45	4	.85

### *Descriptive Statistical Findings*

The following descriptive statistics are based on the study participants' responses to the survey questions. Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the study sample. The results illustrate that 56.5% of the sample were female and that 54.3% of the sample were 40 years or younger. At the time of the study, a majority of participants (67.4%) were, or had previously served as a school administrator. In addition, 59.6% of the sample were K-12 Administrators while 28.2% of the sample reported that they were teaching or held a position not otherwise classified by the study.

Table 4 presents the frequency percentages for the responses to the Likert-type agreement scale. The questions were grouped into the following subscales: Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction, and for each program design component, the average percentages were given at the bottom of each section. It must also be noted that some survey items were reverse-coded to accurately demonstrate that higher levels of agreement with the item were associated with a lower degree of satisfaction. Responses to such items were adjusted by reversing the Likert scale, thus assigning a 5 to *Strongly Disagree* and a 1 to *Strongly Agree*, in order to ensure that higher item scores represented higher satisfaction levels. This process was necessary to clarify the intent, or level of agreement, that respondents were communicating with regard to program needs in terms of identifying potential changes to current program practices. The statements in Table 4 have also been modified to reflect a positive statement corresponding with the items whose scores were reversed.

Table 3

*Demographic profile of participants (n=46)*

Variable:	Valid N	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	20	43.5
Female	26	56.5
Age:		
25-32 yrs	10	21.7
33-40 yrs	15	32.6
41-49 yrs	14	30.4
50-56 yrs	6	13.0
57 yrs or older	1	2.2
Cohort Group:		
Group 1	24	52.2
Group 2	22	47.8
Do you currently, or have you previously, served as a school administrator (building level, district level or post-secondary)?		
Yes	31	67.4
No	15	32.6
Current Professional Position:		
K-12 Teacher	11	23.9
Higher Education Teacher	2	4.3
K-12 Building Administrator	17	37.0
K-12 District Administrator	11	23.9
Higher Education Administrator	3	6.5
Other	2	4.3



The results provided in Table 4 show that, on average, 87.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the Collegiality statements, 75.4% agreed or strongly agreed with the Program Schedule statements, 81.9% agreed or strongly agreed with the Curriculum Content statements, 60.9% agreed or strongly agreed with the Advising statements and 66.3% indicated agreement and strong agreement with the Instruction statements. These findings suggest that study participants were generally satisfied with the design components of Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership Program. In particular, the highest degree of student satisfaction was reported in the area of Collegiality, and 82.6% of the study participants indicated they would recommend the Baker program to other education professionals seeking to complete a doctoral program in educational leadership. The results also indicate that, on average, 8.1% of the participants reported neutral responses.

Table 4

*Frequency Percentage responses to the study questions*

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Collegiality</i>					
1. My interaction with other cohort members was a valuable part of the learning experience	4.3	4.3	2.2	26.1	63.0
2. I could depend on other cohort members for support and encouragement	4.3	2.2	4.3	17.4	71.7
3. While others formed positive relationships, I often felt <i>included</i> ( <del>left out</del> )	4.3	4.3	6.5	30.4	52.2
4. The cohort format increased my level of class participation	0.0	2.2	6.5	50.0	41.3
5. I was no more or less comfortable in this "cohort" environment than I have been in previous "non-cohort" educational experiences	4.3	54.3	10.9	23.9	6.5
6. The cohort system created a <i>healthy</i> ( <del>an unhealthy</del> ) level of competition between class members	0.0	2.2	4.3	45.7	47.8
7. My level of academic achievement <i>was</i> ( <del>not</del> ) positively affected by the cohort format	2.2	8.7	4.3	63.0	21.7
8. I hope to maintain several of the relationships I have developed	0.0	0.0	10.9	34.8	54.3

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
during this program					
9. I prefer the cohort format over more traditional (non-cohort) settings	0.0	0.0	10.9	30.4	58.7
10. The cohort format was a <i>necessary</i> ( <del>an unnecessary</del> ) component of this program	0.0	0.0	6.5	45.7	47.8
Average Percentage:	1.9	7.8	6.7	41.3	46.5

*Program Schedules*

11. Courses were offered in a logical sequence (information in earlier courses was built on in later courses)	4.3	15.2	6.5	73.9	0.0
12. I believe the current course schedule is appropriate (as we currently only meet 1 time per week)*	2.2	2.2	2.2	32.6	60.9
13. The course sequence in this program seemed <i>purposeful and logical</i> ( <del>random and often illogical</del> )	2.2	13.0	13.0	67.4	4.3
14. Ample consideration was given to school year (employment) events and work schedules when planning course schedules and class activities	2.2	30.4	10.9	47.8	8.7
15. Breaks between courses were appropriately scheduled	4.3	26.2	8.7	54.3	6.5

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. The program's current use of Blackboard is appropriate*	15.2	65.2	4.3	15.2	0.0
17. The program's attendance policy is/was reasonable and appropriate	0.0	8.7	4.3	47.8	39.1
18. The 6:00 PM class start time is/was reasonable and consistently followed by program instructors	0.0	4.3	6.5	58.7	30.4
Average Percentage:	3.3	19.4	8.2	41.3	26.0
<i>Curriculum Content</i>					
19. Courses in this program addressed common issues and contemporary challenges facing current and future school leaders	0.0	0.0	4.3	58.7	37.0
20. Courses in this program maintained an appropriate focus on practical issues related to educational leadership rather than on a theoretical or historical perspective*	0.0	6.5	2.2	73.9	17.4
21. Weekly assignments / course expectations were rigorous but reasonable	0.0	2.2	6.5	73.9	17.4
22. Assignments and course activities provided opportunities for practical application of critical leadership skills	0.0	6.5	8.7	65.2	19.6

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. The course outcomes associated with this program are appropriately specific and properly aligned with issues related to K-12 school leadership*	0.0	13.0	6.5	60.9	19.6
24. I believe courses in school/district governance and day-to-day operations/management were well represented in this program*	4.3	58.7	8.7	21.7	6.5
25. The courses in this program have measurably increased my ability to be an effective educational leader	0.0	6.5	4.3	52.2	37.0
26. The standards, expectations and deadlines related to the clinical research study were/are reasonable	10.9	28.3	10.9	39.1	10.9
27. In addition to a general statistics course, a specific course on research (directly related to the clinical research study) should be offered as part of the formal program	0.0	0.0	6.5	34.8	58.7
28. Overall the curriculum in this program was appropriate for my professional needs	0.0	0.0	13.0	58.7	28.3
Average Percentage:	1.5	12.2	7.2	53.2	25.2

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Advising</i>					
29. The role of the major advisor was well defined and consistent for each student in the program	32.6	41.3	6.5	10.9	8.7
30. My advisor was readily available and played a significant role in my development throughout the Ed. D. program	15.2	13.0	8.7	32.6	30.4
31. My advisor was more supportive than critical ( <del>critical than supportive</del> )	2.2	13.0	13.0	32.6	37.0
32. The timeline/schedule related to the assignment of program advisors is appropriate*	30.4	45.7	8.7	13.0	2.2
33. Materials submitted to my advisor were carefully considered and returned in a timely manner	6.5	13.0	13.0	32.6	34.8
34. I maintained a healthy and productive relationship with my advisor	4.3	13.0	10.9	30.4	39.1
Average Percentage:	15.2	23.2	10.1	25.4	25.4
<i>Instruction</i>					
35. Throughout the program instructors demonstrated mastery of the content they were responsible for teaching	0.0	17.4	2.2	60.9	17.4

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
36. Program instructors consistently demonstrated a knowledge of, and appreciation for, the principles of adult learning theory	0.0	13.0	8.7	63.0	15.2
37. The use of direct instruction was properly balanced with the use of other research-based instructional strategies*	2.2	23.9	8.7	56.5	8.7
38. Class activities and the instructional delivery strategies used throughout this program stimulated my thought process and led to immediate and long term professional growth	0.0	4.3	13.0	58.7	23.9
Average Percentage:	0.6	14.7	8.2	59.8	16.3
39. All things considered I would recommend this program to other education professionals seeking to complete a doctoral program in educational leadership	4.3	4.3	8.7	50.0	32.6

*Note:* For percentages that do not total 100 in each row, data was missing (non response)

\* New statement inserted in order to reverse data

The descriptive statistics for the program design components are shown in Table 5. Given that responses ranged from 1=*Strongly Disagree* through to 5=*Strongly Agree*, the results demonstrate that most of the average responses tend to be in agreement with the corresponding statements in the survey instrument. While the measures themselves have no intrinsic value, they do allow for statistical comparison and analysis. Across the sample, greater agreement was reported for Collegiality ( $M=4.08$ ) and lesser agreement was reported for Advising ( $M=3.52$ ).

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for the sample Program Design Component Means (n=46)*

Program Design Components:	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Collegiality	2.60	4.80	4.08	.470
Program Schedules	2.38	4.63	3.59	.553
Curriculum Content	2.60	5.00	3.89	.489
Advising	1.17	4.83	3.22	.989
Instruction	2.25	5.00	3.77	.740

One of the underlying assumptions for inferential analyses, such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-tests, is that the data are normally distributed. Kolmogorv-Smirnov tests confirmed this assumption had been met for the mean measures for all of the design components apart from measures for Instruction (K-S  $d=.253$ ;  $p<.01$ ). However, the study sample size is regarded as sufficiently large and the central limit theorem may be applied in this case (Lindman). Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of means for the program design components. It is apparent from the data that most of the



means are between 3.0 and 4.0. A value of 3.0 represents neutral responses, which suggests that most of the participants are in agreement with the statements in the survey instrument.

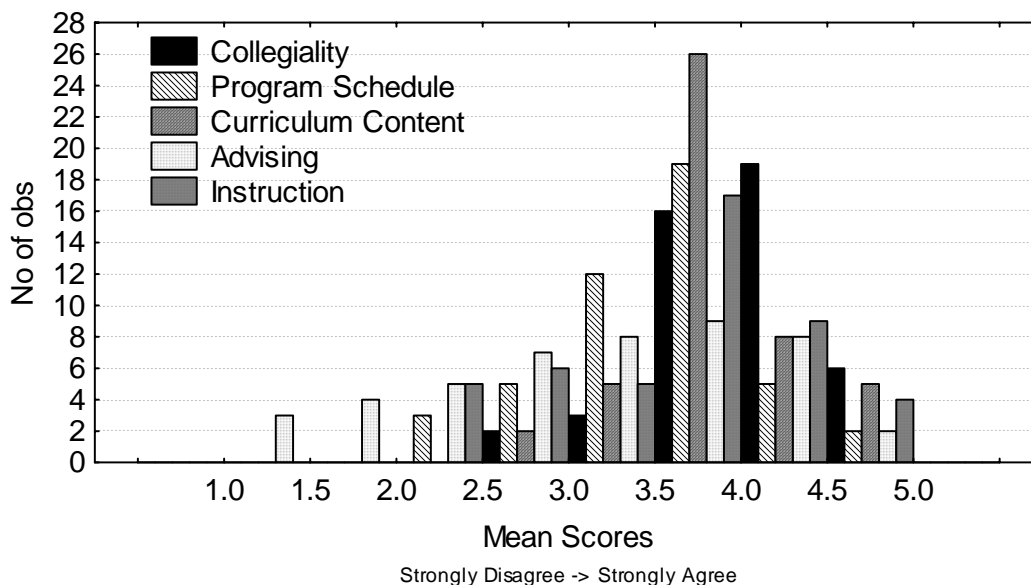


Figure 2. Frequency of means for each Program Design Component

A correlational analysis was also conducted to determine if there were any significant relationships between the means scores for the program design components. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient is most commonly used to measure a relationship between two variables and can be any value between -1 and 1. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient is most accurate when the variable measures show sufficient covariance (a statistic representing the degree to which two variables vary together). This statistic indicates the strength and direction of the relationship. The significant correlation results in this study (Refer to Table 6) indicate that, on the agreement scale, participants that agreed with Curriculum Content statements were significantly more likely to agree with statements for each of the other program design

components. Even more significant were the results for those that agreed with statements related to Instruction and the likelihood that they also agreed with statements related to Program Schedule.

Table 6

*Pearson's Correlations between the program design components of the Instrument*

Variables:	1	2	3	4	5
1. Collegiality	1.0	-	-	-	-
2. Program Schedules	.25	1.0	-	-	-
3. Curriculum Content	.33*	.57*	1.0	-	-
4. Advising	.09	.20	.40*	1.0	-
5. Instruction	.13	.75*	.55*	.23	1.0

\* Statistically Significant for  $p < 0.05$

#### *Findings for the Research Hypotheses*

In order to test a portion of the study's research questions, four hypotheses examined whether the overall level of student satisfaction was affected by gender, current or previous administrative experience, cohort membership or age. In an effort to analyze these differences, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using the demographic factor as the categorical independent variable and the five program design components serving as the dependent variables.

*Null Hypothesis 1.* There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant gender.

The ANOVA test results showed that there were no significant differences in satisfaction levels between and male and female participants across the five program design components ( $F(5; 40)=0.483; p=.787$ ). Further analysis of the univariate tests also showed no significant differences (Refer to Table 7) between male and female levels of satisfaction for each of the design components.

Table 7

*Test Results for differences in levels of satisfaction between the genders*

Dependent Variables:	F-Statistic	df	p-value
1. Collegiality	0.208	1, 44	.650
2. Program Schedules	0.059	1, 44	.809
3. Curriculum Content	0.420	1, 44	.520
4. Advising	0.012	1, 44	.912
5. Instruction	1.324	1, 44	.256

\* Significant difference at  $p<0.05$

*Null Hypothesis 2.* There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on current or previous administrative experience.

The ANOVA test results showed that there were no significant differences in satisfaction levels between study participants, who did or did not have administrative experience, across the five program design components ( $F(5; 40)=1.564; p=.192$ ). Further analysis of the univariate tests, however, did indicate a significant difference (Refer to Table 8) in Collegiality scores between those with administrative experience

and without; in particular, participants with administrative experience reported higher levels of satisfaction within this program component than those without experience.

Table 8

*Test Results for differences in levels of satisfaction between those with and without administrative experience*

Dependent Variables:	F-Statistic	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value
1. Collegiality	4.176	1, 44	.047*
2. Program Schedules	1.814	1, 44	.185
3. Curriculum Content	0.055	1, 44	.815
4. Advising	1.054	1, 44	.310
5. Instruction	1.180	1, 44	.283

\* Significant difference at  $p < 0.05$

*Null Hypothesis 3.* There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program between cohort number 1 students and cohort number 2 students.

The ANOVA test results showed that there were no significant differences between the two cohort's levels of satisfaction across the five program design components ( $F(5; 40) = 0.777; p = .572$ ). Further analysis of the univariate tests showed no significant differences (Refer to Table 9) between the cohorts for the program design components.

Table 9

*Test Result for differences in levels of satisfaction between the two Cohorts*

Dependent Variables:	F-Statistic	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value
1. Collegiality	0.599	1, 44	.443
2. Program Schedules	1.496	1, 44	.228
3. Curriculum Content	0.003	1, 44	.957
4. Advising	0.187	1, 44	.667
5. Instruction	2.068	1, 44	.157

\* Significant difference at  $p < 0.05$

*Null Hypothesis 4.* There is no difference in the overall level of satisfaction with the Baker University Educational Leadership doctoral program based on participant age.

The ANOVA test results showed that there were no significant differences between the age groups' levels of satisfaction across the five program design components ( $F(20; 123.7) = 0.948; p = .528$ ). Further analysis of the univariate tests also showed no significant differences (Refer to Table 10) between the age groups of the participants for any of the individual program design components.

Table 10

*Test Result for differences in levels of satisfaction between the Age groups*

Dependent Variables:	F-Statistic	df	p-value
1. Collegiality	0.437	4, 41	.781
2. Program Schedules	0.786	4, 41	.541
3. Curriculum Content	0.616	4, 41	.654
4. Advising	1.669	4, 41	.176
5. Instruction	1.767	4, 41	.154

\* Significant difference at  $p < 0.05$

A final analysis, using paired t-tests, was conducted to determine whether there were any overall differences between the program design components. The results (Refer to Table 11) indicate that study participants reported significantly greater agreement with Collegiality statements than all the other component statements.

These results suggest that while the study participants were generally satisfied with each of the program design components, they were most satisfied with the Collegiality component. However, while there was no significant difference in satisfaction levels between Curriculum Content and Instruction, there was a significant difference in levels of satisfaction between Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, and Advising. On average, participants were more satisfied with Curriculum Content than Program Schedule, but were more satisfied with Program Schedule than with program Advising. There was also greater satisfaction with Curriculum Content and Instruction than Advising.

Table 11

*T-Test Results for differences between the Program design component Means*

Variable:	T-test Statistic	df	p-value
Collegiality vs. Program Schedules	6.40	45	.000*
Collegiality vs. Curriculum Content	3.57	45	.001*
Collegiality vs. Advising	6.19	45	.000*
Collegiality vs. Instruction	3.41	45	.001*
Program Schedules vs. Curriculum Content	-4.19	45	.000*
Program Schedules vs. Advising	2.43	45	.019*
Program Schedules vs. Instruction	-2.51	45	.016*
Curriculum Content vs. Advising	5.00	45	.000*
Curriculum Content vs. Instruction	1.32	45	.193
Advising vs. Instruction	-3.42	45	.001*

\* Significant difference at  $p < 0.05$

Additional data gathered from the survey also provided insight into the primary reasons participants decided to enroll in the Baker University Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership Program. Results of this data indicate that 28.3% of participants chose the Baker Ed. D. program because of convenience of location, 34.8% reported their selection of the program was based on dissatisfaction with other programs, 10.9% mentioned faculty reputation, and 17.4% indicated their choice was related to a previous personal experience with Baker University. Survey results further indicate that the three primary reasons participants reported for choosing the Baker doctoral program were: the program's practical versus theoretical program approach (52.2%), the program's design and expectations (58.7%) and the belief, based on the manner in which the program was promoted/marketed, that the program is/was student centered (67.4%).

### *Summary*

This chapter presented the statistical findings for the research hypotheses. Findings from the reliability tests demonstrated the overall measures were reliable. While the descriptive statistical results of this study indicate that study participants in Baker University's Ed. D. in Educational Leadership Program report consistently high levels of satisfaction with all tested components of the program (Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction), study participants expressed the highest degree of satisfaction with the Collegiality component of the program. Test results also showed that satisfaction was significantly greater for this component than all the other components, apart from Curriculum Content. Additionally, participants were more satisfied with Curriculum Content than Program Schedule, but were more satisfied with Program Schedule than Advising. Results also indicate greater satisfaction with Curriculum Content and Instruction than Advising.

Inferential analysis findings showed that reported measures for Curriculum Content were significantly correlated with all other program design components. The most significant correlation was between measures for Instruction and Program Schedule. The present study could not establish that the demographic factors of gender, administrative experience, or age had a significant impact on levels of satisfaction with the components of the Educational Leadership Program. However, participants with administrative experience reported greater satisfaction with the Collegiality component of the program. A discussion of these findings and conclusions for this research study is presented in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Introduction*

In his 2005 study titled, “Educating School Leaders,” Art Levine conducted a large scale survey of education faculty, student alumni and practicing school leaders to help examine the effectiveness of current, university-based, school leadership training programs. In addition to surveying key stakeholders, Levine conducted a variety of case studies aimed at investigating the key components of these programs, the curriculum they delivered and the degrees they conferred (11).

The findings of Levine’s study led him to conclude that there was a shortage of strong educational leadership programs for aspiring school leaders. Levine described the mission of training future school leaders as a “confused field” and expressed concern that both the curriculum and degrees awarded in these programs lacked relevance in current practice. Levine also indicated that a reliance on mostly adjunct professors in these programs often led to a sub standard level of instructional quality (12).

At the same time, given a growing shortage of qualified school leaders, many Departments of Educational Leadership in universities across the nation are feeling increased pressure to graduate students to fill these vacancies (Brown and Amsler 4). As the need for highly skilled school leaders continues to grow, student attrition rates in education doctoral programs remain high. Current research indicates that a primary reason for this increasing gap between leadership supply and demand is a failure by many

institutions to adequately consider and address student satisfaction levels within their programs.

In an attempt to address the current quantity and quality issues related to school leadership on a more regional level, Baker University designed a school leadership doctoral program aimed at addressing both the professional and personal needs of participating students. Toward this end school officials included specific design components aimed at ensuring the program would provide appropriate levels of rigor, offer a relevant curricular basis and provide meaningful opportunities for student feedback.

The primary purpose of this study was to conduct an initial assessment of student satisfaction levels reported by students who participated in the first two Ed. D. cohorts in Baker University's Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program. For the purpose of this study, satisfaction was measured in the areas of Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content and Advising and Instruction. The influence of various demographic factors on program satisfaction was also analyzed.

#### *Summary of Findings for the Research Questions*

*Research Question 1.* The first question addressed in this study examined the personal and professional characteristics associated with program participants who were members of the first two student cohorts in Baker University's Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program. Results of the demographic analysis not only showed that there were more females in the sample, but also showed that there were more females with administrative experience in the first two cohorts than their male counterparts. Demographic data also showed that most of the male participants were between the ages

of 33 and 49 years, while female participant ages ranged fairly evenly from 25 to 56 years. Background data also illustrated that most of the sample held a position in K-12 Building or District Administration during the time the study was completed. There were, however, more male participants serving as higher education teachers and administrators than females. Cohort 1 was comprised mostly of students aged 41 to 49 years, while Cohort 2 students were younger with most being between 33 and 40 years of age. In addition, more members of Cohort 2 were K-12 Building Administrators than in Cohort 1. Participant responses also showed that the primary reason participants chose to participate in the Baker University Educational Leadership Program was related to the program being promoted as being student-centered.

*Research Question 2.* The second question addressed in this study was to determine which design components of the Baker Ed. D. program appealed most to participants (based on levels of student satisfaction). For the purposes of this study, design components of the Baker Ed. D. program were defined as Collegiality, Program Schedule, Curriculum Content, Advising and Instruction. Findings from the analysis demonstrated that not only were students' interactions with other cohort members regarded as a valuable part of the learning experience, students ranked Collegiality as the component with the highest level of program satisfaction. Based on the sample averages, the rank order for program component satisfaction levels, in terms of average agreement scores was Collegiality, followed by Curriculum Content, Instruction, Program Schedule and lastly Advising. These findings were supported not only by the Likert-type responses contained in the survey instrument, but also by the general comments submitted (Refer Appendix 5) in the survey data.

*Research Question 3.* The third question addressed in this study was to determine which program areas were identified as areas worthy of additional consideration or modification (based on levels of student satisfaction). The findings from tests for significant differences between the components showed that while the study participants were significantly more satisfied with Collegiality, they were also more satisfied with the Curriculum Content than Program Schedule and Advising. Participants also indicated higher levels of satisfaction with Program Schedule than Advising and there was greater satisfaction with Instruction than Advising.

Based on these general findings, it is reasonable to conclude that of all the program design components, Advising would require additional consideration and modification. In addition to this finding it is interesting to note that 63% of respondents, in the Curriculum component, did not believe courses in school/district governance and day-to-day operations/management were well represented in the program. In the Advising component, 73.9% found the role of the major advisor was not well defined and not consistent for each student in the program, and 76.1% felt the timeline/schedule related to the assignment of program advisors was not appropriate. These findings are corroborated by the general comments submitted (Refer to Appendix 5).

*Research Question 4.* The fourth question addressed in this study was to determine how student participants rated their experience in this program. Findings from the comments submitted (Refer Appendix 5) showed that of the 46 participants, 29 submitted open-ended responses. Although many participants expressed their appreciation for the efforts made throughout the program, many of the comments provided both positive and critical feedback with regard to general program assessment.

These statements support the previous findings of the study as participants reported satisfaction with the cohort format and indicate that the overall curriculum of the program was appropriate for their professional needs. Students also expressed that the program provided meaningful opportunities for practical application of critical leadership skills, thus increasing their ability to be effective educational leaders.

*Research Question 5.* The fifth question addressed in this study was aimed at determining whether there were any significant differences in the satisfaction level of students (toward this program) based on age, gender, cohort membership or professional experience. Findings related to this question indicate that age, gender, or professional experience did not significantly impact levels of satisfaction with the Educational Leadership Program. However, students with current or previous administrative experience did report greater levels of satisfaction in the Collegiality design component.

*Research Question 6.* The sixth question addressed in this study was to establish whether students would recommend this program to others. As can be gleaned from the general comments provided by participants, many felt that the program provided a necessary service, particularly given the willingness of Baker University to include student evaluation in the process of development of the new doctoral education program. The findings from the responses to the statement: All things considered I would recommend this program to other education professionals seeking to complete a doctoral program in educational leadership, showed that 82.6% of the students agreed with this statement. A clear majority of students in the present study sample would recommend the program to others.

### *Implications and Limitations of Results*

Although this study endeavored to assess student satisfaction in a single school leadership doctoral program, the results of this study and the research that supports it provide a strong rationale for why including student feedback in the evaluation of graduate level school leadership training programs is important. While collecting and analyzing student feedback alone is not a sufficient manner in which to conduct a comprehensive program evaluation, it can provide valuable information related to identifying program strengths and weaknesses.

This study is particularly significant to the field of education because it validates the need for doctoral programs to address current trends in school leadership as well as design program components that meet the personal and professional needs of its student participants. As the results of this study would imply, programs that generate high levels of student satisfaction are more likely to reduce the growing levels of student attrition that currently plague doctoral programs in education. Given the well-documented correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement, and the continuing shortage of well qualified school leaders, this point is especially important to consider.

The findings of this study also have the potential to assist the School of Education at Baker University in the determination of program modification needs and may be useful in the area of strategic planning and accreditation. The purpose and structure of this study also serve as an example to other programs that have the foresight to investigate student satisfaction levels as part of a larger program evaluation plan.

The primary limitation for this study is generalizability of the findings. This study

may not be applicable to a larger population because the study was limited to a small sample from a single university and a specifically designed Ed. D. program. While there are a variety of factors that collectively determine a program's effectiveness, the evaluation of the program (in this study) was based exclusively on student satisfaction. In addition, some participants of this study completed the research survey prior to completing the entire program.

In addition, as a member of Cohort 1, the researcher was closely associated with the program being studied. As such, involvement as a participant observer had the potential implication for personal bias. However, the researcher put delimitations in place by limiting the study sample to doctoral students enrolled in the first two cohorts (2005 and 2006) of the Baker University Doctorate of Education in School Leadership program.

#### *Conclusion and Recommendation*

Baker University, in an effort to combat a growing shortage of qualified school leaders, designed an educational doctoral program aimed at meeting both the professional and personal needs of its participants. Recognizing the significance of student perception and satisfaction, Baker University made a deliberate effort to collect student feedback as one measure of initial program effectiveness.

While the review of literature has shown that there have been a number of studies related to the evaluation of educational administration programs, the purpose of this study was to assess student satisfaction with the new Educational Leadership Doctorate Program at Baker University. The findings of this assessment indicate there was general satisfaction expressed by the participants in the study across all of the program design components and the researcher recommends that these findings be used to guide the

university's efforts in continuous program development. More specifically, participant responses demonstrate that over 82% of program participants would recommend this program to other educational professionals. However, it was also noted that program officials may need to further consider the current level of instruction/training related to school/district governance and day-to-day operations/management. Results of this study also indicate a need for improved efforts in the area of student advising. Specifically the role of major advisors, including the timeline/schedule related to the assignment of program advisors, warrants additional consideration. Finally, it is reasonable to expect that the findings of this study may also provide a framework for how doctoral programs in education (or the processes that are used to evaluate them) can be designed to more effectively respond to issues related to student satisfaction and retention.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Reflecting on the purpose, organization and results presented in this study, there are a variety of opportunities to further examine, not only the questions posed in this research, but also several closely associated issues that could be examined as part of a similar or separate study.

While the results of the study clearly indicate a high level of program satisfaction within the first two Baker University Ed. D. program cohorts, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with a larger population sample. In addition it would be useful to compare results over time. Repeating this study as part of a more comprehensive system of program evaluation would help measure program development and whether Baker University has in fact responded to the information gleaned from the collected student feedback. For example, the present study indicates a need to more effectively manage



program/student advising. Replicating this study within the next three to four years would provide an opportunity, not only to assess student satisfaction, but it would also provide a means to examine whether a previous recommendation (like modifying the advising process) received the level of attention that was suggested.

Although this study did not aim to compare the level of satisfaction with this program to that of others, significant findings could be produced from future studies that may elect to do so. As the literature in this study indicated, there is a recognized division between traditional and non-traditional doctoral programs. Future research may endeavor to study multiple programs (categorized as either traditional or non-traditional) to determine what differences (in student satisfaction levels) may exist.

Future research might also be conducted to determine what relationship may exist between student satisfaction levels (within a doctoral program) and performance effectiveness. It would be significant to examine whether students who report high levels of satisfaction with their graduate school training go on to effectively/successfully apply newly learned/developed skills as actual practitioners. Findings related to this question could be examined by analyzing on the job evaluation data from the same population sample used in the present study. Current research indicates that high levels of student satisfaction reduce student attrition rates, but does it lead to higher levels of actual performance?

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## APPENDIX 1: Required Curriculum for DLL

## CURRICULUM REQUIRED FOR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP LICENSURE

### Common Program Strands

- Leadership Practices
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
- Beliefs, Values and Ethical Issues
- Enrichment through Diversity

<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
1. Foundations of Educational Leadership	3
2. Collaborative Leadership in a Community Context	3
3. Statistical Analysis	3
4. Leading Special and Diverse Populations	3
5. Methods of Inquiry and Research	3
6. Professional Inquiry Colloquium I	2
7. Developing Professional Learning Communities	3
8. Curriculum, Learning and Instruction	3
9. Field Experience I	2
10. Legal, Policy, and Ethical Issues in Leadership	3
11. Human Resources Management	3
12. Management of Finances, Facilities and Resources	3
13. Program Planning and Evaluation	3
14. Professional Inquiry Colloquium II	2
15. Field Experience II	2
16. Portfolio Presentation	<u>2</u>
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED HOURS for DISTRICT LICENSURE ONLY</b>	<b>43</b>

## APPENDIX 2: Baker University Curriculum Requirement for Ed. D

**BAKER UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM REQUIRED FOR THE EDUCATIONAL  
DOCTORATE (Ed.D.) IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Common Program Strands**

- Leadership Practices
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
- Beliefs, Values and Ethical Issues
- Enriching through Diversity

	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>
1	Foundations of Organizational Leadership	3
2	Collaborative Leadership in a Community Context	3
3	Statistical Analysis	3
4	Leading Special and Diverse Populations	3
5	Methods of Inquiry and Research	3
6	Professional Inquiry Colloquium I	2
7	Dissertation Development	6
8	Developing Professional Learning Communities	3
9	Field Experience I	2
10	Legal, Policy, and Ethical Issues in Leadership	3
11	Human Resources Management	3
12	Management of Finances, Facilities and Resources	3
13	Program Planning and Evaluation	3
14	Professional Inquiry Colloquium II	2
15	Field Experience II	2
16	Portfolio Presentation	2
17	Field of Concentration (Graduate Credits in Content Area – transfer credit will be considered)	6
18	Dissertation Completion and Presentation (Continuous enrollment until complete)	6+
	<b>TOTAL REQUIRED HOURS for the Ed.D. ONLY</b>	<b>58+</b>
<b>Note:</b>	Candidates desiring both the Ed. D. and DLL must also complete Curriculum, Learning and Instruction	3

## APPENDIX 3: Clinical Research Requirements

## Clinical Research Requirements

The doctoral clinical research study is conducted in accordance with guidelines established for doctoral candidates of Baker University. The doctoral study follows recommendations found in “The Role and Nature of the Doctoral Dissertation: A Policy Statement,” Council of Graduate Schools.

### **Purpose**

The doctoral clinical research study will

1. Reveal the candidate’s ability to analyze, interpret and synthesize information;
2. Demonstrate the candidate’s knowledge of the literature relating to the project or at least acknowledge prior scholarship on which the study is built;
3. Describe the methods and procedures used;
4. Present results in a sequential and logical manner; and
5. Display the candidate’s ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results.

The clinical research study is the beginning of the candidate’s scholarly work, not the culmination. Clinical research is expected to provide the candidate with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline and should provide for the type of research that is expected after the Doctor of Education degree is awarded.

### **Process**

Once a candidate has entered the program, he or she receives a full description of the process to be used for completing the study, including the following:

- Clinical research proposal development and approval.
- Statement on originality.
- Format and publication of the dissertation.
- Adviser-Advisee relationship.
- Administrative and faculty support.
- Study presentation process.
- Deadline to complete dissertation.

The candidate is expected to successfully complete an initial portion of the study through enrollment in “Clinical Research Development,” six (6) credit hours, conducted in three, two-credit-hour seminars. Seminars are scheduled at the completion of the first 15 hours of coursework. The second portion of the research project, “Clinical Research Completion and Presentation,” includes initial enrollment in six-plus (6+) credit hours in a given semester. A candidate is expected to participate in continuous enrollment of one credit-hour per semester (after the completion of the 6 credit-hour Clinical Research Completion semester) until the research study is successfully completed, presented, and approved by the candidate’s research committee.

**General Content**

Following approval of the study proposal by the candidate's major advisor and committee, the candidate will submit the study to include the following:

- Chapter 1: Introduction – A description of the study's proposition(s), questions(s) and hypothesis (es) to be examined.
- Chapter 2: Review of the literature – A logical link of data to the proposition.
- Chapter 3: Methodology – A description of the unit or units of analysis to be used.
- Chapter 4: Results – A description of the findings.
- Chapter 5: Discussion – A description of the interpretations made from the results, including the criteria for interpreting the findings and the applications to future studies.

APPENDIX 4: Survey Instrument



## Survey Instrument

### 1. Introduction

Understanding student perceptions regarding the components of their graduate program experience is critical in evaluating a doctoral program. Student evaluations, when used appropriately, aid educational leaders in assessing the impact of instruction within the context of the personal experience of the student. Student evaluations, in particular, achieve this goal in a manner that other forms of evaluations such as faculty interview or peer review do not as adequately address.

This survey is aimed at identifying the collective perceptions of graduate students who have participated in Baker University's Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership program. This study attempts to aid Baker University in evaluating, from the students' perspective, the program's ability to meet designed expectations and achieve program goals in a manner that was reasonable for, and relevant to, student participants.

More specifically this survey has been designed to investigate student satisfaction levels during participation in the Baker University Educational Leadership Doctoral program. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete and there are no right or wrong responses. All information will remain confidential and no individual respondent will be identified when results are published. Only summary information will be reported.

**Protections for Participants:** Baker University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study.

Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Doug Sumner at [sumnerd@usd231.com](mailto:sumnerd@usd231.com) or Dr. Harold Frye at [hfrye@bakeru.edu](mailto:hfrye@bakeru.edu)

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences.

## 2. Background Information

### 1. Gender

Male

Female

### 2. Age Range

25-32

33-40

41-49

50-56

57+

### 3. Cohort Group Membership

Cohort #1

Cohort #2

### 4. Do you currently, or have you previously, served as a school administrator (building level, district level or post-secondary)?

Yes

No

### 5. Current Professional Position

K-12 Teacher

Higher Education Teacher

K-12 Building Administrator

K-12 District Administrator

Higher Education Administrator

Other

### 6. Primary Reasons for choosing this program (select up to three reasons)

Reputation of the Institution

Convenience/Location

Program Design and Expectations

Faculty Reputation

Previous personal experience with Baker University

Practical vs. Theoretical Program Approach

Program is/was promoted as "Student Centered"

Dissatisfaction with other Programs

### 3. Collegiality

1. My interaction with other cohort members was a valuable part of the learning experience.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. I could depend on other cohort members for support and encouragement.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3. While others formed positive relationships, I often felt left out.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. The cohort format increased my level of class participation.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

5. I was no more or less comfortable in this "cohort" environment than I have been in previous "non-cohort" educational experiences.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

6. The cohort system created an unhealthy level of competition between class members.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

7. My level of academic achievement was not positively affected by the cohort format.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

8. I hope to maintain several of the relationships I have developed during this program.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

9. I prefer the cohort format over more traditional (non-cohort) settings.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

10. The cohort format was an unnecessary component of this program.

Strongly Disagree  
Disagree  
Neutral  
Agree  
Strongly Agree

#### 4. Program Design / Schedule

1. Courses were offered in a logical sequence (information in earlier courses was built on in later courses).

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. I would prefer taking courses twice a week to eliminate four hour class sessions.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3. The course sequence in this program seemed random and often illogical.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. Ample consideration was given to school year (employment) events and work schedules when planning course schedules and class activities.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

5. Breaks between courses were appropriately scheduled.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

6. The use of Blackboard as an instructional resource could be better utilized to allow for one week of off-site, independent instruction during each seven week course.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

7. The program's attendance policy is/was reasonable and appropriate.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

8. The 6:00 PM class start time is/was reasonable and consistently followed by program instructors.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

## 5. Curriculum Content

1. Courses in this program addressed common issues and contemporary challenges facing current and future school leaders.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. Courses in this program focused too heavily on a theoretical or historical perspective rather than on issues related to actual practice.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3. Weekly assignments / course expectations were rigorous but reasonable.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. Assignments and course activities provided opportunities for practical application of critical leadership skills.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

5. The course outcomes associated with this program are too broad and need to align more specifically to K-12 school leadership.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

6. I believe courses in school/district governance and day to day operations/management were under-represented in this program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

7. The courses in this program have measurably increased my ability to be an effective educational leader.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

8. The standards, expectations and deadlines related to the clinical research study were/are reasonable.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

9. In addition to a general statistics course, a specific course on research (directly related to the clinical research study) should be offered as part of the formal program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

10. Overall the curriculum in this program was appropriate for my professional needs.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree



## 6. Advising and Instruction

1. The role of the major advisor was well defined and consistent for each student in the program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. My advisor was readily available and played a significant role in my development throughout the Ed. D. program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

3. My advisor was more critical than supportive.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. The assignment of major advisors should be made much earlier in the program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

5. Materials submitted to my advisor were carefully considered and returned in a timely manner.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

6. I maintained a healthy and productive relationship with my advisor.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

7. Throughout the program instructors demonstrated mastery of the content they were responsible for teaching.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

8. Program instructors consistently demonstrated a knowledge of, and appreciation for, the principles of adult learning theory.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

9. Direct Instruction (lecture) was the dominant form of instruction throughout this program.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

10. Class activities and the instructional delivery strategies used throughout this program stimulated my thought process and led to immediate and long term professional growth.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

## **7. Recommendation and Open Comments**

1. All things considered I would recommend this program to other education professionals seeking to complete a doctoral program in educational leadership.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. Please include any comments you believe will help support and or explain your responses to previous survey questions (please skip a line between comments).

APPENDIX 5: Open-ended Survey Comments

**Open-ended Responses to include any comments the participants believe will help support and or explain their responses to previous survey questions (please skip a line between comments).**

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1. This program appears to be making a genuine effort to gather feedback to improve the effectiveness of the experience for students. If that focus continues, this program will grow in popularity and develop high skilled educational leaders well in to the future.

2. My advisor is HORRIBLE.

3. I felt the program was highly and appropriately geared toward district-level administrators. The choice of courses was very appropriate, however the delivery and structure of some need improvement. The effectiveness and "hands-on" nature of advisors was extremely varied. As a "student-centered" program, more frequent contact initiated by each advisor should be an integral part of the program; some of us chose the program because we sought a 1:1 coaching approach to advising us through our dissertation. Some instructors were extremely effective, while others were extremely ineffective. The PLC course was not dynamic and should have been given the nature of the topic. The instructor of the School Law class provided very little information and relied primarily on student presentations. While other courses had challenging assignments, I expected that and learned much from them in most cases. Clear course expectations and periodic feedback should be a given, and to do so, collective oversight of a team of program leaders should review each course, its objectives, expectations, timeline for assignments, and rubrics. Consistent opportunity to provide feedback via a Baker-designed survey should be part of every course; the design should include some general questions and course-specific ones. Student input into the design of the surveys should be mandatory; this could look like having a representative from each cohort provide such input. I would recommend inserting a colloquium more frequently, perhaps 3 or 4 instead of the current 2. This would allow further support during the dissertation process. Periodic statistics support would also greatly support students. This could be in the form of a 1 hour refresher and 2nd hour of dissertation-specific guidance. For students without building-level certification, it was very frustrating to be told when choosing Baker that they could obtain simultaneous certification through the EdD program only to have Baker change its mind. At this point Baker has not indicated a definite willingness to find a compromise/solution for these students whose professional timelines may now be impacted by at least one additional year. This has serious ramifications for some. Overall, I would recommend the program because I see an earnest desire to design a program that is highly innovative and effective. The program leaders seek feedback from students and although stressful at times, adjust the program in appropriate response.

4. I have been very pleased more often than not with the program here at Baker. The cohort situation is a benefit to the program, especially one as rigorous as this one. Although, my advisor has changed multiple times due to illness or interim, I believe that to be the result of a newly formed program. It should be noted my secondary advisor has been extremely helpful. I believe the instructors were well versed as well as experienced

within their area, with the exception of adjunct professors. I would definitely recommend the Baker Doctoral Program. I paid to learn, and I believe this was accomplished. My only request would be more time to get in the field experience and clinical study, or even cutting the field experience in half. Most of us are working in the field everyday, and this is time consuming and restraining for a non-traditional student. I also was appreciative of the diversity in the program ranging from building principals, instructional coaches, teachers, and psychologists, this was an asset to the program and allowed for multiple perspectives.

5. Some excellent instructors/advisors while some were very weak which hurt the credibility of the program. Something must be done to improve the C&I class.

6. Few instructors are stuck on their own opinions and ways. The program is new, and instructors need to be re-evaluated. The expectations for the CRS are reasonable but not well communicated. Consistency between advisors must be improved.

7. The assignment of advisors was a hit and miss opportunity for students. Most advisors appear to do a great job, but I have heard horror stories about two of them. This area of the program must be improved (made more stable or consistent) as the consequences for students are incredibly significant.

8. One instructor stated that he was there as a facilitator of our learning. Instructors need to teach as if we need the info not as if we already know all the info.

9. This program has taken a great "first step" toward creating a doctorate program that is unlike (better than) any others in this area. I am so glad to see the on-going effort to consider student feedback. With the exception of 2 instructors (LSDP and C&I) each of the faculty are credible leaders in our field and did a nice job of managing their course topics. Communication (last minute changes) was a concern at time, but understandable given the program is still developing. I am confident this will improve quickly.

10. More effort should be made to incorporate the clinical research study into a variety of courses. Instructors should be more open to topics of interest to higher education.

11. This program is off to a strong start, but don't be afraid to change according to the feedback you get. The program was promoted as student centered and relevant... make sure you maintain that focus!

12. Not all instructors were equal in delivery and support. Favoritism was shown at times by the professor towards certain students. Some of the absence policies seemed to be more enforced with some students over others. Several students had major issues with their advisor but were not allowed to switch or resolve the issues in some productive way. A course should be offered once each year to help with writing ch.1-3 and then ch. 4-5. Otherwise, doing the dissertation at the same time as the coursework, field experience, and full-time employment is unreasonable.

13. Advisors do not seem to be on the same page. Rules of the game seem to change as the program went along. Went from MLA format to APA format with little or no explanation to the co-hort. I don't mind doing presentations, but the entire law class was presentations by students. The professor did nothing. Finally, I would like to see a finance/budget class implemented. This is such a vital piece of being an administrator. Would like to know more about it.

14. Stats class was very helpful and instructor was always there to help and support.

15. Way too expensive for what I got

16. I was under the impression this would be a diverse cohort with teachers, administrators, higher education instructors, and staff. It really only appears to be for individuals who have been K-12 administrators. I feel I have benefited greatly from the instruction; am now interested in administration; and plan to go back to get my building licensure as a result. However, many others were under the same impression regarding content/professional diversity. Others thought they would have a chance to obtain building licensure if they didn't already have it. This apparently isn't the case. So many are frustrated about the numerous additional hours they must complete, in addition to the doctorate, just to obtain training for building licensure. Training which is apparently below the training we've been receiving in this program. It doesn't really make sense. Also, while it is understandable there have been many changes along the way, many are very upset with the major changes and shifts which have occurred regarding the dissertation. Some have spent countless hours pouring into their chapters, samples, studies, etc. only to discover they must totally redo something and/or scrap their previous work. I think this is something that needs to be addressed. Several are afraid to begin anything else because they are waiting for the next last minute change. We were told there would be changes, but changes after much work has already been completed doesn't really seem right. Overall, I have been very please with the program but feel these things must be shared on behalf of myself and my colleagues.

17. Overall, I have been very pleased with the course content, professors, and amount of learning that has taken place. However, I feel that one or two professors had unrealistic expectations when it came to course work and grading. Some professors were more willing to work with students and understood that not all of us are administrators already. We have different backgrounds and different skill basis. Most professors worked hard to assure that the content of their course was applicable to all students, while other professors expected everyone to walk in the door with the same amount of expertise and background knowledge in a certain subject. This was frustrating. We have all learned a great deal in this program, but a professor's attitude and your experience with that professor can really "make or break" how you feel about a certain class or program.

18. Courses which were taught through the use of student presentation were not as useful as the courses with a mix of direct instruction and student projects. Depending on other members for the content of the course was not the expected quality. I was pleased with the over all quality of course work and instruction from the program.

19. I seem rather negative about the questions regarding the advisor. The advisor I have been assigned has struggled with outlining expectations and providing quality support. Other advisors have stepped in to assist me and Baker is aware. I just didn't want to seem too negative! The other advisors have been great. Some information regarding the clinical research study was disclosed too late for me to graduate when I had anticipated. As well as, a few other items have been added to the "things to complete list", making it almost impossible to plan ahead (example: portfolio paper). I can complete the assignments, but would like to have known about them in the beginning of the program.

20. Any time concerns were expressed, an appropriate and helpful response was received. Although some instructors were not as good as others, it was possible to have a meaningful experience with each course. More in-depth instruction on research methods is needed earlier in the program, especially before the IRBs are negotiated and approved. I'm glad I participated in this program, even though it was a bit "tricky" at times being in the first cohort. I believe Baker University chose its first cohort wisely in order to make the program better for subsequent cohorts.

21. My primary concern/complaint is the inappropriate structure and emphasis of the clinical research. Although we are told it is not a "dissertation" and our program is an Ed.D. instead of a Ph.D. program, the clinical research is designed and structured much the same as a dissertation for a Ph.D. program. The approval process, rewrites, length, multiple person oversight, and overall expectations of the research is inappropriate for an Ed.D. program such as this. It has resulted in my disappointment and dissatisfaction with the program and will prevent me from recommending the program to others.

22. Although the course attendance policy was well stated it was not followed by all professors. I realize that being the first cohort had disadvantages that may reflect in changes made to following cohorts. I would like to have seen more choices for advisors and a process to change your advisor if you were having problems.

23. I believe being the first cohort had some drawbacks.... I feel like advisors should have been assigned much earlier in the process. I also feel that stats was too short, and should occur later in the program as students are beginning to design the Clinical Research study they wish to conduct. I also felt that because several instructors backed out at the last minute our expertise in those areas is lacking. Finally, I think the law class should be taught by a lawyer. Good luck!

24. This may seem off topic, but classroom size is an issue. With 24 students we need more space!

25. With few exceptions the teaching staff is strong and provides practical learning activities for students. Advising may be an issue, mine was great, but others in our cohort had serious concerns.



26. As a member of Cohort 1, I anticipated inevitable change and the need for flexibility for the first group. I have no problems with how the program played out, however I anticipate that future cohorts will have better communication throughout. I also felt that at least half of the courses related to building leadership as opposed to district level leadership. This needs to change. The building level leadership is a master's program. We don't need that...been there, done that. Also, a few instructor changes should be considered. Facilities and SPED top the list. Nice people, just not "experts" in that content area. Overall, I had a great experience.

27. The research project is reasonable, but more time must be spent getting candidates prepared for it. This is a new experience for most and more and earlier guidance is needed. Beyond that I have been very pleased with the program; especially with Dr. Frye's willingness to listen and respond to concerns.

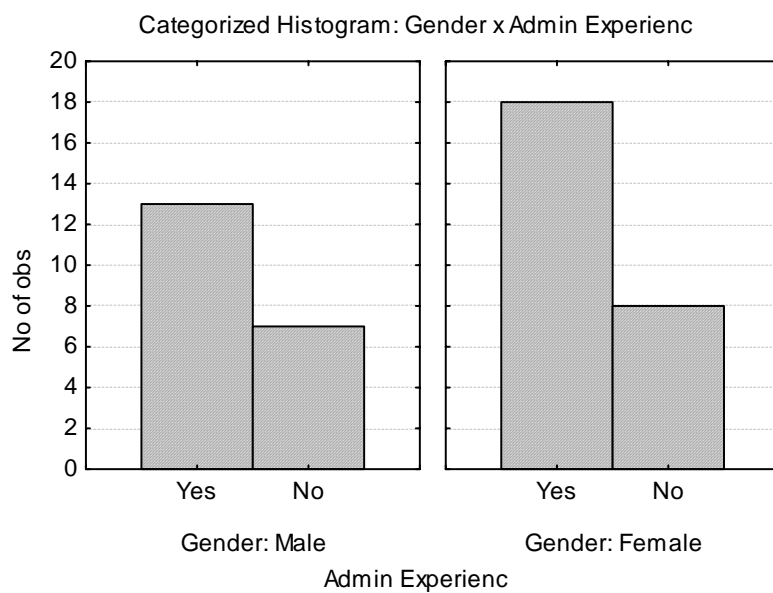
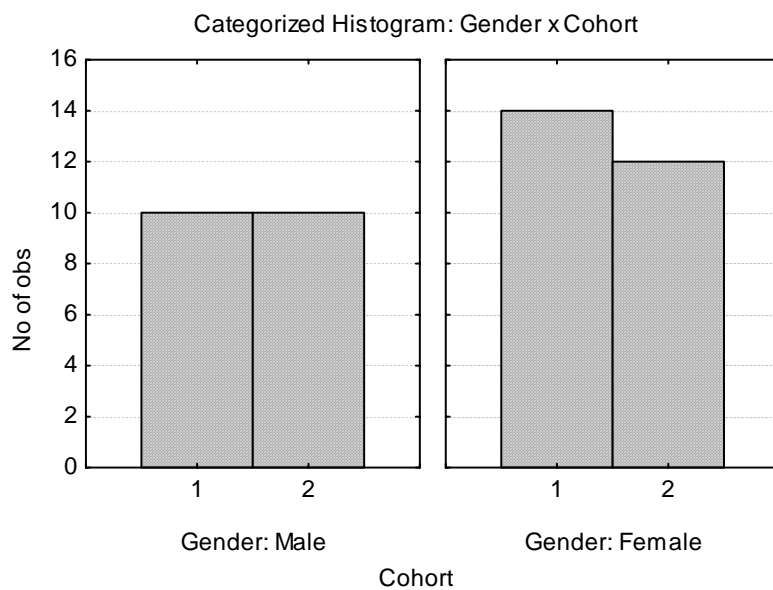
28. I enjoyed most of the program. The constant change in policy and practice in the dissertation process was unnerving.

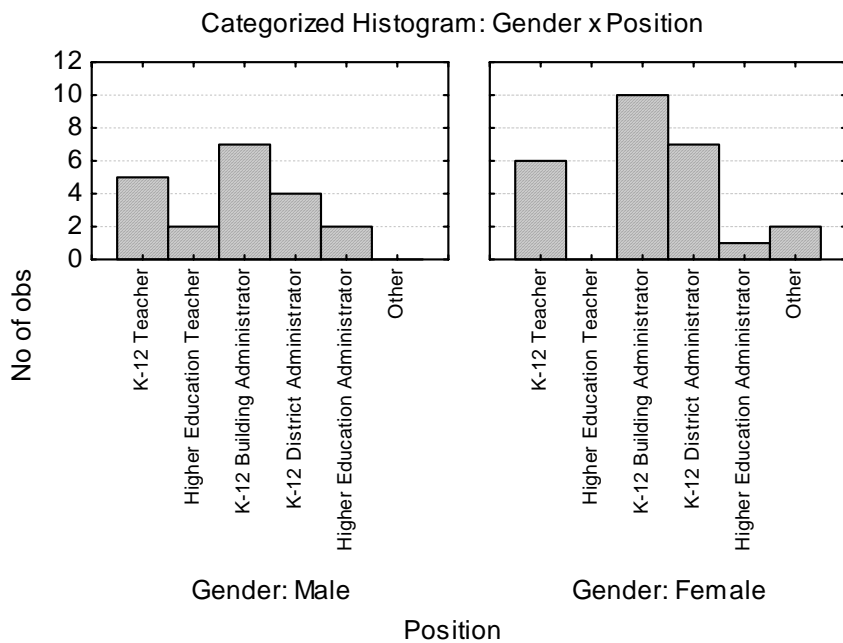
29. This program offered a fresh approach to graduate study and a positive alternative to the other "old school" programs offered by area universities. I believe the Baker staff was very honest about our Cohort being a "test-case" for the program and each of us should have understood that going in. While every new program has to be modified and improved, I thought most of the faculty did an exception job of listening and considering the feedback we offered. With the exception of two instructors, I believe the faculty was very strong and well prepared.

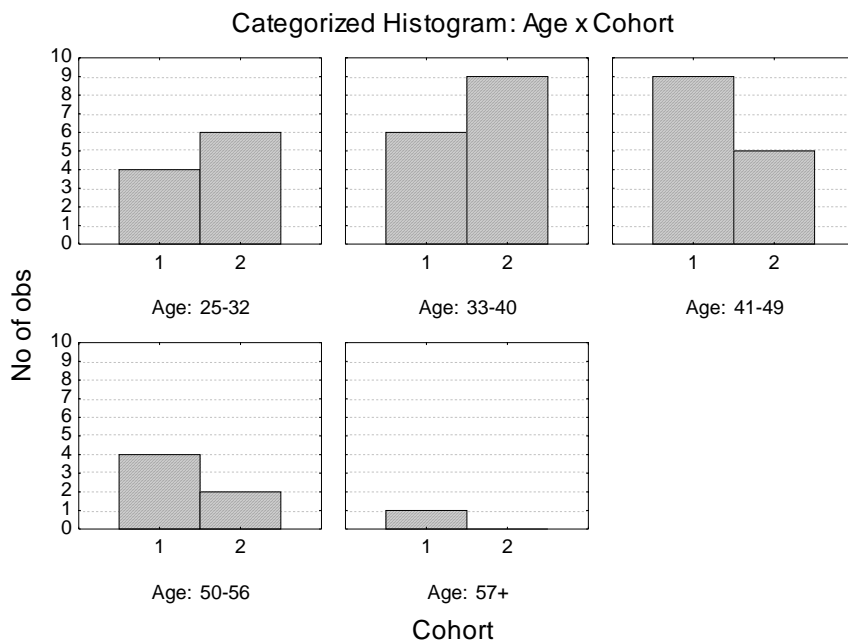
## APPENDIX 6: Diagrams for Demographic Relationships

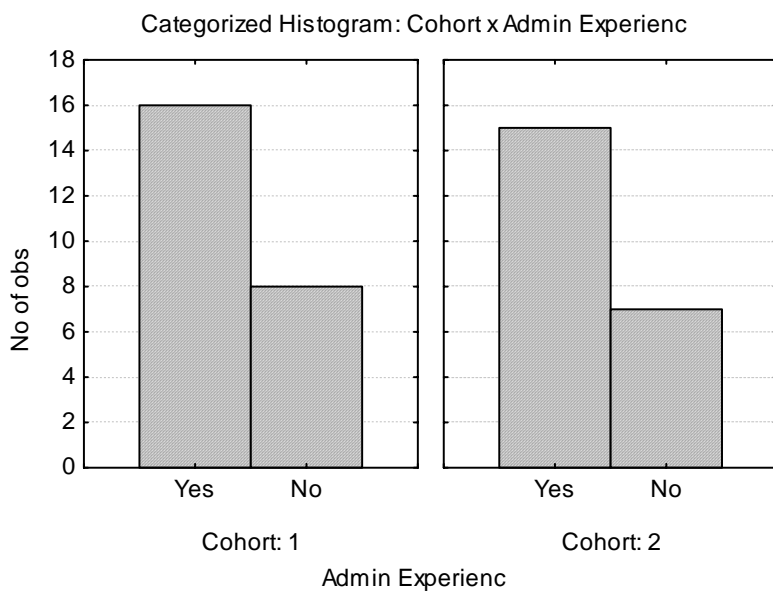
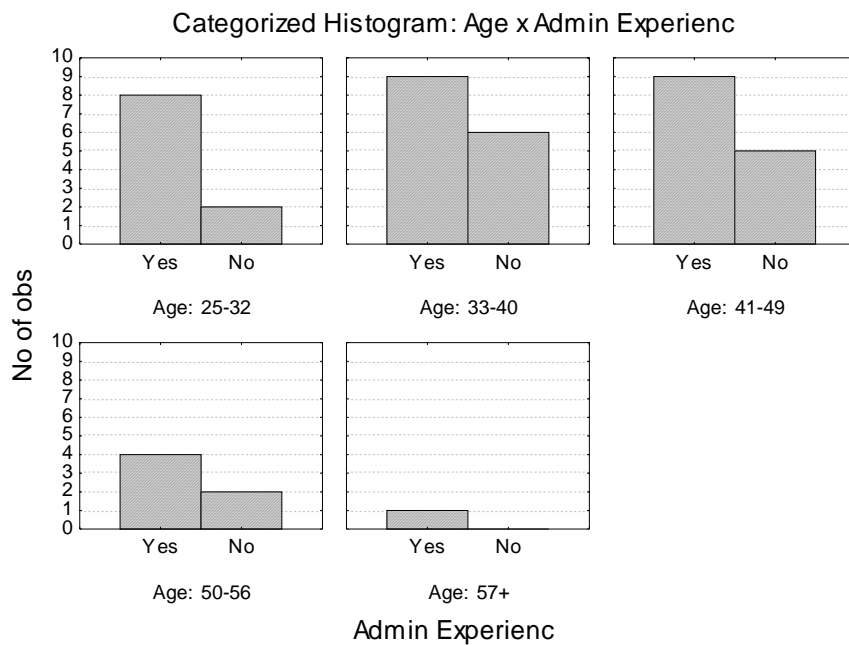
## Diagrams for Demographic Relationships

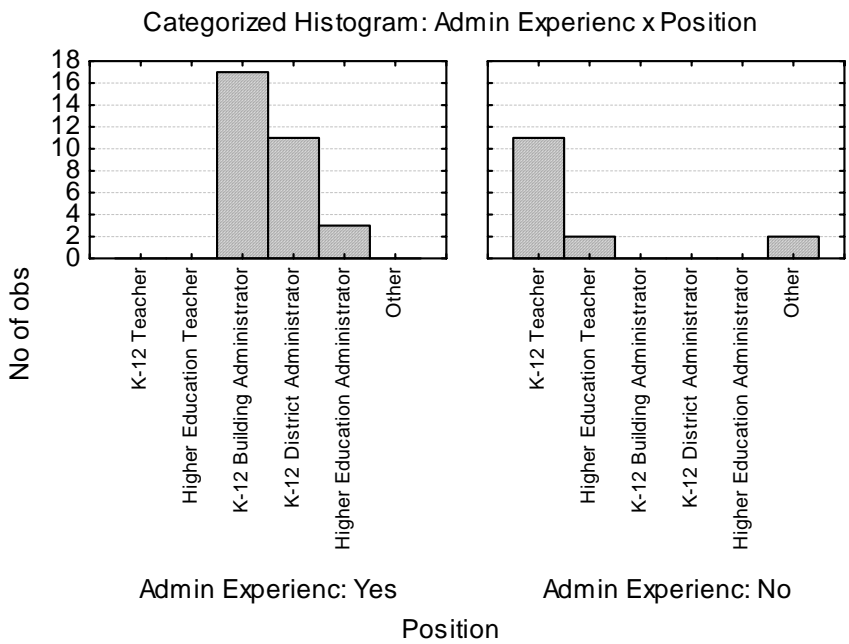
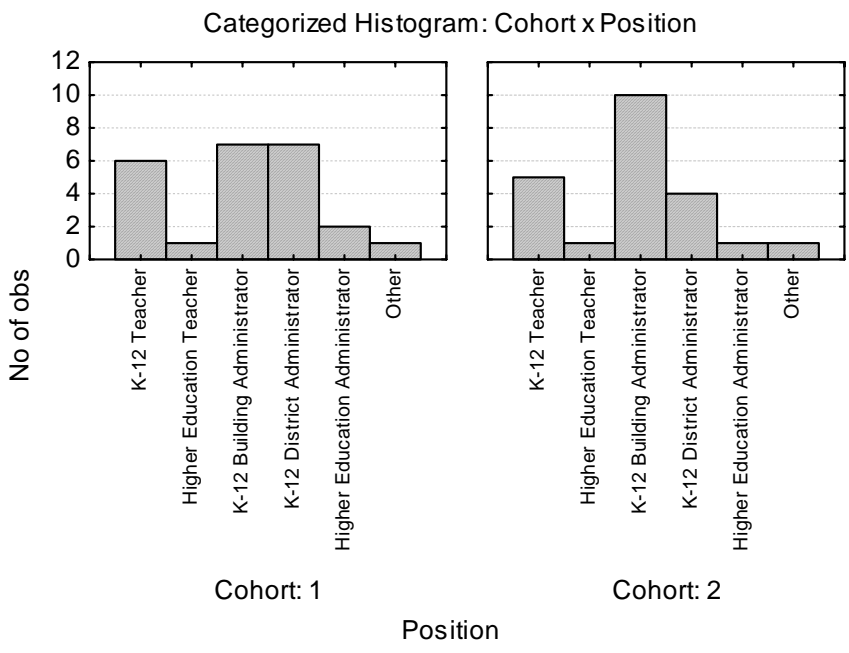
Categorized Histograms showing the personal and professional sample aspects









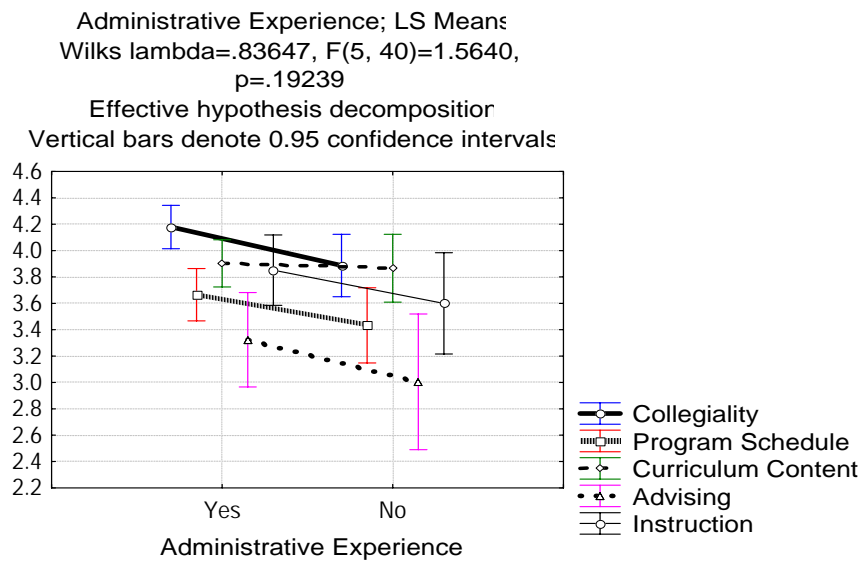
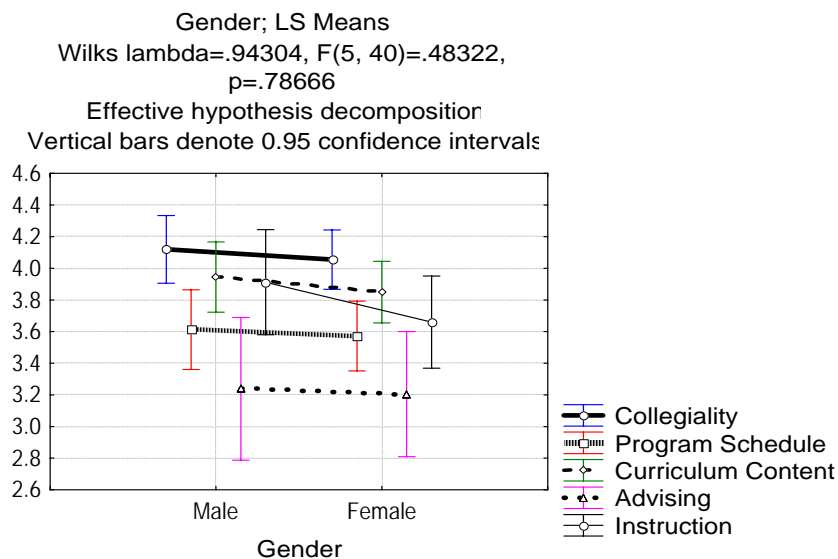


## APPENDIX 7: Least Squares Means Graphs



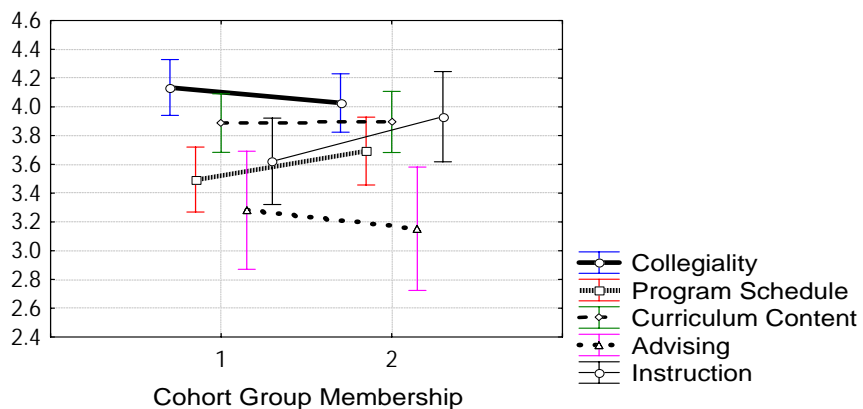
## Least Squares Means Graphs

Additional Graphs showing the Least Squares Mean differences for the ANOVA tests



Cohort Group Membership; LS Means  
 Wilks lambda=.91150, F(5, 40)=.77671,  
 p=.57233

Effective hypothesis decompositor  
 Vertical bars denote 0.95 confidence intervals



Age; LS Means  
 Wilks lambda=.62294, F(20, 123.66)=.94844,  
 p=.52841

Effective hypothesis decompositor  
 Vertical bars denote 0.95 confidence intervals

